

## Transport and the Environment Board

21 October 2021

### Rail Update

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<b>Is the paper exempt from the press and public?</b>	No
<b>Purpose of this report:</b>	Discussion
<b>Is this a Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Has it been included on the Forward Plan?</b>	Not a Key Decision

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**Director Approving Submission of the Report:**

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**Executive Summary**

This is a briefing report to provide MCA Transport and Environment Board Members with an update on current rail related matters.

**What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?**

Poor rail connections limit the flow of people, ideas and businesses both within our region and between South Yorkshire and other parts of the North and the rest of the country. The SCR Integrated Rail Plan sets out the network, services and investment that South Yorkshire requires to improve capacity, reliability, affordability, journey times and frequencies. Progress on key elements of this Plan is provided in this report.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that Transport and Environment Board members review the Update report, discuss key issues and advise if there are items that should be considered in more detail at future Board meetings.

## **Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel**

None

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### **1. Background**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on a range of rail matters. It is anticipated that the Government's Integrated Rail Plan will be published in October 2021 and that this will provide greater clarity on Government's investment plans related to HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) investment. Government is also embarking on the transition to Great British Railways, an arm's length railway body which will subsume the responsibilities of Network Rail, most rail functions of DfT and many operator roles.
- 1.2 In recent months there has been significant work by the Manchester Recovery Task Force on a new rail timetable as well as progress on key South Yorkshire schemes and stations. These are covered in more detail in the report.
- 1.3 Board Members are invited to comment on the issues in this report and to identify if there are topics that would benefit from more extensive discussion at future Board meetings.

### **2. Key Issues**

#### **2.1 Integrated Rail Plan**

The Government's Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) is anticipated imminently and will set out how HS2 and NPR will be phased and integrated. The IRP is likely to include the Government's position on the Eastern leg of HS2 Phase 2b in South Yorkshire alongside plans for NPR. The extent to which the IRP will support and fund the NPR 'preferred' network, endorsed by Northern leaders, is currently unknown. Also, in South Yorkshire NPR is closely linked to the HS2 Eastern Leg, as the NPR route from Sheffield to Leeds will use part of the HS2 line between Clayton Junction and Leeds.

#### **2.2 Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail and Great British Railways**

The 'Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail' was published as a White Paper on 20 May 2021 and sets out reform to achieve seven promises to passengers and freight customers, and 62 commitments that frame the reform proposals. There will be a fundamental restructuring of the railway with a new public sector arm's length railway body which will subsume the responsibilities of Network Rail, most rail functions of DfT, and many operator roles to ensure a more joined-up approach to running the railway. It will be called 'Great British Railways' (GBR), and assume the role of 'guiding mind', providing accountability and leadership.

The Transport Secretary has recently announced the core goals that will define GBR. These include changing the culture of the railways, putting passengers and freight first, attracting new people to travel and making travel easier, driving down costs and being more accountable. A GBR Transition Team has been set up and they have

started to engage with stakeholders across the whole industry about the strategy and plans for the new structure.

### **2.3 Manchester Recovery Task Force**

DfT and TfN have published a statement on the work of the Manchester Recovery Task Force (MRTF) and launched a consultation on a proposed new rail timetable. Aiming to address the longstanding congestion and reliability issues around Manchester, the new timetable should be implemented from December 2022.

The new timetable will mean that the current 18 trains per day, in each direction, between Cleethorpes – Doncaster - Sheffield-Manchester Piccadilly - Manchester Airport will run to Liverpool Lime Street instead of Manchester Airport. This rerouting will mean that Sheffield will gain a second direct train per hour to Liverpool Lime Street and Doncaster will gain one direct train per hour to Liverpool Lime Street.

Passengers for the airport will need to change at Manchester Piccadilly where there will be a train approximately every ten minutes to the airport from the adjacent platform. Journey times between Sheffield and Doncaster to/from Manchester Airport should take no longer than an additional ten minutes compared with current direct services.

Throughout the MRTF process, the Mayor has worked tirelessly to secure the first and last trains of the day running to Manchester Airport, providing direct connectivity for early and late travelling passengers. This is far from ideal and work will continue to advocate for full reinstatement of hourly direct services.

In the longer term, from the early 2030s, NPR will provide two faster trains per hour between Sheffield and Manchester Airport.

### **2.4 Network Rail Continuous Modular Strategic Planning (CMSP)**

Network Rail have carried out a CMSP study on both Sheffield Midland area (2019) and Doncaster Station area (2021) looking at what infrastructure enhancements are required to accommodate current and future rail services and to improve performance.

A package of shorter term, smaller scale capacity and performance enhancements has been developed for Sheffield Midland, which will enable the station to work more flexibly and handle more trains from both north and south. This is being presented to the DfT for funding with a view to delivery in the next five years. A further package of longer term and more substantial interventions in the wider Sheffield area will be developed following the publication of the IRP once there is certainty on HS2 and NPR.

Two packages of interventions to enhance capacity and performance are also being developed arising from the Doncaster CMSP study – one for the area around Doncaster station and one for the South Kirkby and Hare Park area on the ECML branch to Leeds. These are also seeking funding from the Government.

## 2.5 Hope Valley Line capacity scheme

This scheme - to add a second platform and track at Dore and Totley station, extend the Dore South curve and build a new passing loop for freight at Bamford - is starting to get underway. Preparatory work has commenced, and work will start on site in early 2022. The contractors have been liaising closely with the MCA as well as the local community.

The scheme is due to be completed by the end of 2023 and the main output of the scheme will be much needed improved reliability along the Hope Valley Line. The other original output of the Scheme was a third fast train between Sheffield and Manchester. However, due to congestion at both the Sheffield and Manchester ends of the line, at present there is no guarantee that the third fast train will be delivered from this scheme alone. The Sheffield CMSP work will assist with capacity issues at Sheffield, but further work is required to address capacity issues in Manchester. The Mayor continues to firmly make the case with DfT officials and directly with the Transport Minister and work will continue to secure this train as soon as possible after the scheme is completed.

## 2.6 East Coast Mainline Timetable Consultation

All the franchised passenger train operators that currently use the East Coast Mainline recently consulted on their proposals for the May 2022 timetable changes. SYMCA submitted a combined response covering all operators. Following the consultation, and in response to considerable opposition to the removal of a TPE service between Liverpool and Edinburgh, and other proposals, the timetable changes were paused by the Government and will not be implemented in May 2022. There will be a further review of the proposals with a view to introducing them in 2023. MCA officers are keenly awaiting and, working with the Mayor, ready to act to ensure that the improvements that were proposed for Doncaster and Sheffield still materialise.

## 2.7 Second train per hour on Penistone Line

In June 2021, Kirklees Council (with support from WYCA and SYPTE) submitted a bid to the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) for a package of works to improve travel along the Penistone Line between Huddersfield, Barnsley, and Sheffield. Combined, this package of improvements will provide passengers with a seamless end-to-end journey and will encourage more people along the line to take the train. The bid focuses on investment into three key elements: Major infrastructure improvements to facilitate two trains per hour, line speed and reliability infrastructure improvements and Mobility Hubs at all stations along the route. It is anticipated that successful bids to the LUF will be announced as part of the Spending Review in October.

## 2.8 Second express Sheffield – Leeds service

At present there is only one express train per hour between Sheffield and Leeds (in both directions) operated by Cross Country, with a journey time of 40 mins. In Northern's original franchise agreement there was a commitment to introduce a

new second Sheffield - Leeds express train and this commitment should have been delivered in December 2019. For various reasons delivery of the additional service did not happen.

When Northern changed to Operator of Resort in March 2020, franchise obligations were renegotiated with DfT and this commitment to the second fast train did not transfer across into the new Service Agreement. Over the last 18 months, SYPTE and WYCA have been working jointly with TfN to get this commitment reinstated. The proposal is for a second hourly express service between Sheffield and Leeds, in both directions, on the opposite half hour to the Cross Country service.

Recent announcements regarding the postponement of the ECML timetable looked initially to put this service once again at risk. However, TfN have confirmed they are still on track to submit the business case for the new service to DfT this month and Northern are continuing to work through the resourcing implications. Planned delivery is hoped to be December 2022.

## **2.9 Cross Country**

SYMCA officers are engaging with Cross Country to seek the restoration of the Reading to Newcastle via Doncaster service, which was withdrawn during the Covid pandemic due to low demand. Demand is now recovering, especially the leisure market, and some trains on the remaining service via Leeds are quite crowded. SYMCA have requested the reinstatement of the service via Doncaster and have a meeting arranged with Cross Country to discuss this shortly, along with the reinstatement of the Chesterfield stop in all of the Plymouth – Edinburgh services.

## **2.10 Restoring Your Railways**

SYMCA submitted the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the Barrow Hill Line scheme in February 2021. It is anticipated that the outcome of this will be known around the time of the Spending Review. Work is continuing on the SOBC for a new station at Waverley, which was a successful second round Restoring Your Railways bid. An announcement on the third round Restoring Your Railways bids, which includes the Stocksbridge (Don Valley) Line, the North Midland Line from Barnsley to Wakefield, and the Askern Line from Doncaster to Knottingley, is also expected in October as part of the Spending Review.

## **2.11 Station Improvements**

SYPTE and Northern were successful in securing £1M to improve the accessibility of 10 stations via the Access for All (Mid-Tier) programme. It should be noted that these 10 regional stations differ from the 11 being improved via the Transforming Cities Fund. Works will begin in late 2021.

Whilst funding is still being sought via local allocations, SYPTE is working with partners to strengthen its previously unsuccessful bids to the Access for All (Major) scheme programme – Submissions to this fund are expected to be made in 2022.

Work is underway with delivering the Transforming Cities Fund(ed) rail station improvements package. This will see over £3M spent on improving the station accessibility and environment of 11 stations.

SYLTE was successful in securing a portion of the Northern Accessibility Fund (as a result of Pacer withdrawal delay), which will see improvements to signage for visually impaired people, making stations much more inclusive and welcoming.

## **2.12 Community Rail activity**

SYLTE has been working in partnership with communities and Network Rail over lockdown to better understand the motivations behind track trespass, track-access methods and potential mitigation measures for hotspots across South Yorkshire.

Subsequently SYLTE has been leading a number of projects including connecting with local people to form new station adoption groups in hotspot areas to help promote rail safety within their local community as well as being a familiar calming presence at the station whilst they carry out their activities. Of the 29 stations within South Yorkshire, 14 of these now have station adoption groups.

SYLTE has also arranged for group members to attend the Samaritans Managing Suicidal Contacts training course to help them recognise, support and signpost people of concern on the platforms.

## **3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal**

### **3.1 Option 1**

It is recommended that the Board consider the Update report and discuss issues of interest. This is only a briefing report and not a decision-making report.

### **3.13 Recommended Option**

N/A.

## **4. Consultation on Proposal**

4.1 Individual schemes and programmes referred to in this update report will each have their own arrangements for consultation and stakeholder engagement.

## **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 Individual schemes and programmes referred to in this update report will each have their own delivery and accountability arrangements.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice**

6.1 There are no financial and procurement implications arising from this report.

## **7. Legal Implications and Advice**

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **8. Human Resources Implications and Advice**

8.1 There are no Human Resource implications arising from this report.

**9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice**

9.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report. Equality and diversity are considered at a scheme and programme level.

**10. Climate Change Implications and Advice**

10.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report. Climate change implications are considered at a scheme and programme level.

**11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice**

11.1 There are no ICT implications arising from this report.

**12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice**

12.1 There are no communications and marketing implications arising from this report.

**List of Appendices Included\***

None

**Background Papers**

None