

Transport Delivery Committee

Date	05 November 2018
Report title	Rail Business Report
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Report to be/has been considered by	Councillor Roger Horton – Lead Member Rail and Metro

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Transport Delivery Committee is recommended to:

- **Note** the content of the report

1.0 Purpose

To provide an update relating to the performance, operation and delivery of rail services in the West Midlands including on rail operator partnership agreements and West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) activity.

2.0 Section A – Background

- 2.1 Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and West Midlands Rail currently work to influence the management and delivery of rail services and projects.

2.2 This report provides a summary of rail activity in the TfWM and wider WMRE areas between May and September 2018.

3.0 Section B – Rail Review

3.1 On 20th September 2018 the Government announced that it is undertaking a fundamental review of the rail industry following the “*systemic failings in the industry*”, which the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) concluded were a significant factor in the major disruption which occurred on a number of parts of the rail network around the May timetable change.

3.2 The Rail Review has been commissioned to review these failings alongside other wider structural issues in the industry and will report next Autumn with the intention of its findings being implemented from 2020. The review will have a wide scope including:

- leveraging the commercial model to ensure improved services for passengers and taxpayers, and more effectively balance public and private sector involvement
- the roles and structures of all parts of the industry, looking at how they can work together more effectively to reduce fragmentation, improve passenger services and increase accountability
- how the railway can support a fares system that delivers value for money for passengers and taxpayers; and improved industrial relations to maintain performance for passengers

3.3 A direct consequence of the announcement of the review is that the DfT have decided to cancel the competition for the Cross Country Franchise. The rationale behind this decision was that it would be imprudent to press on with letting a contract on a set of assumptions that might soon change. The current Cross Country Direct Award has the option of a 13 period extension, but it is likely that the Department will need to negotiate a further Direct Award with the existing operator Arriva (part of the German state railway Deutsche Bahn). On October 13, the government published a Prior Information Notice (PIN) in the Official Journal of the European Union, which envisages a further Direct Award of up to 5 years (potentially until 2025).

3.4 Although the postponement of the Cross Country Franchise competition is disappointing, WMRE will use the Direct Award as an opportunity to press for more capacity in the region, as well as the remapping of the Leicester-Birmingham and Nottingham-Birmingham local services to the West Midlands Franchise. The latter ambition may be easier to realise via a Direct Award than through a Franchise competition as there will be fewer procurement and competition requirements to consider in the negotiations.

3.5 The Review has the potential to drive fundamental reform in the way the rail industry operates and is therefore very likely to impact on WMRE and the way it does business. WMRE will need to develop its views to feed into this process at the appropriate time and seek to actively lobby to protect the interests of passengers in the West Midlands. WMRE are currently considering what specific activity it may need to undertake in order to support the review and secure meaningful participation throughout the process. This has already begun in the shape of a letter from the Chair of WMRE to the Secretary of State for Transport which has received a positive response from the Minister. WMRE will keep both TDC and WMRE Board Members briefed on the progress of the Rail Review at the appropriate meetings.

4.0 Section C – West Midlands Franchise

4.1 A major development for the region’s rail network occurred on 29th July 2018, when the first electric passenger service called at Bromsgrove station. This brings to a conclusion the multi-million pound scheme to extend the Cross City Line from its current terminus at Longbridge to north Worcestershire, providing Bromsgrove with three extra trains an hour in the process. The occasion was marked by a formal launch event on the first weekday of operation – Monday 30th July – with Cllr Roger Lawrence, chair of WMRE, joining representatives from Worcestershire, Network Rail and WMT to unveil a commemorative plaque (see image below).



Figure 1 From left to right: Richard Dugdale (NR), Cllr Ken Pollock (WCC), Richard Brooks (WMT), Cllr Roger Lawrence (WMRE)

4.2 The arrival of electric trains at Bromsgrove represent the second time that WMT have introduced new services to the region. In spring the first passenger trains began calling at the new station at Kenilworth, and on 20th July the station was officially opened. The guest of honour for the event was Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport. He was accompanied by the local MP, Jeremy Wright, as well as Cllr Peter Butlin from Warwickshire County Council. Several of the speakers expressed support for the introduction of a Sunday service at the station, and WMRE are working with the industry to find ways to unlock the track capacity constraints that currently make this impossible.



Figure 2 Chris Grayling MP (left) at the formal opening of Kenilworth station

4.3 Given the difficulties experienced by Northern and Thameslink following the introduction in May of major timetable changes, DfT have decided to defer all major timetable changes planned for December 2018 until May 2019. WMT are one of those Franchises who were planning on introducing new services at this time. A copy of the briefing note provided by WMRE to the WMRE Board on this subject can be found in Appendix A.

4.4 An unintended consequence of the decision to defer the December timetable is that the local Sunday service on the Shrewsbury Line will no longer transfer to WMT in December as planned. Instead it will continue to be operated by the Welsh Franchise until the December timetable is implemented in May 2019.

4.5 WMRE, WMT and Network Rail have agreed the form of the special leaf fall timetable that will operate on the Cross City Line in the autumn of this year. This

is a marked improvement from the timetable that has been operated in previous years, as it ensures that all stations are served during the morning and evening peak periods, and keeps the amount of trains that skip-stop certain stations during the off-peak to a minimum. This progress has been made possible by WMT and Network Rail agreeing an action plan of over 30 initiatives designed to address the root causes of the low track adhesion on the Cross City Line. The performance of the timetable and the success of the initiatives will be reviewed in December 2018, and unless this shows that the impact on the region's rail network will be intolerable, there will not be a leaf fall timetable in 2019.

4.6 WMT's performance was significantly affected by the landslip at University station which closed the Cross City Line south of Birmingham New Street between 14th and 15th August. The landslip – which led to 713 trains being cancelled – was caused by a leak from a Severn Trent water pipe that was buried within the cutting wall. This caused the cutting wall slip by 3m over a length of 30m. With the soil came several trees, one of which fell on to the overhead line equipment, bring down the wires. The line could not reopen until the leak had been fixed and the cutting wall secured, a job that took more than a day to complete.

4.7 In recognition that performance has been challenging since the start of the Franchise, WMT have developed an action plan to address the situation. This comprises almost 70 schemes. Major schemes including improving train crew manpower planning processes, better industrial relations, more robust traincrew diagramming, and improved service recovery and contingency planning. Shorter term schemes include, more effective line management within the drivers team, more accurate and efficient processes, a suite of improvements for the Class 323 fleet, and schemes to decrease the amount of delay caused when passengers are taken ill on board trains.

4.8 Safety and Security

The number of suicides and suicidal attempts on the railway has continued to rise. This is true of both the West Midlands region and also nationwide. WMT are working closely with the Samaritans and the BTP to try and reduce this tragic trend. To assist them in this endeavour, WMT have arranged for Richard Godwin - one of Network Rail's suicide prevention and route crime specialists - to join them on a secondment. Richard joined at the end of September and will be attending the December WMRE Board meeting to provide an update on WMT's suicide prevention activities.

4.9 Community Engagement

WMT held the area's first conference for Station Adopters on 21st September at the Bull Ring Conference Centre. Designed as a forum to generate and share ideas for future station adoption and to celebrate the good work done by all the volunteers to date, the event received an enthusiastic reception from the attendees. Many found it really useful to have, for the first time, a forum to meet

and get to know other Station Adopters, as well as to meet representatives from the railway industry, in the form of WMT and WMRE. WMT and WMRE intend to work closely with Network Rail to build on this event and provide future support for station adoption.

WMRE had a very successful two days at the Tyseley 50 open day event over the weekend of 29th/30th September. Organised by Vintage Trains to celebrate 50 years of open days at Tyseley Depot (the depot first opened its doors to the public on 29th September 1968), WMT and the WMRE had a joint presence on both days on the adjoining WMT Depot. Alongside a class 172 in the first version of the West Midlands Railway (WMR) livery and a class 170 in the interim WMR livery, a WMRE stand was constructed with station name boards and artist's impressions of the new stations at Darlaston and Kings Heath, along with other information about WMRE's work. Engagement from the public was very positive, with lots of people showing interest in the new stations in particular. The stand was busy throughout the weekend and it was good to hear of the difference that people felt the new stations would make to their lives. Over the course of the weekend, the public took away WMRE branded merchandise, including pens, badges, small pots of jelly beans and leaflets explaining our work.



Figure 3 Pete Brunskill and Luke Bodin representing WMRE, accompanied by West Midlands Trains colleagues at the Tyseley Open day

WMRE also had a presence at the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce Autumn Expo at Edgbaston Cricket Ground on 5th October. The station name board from Kings Heath and artist’s impression of the new station were again on display and, as with the Tyseley event, generated lots of discussion. Attendees were keen to understand further detail on the locations of the new stations and were very much looking forward to the new journey opportunities they would bring. It was good to be able to put WMRE alongside local businesses to represent the railway’s part in driving improvements in the Greater Birmingham area.

The Annual WMRE Stakeholder Conference is fast approaching. It will take place on 21st November at Summer Lane, with Jools Townsend (Chief Executive, Association of Community Rail Partnerships) as the key note speaker. The theme for this year’s event will be “local rail services, serving local communities” and will explore the vital contribution that rail makes to local communities, as well as the important role that communities play in supporting their local railway. A varied programme of speakers will share an exciting vision of the future plans for rail in the region and will encourage attendees both to think about how local communities will benefit from these plans and also about how communities can play a role in engaging with their local railway as these plans are brought to fruition.

5.0 Section C – Rail Programme

5.1 Update on principal projects as per table below:

Scheme	Update
<p>Snow Hill 3rd Access</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction contract let • Funding contribution from Ballymore obtained • On-site later this year • Completion Summer 2019

Scheme	Update
<p>University</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single option design being finalised • Needs Scheduled Monument Consent • Construction – 2020-21 • Completion – early 2022 • Ward councillor briefings held • Full briefing held with TDC in September – further detailed update and site visit planned for early 2019
<p>Perry Barr</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atkins appointed to undertake design and development work • Scope of work being finalised with BCC who are still finalising proposals for wider highways and regeneration in the area • Scope will include wider public transport interchange • Delivery early 2022
<p>Darlaston</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred Design options selected to take forward to GRIP 4 • Briefings held with local councillors • Land purchase completed at Darlaston for main station site • Public engagement – Winter 2018 • Planning permission – Summer 2019 • Construction – 2020-21 • Completion – December 2021 • Train service options being investigated through Tracsis study • Meetings held with affected landowners
<p>Willenhall</p> 	

Scheme	Update
<p>Camp Hill Line stations – Moseley, Kings Heath and Hazelwell</p> <p>Moseley</p>   <p>Kings Heath</p>   <p>Hazelwell</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preferred design options for all stations selected• Briefings with Ward Councillors held• Public engagement – November 2018• Planning permission – Summer 2019• Construction – 2020-21• Completion – December 2021• Train service options being investigated through Tracsis study• Key issues raised to date are related to drop-off, parking and access to the stations

Scheme	Update
<p>Solihull</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project to redevelop Solihull station getting underway • Project objectives being agreed to allow scoping document to be developed to allow initial design study to be commissioned. • Governance arrangements with partners being finalised • Project will be led by Solihull MBC who have identified budget to commission work • Project timescales to be determined

5.2 Initial feasibility activity is also underway on a number of other projects including Moor Street station, Aldridge new station, Dudley Port interchange and Cannock station upgrade.

6.0 Section D – Single Network Vision

Following the success of getting WMRE represented on the Network Rail Supervisory Board for the West Midlands (which represents the highest level of rail industry governance in the area), we intend to investigate the possibilities of using the senior level oversight provided by the group to drive forward the Single Network Vision proposition for customer service. Following recent Supervisory Board discussions, it has become clear that this aligns very well with Network Rail's latest approach to improving performance, the so-called "corner-shop approach". This "corner-shop approach" seeks to bring together those key players along a line of route who most understand the business (as would be the case at a corner-shop) and to incentivise and enable them to drive performance improvements. We are seeking to widen this model so that it can be used to drive customer service in a wider sense, as expressed in the Single Network Vision. It is intended that a pilot scheme will be rolled out on the Cross-City line initially, with further routes to follow depending on the results of the pilot.

6.1 Chiltern Railways Partnership Agreement

The first Chiltern Railways Partnership Board meeting (associated with the renewed agreement signed on 13th June) took place on 26th September. The Board agreed to adopt a prioritised approach in order to deliver best value to the travelling public and in order make the most of the resources available to the Partnership. Key focuses for the Partnership are likely to be rolling out Swift smart ticketing technology on Chiltern Railways services, delivering multi-modal

branding at Solihull interchange and short term actions to improve the passenger environment between Moor Street and New Street stations.

The Board meeting also heard a business update from Chiltern Railways, who reported a challenging period for performance during period 6, with the company achieving 89.77% PPM against a target of 94.05%. Much of the cause of this was due to rail infrastructure failures, including a particularly disruptive signalling failure at Wembley during the evening peak on 14th September. Chiltern also updated the Board on plans to deliver the rail industry's first conversion of a Diesel Multiple Unit to hybrid drive. The first is due for completion by late 2019 and will deliver improved fuel efficiency and performance with lower emissions on Chiltern Railways routes.

6.2 Virgin Trains Partnership Agreement

Virgin Trains, the West Midlands Rail Executive and Transport for West Midlands signed a new partnership deal on 1st August. Launched by Councillors Roger Lawrence and Roger Horton and Amanda Hines (General Manager for Virgin Trains in the West Midlands), the agreement will focus on sustainable travel to stations and enhanced events management, in particular for football events. The first Board meeting of the new Partnership is due to take place on 19th October.



Figure 4. Cllr Roger Horton, lead member for rail and Metro on WMCA's transport delivery committee, Amanda Hines, general manager for Virgin Trains in the West Midlands and Cllr Roger Lawrence, chair of the West Midlands Rail Executive, hold copies of the partnership agreement

7.0 Section F – Stations Alliance and Rail Investment Strategy

- 7.1 On Monday 15th October WMRE launched the stakeholder consultation for the Rail Investment Strategy (RIS). The consultation will run for five weeks, closing at midday on Monday 19th November. This will allow around three weeks for the responses to be collated and analysed ahead of the WMRE Board meeting on 10th December.
- 7.2 WMRE are seeking to hear the views of as wide a range of organisations, businesses and individuals as possible. The Strategy and the questions which WMRE are seeking consultation responses on are available at <http://wmre.org.uk/strategy/wmris>.
- 7.3 Interim resources to support the management of the Stations Alliance have been brought on board. WMRE is relocating to the 7th Floor to allow the full integration of project delivery teams, Stations Alliance partners and WMRE/TfWM staff involved in rail. This will allow more joined up working to take place and more efficient delivery of stations projects.
- 7.4 With more staff in place to support the Stations Alliance it will be possible to move forwards on Stations Masterplanning and other activities identified in the WMSA work programme.

8.0 Section G – Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this update report. Although the latest status position covering the Rail Programme, Rail Investment Strategy and Stations Alliance is for noting in this report there are a number of financial risks and challenges against these that will be need to be carefully considered. This will form a key element as part of progressing the further development and/or delivery of these with all funding options and opportunities needing to be fully explored and quantified before any decisions are made.
- 8.2 Any costs incurred or support provided by TfWM or West Midlands Rail Executive from supporting the activity in relation to the Chiltern and Virgin partnership agreements will be met from within agreed funding and resources.

9.0 Section H – Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the contents of this report although legal support may be required to support existing partnership agreements referred to.

10.0 Section I – Equalities Implications

10.1 There are no equalities implications as a result of this report.

11.0 Section J – Geographical Scope

11.1 This report covers rail services within the WMRE geographical area, which includes the seven authorities which make up WMCA as well as the nine Shire and Unitary authorities which ring the Met area.

12.0 Section K – Inclusive Growth Implications

12.1 There are no direct inclusive growth implications arising from the contents of this report.

Appendix A

West Midlands Rail Executive Briefing on Deferral of December 2018 timetable

Board Briefing

West Midlands Trains December 2018 Timetable Change

5 July 2018

1. Executive summary

Following a review by Network Rail into the circumstances surrounding the failed introduction of new timetables on the Northern and Thameslink Franchises in May 2018, the infrastructure provider and maintainer has recommended to the Department for Transport that the timetable changes proposed for December 2018 are deferred until May 2019. This recommendation has been accepted by the Department, meaning that the major timetable recast planned by West Midlands Trains (WMT) for December will now take place in May 2019.

2. Background

On 20th May 2018 the Northern and Thameslink Franchises introduced brand new timetables across all of their respective routes. These timetables marked a significant departure from the previous schedules, and in the case of Northern were predicated on Network Rail having upgraded certain key pieces of infrastructure. Both operators' timetables ran into difficulty from the first day of operations, with the ensuing delays and cancellations making national headlines.

3. Network Rail Response

In response, the Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, ordered a number of reviews and investigations to understand what went wrong. These included an analysis by incoming Network Rail Chief Executive Andrew Haines of his organisation's ability to validate in a timely manner the timetables that are planned to be introduced across the whole of the network in December 2018. This work also gave consideration to Network Rail's capacity to deliver any new or improved infrastructure that might affect the operation of the planned December 2018 timetables.

4. West Midlands Trains' December 2018 timetable

WMT's successful bid to operate the West Midlands Franchise saw them commit to introduce a significantly enhanced timetable in December 2018. The principal features of this new timetable have been communicated to the Board previously, but in short included:

- New cross-Birmingham linkages creating better connectivity to London and Birmingham International
- Better evening services on most routes
- Uplift in Shrewsbury Line frequency on weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays
- Later services on Coventry, Cross City North and Wolverhampton lines
- Electric services on the Chase Line

5. Chase Line Electrification

The latter enhancement is dependent on Network Rail completing the electrification of the Chase Line by the autumn to allow sufficient time for driver training ahead of the introduction of electric passenger services in December. The launch of these services is important to the overall structure of the WMT timetable as it enables diesel trains to be redeployed elsewhere in the region to provide new services and more capacity. Consequently, any failure to deliver the Chase Line electrification scheme on time would have a knock on effect to other routes and have the potential to create disruption for passengers.

6. Network Rail's Recommendation

Mr Haines' review determined that there was sufficient risk attached to the delivery of the Chase Line electrification scheme to warrant a recommendation to the Secretary of State that the planned December 2018 timetable be deferred to May 2019. This would de-risk the timetable by giving Network Rail sufficient time to complete the electrification works and for WMT to ensure that all drivers are trained on the route. This recommendation was consistent with that given by Mr Haines elsewhere in the country. For example, planned changes to CrossCountry and freight timetables in December 2018 have also been deferred until May 2019.

The Secretary of State has accepted Mr Haines' recommendations for December 2018.

7. Implications for the West Midlands

The consequence of this decision is that WMT's existing May 2018 timetable will be rolled over into December 2018, with the December 2018 timetable now planned for May 2019. Although this means that the region will have to wait six more months for the better journeys promised by WMT, neither will any existing services be reduced or downgraded as a result of this decision.

The deferral of the December 2018 timetable de-risks the Chase Line electrification programme, thus averting the possibility of a Northern or Thameslink style event, and the reputational damage that this would bring. It also more neatly aligns the start of the enhanced services with the delivery of the final Class 230 and Class 172 units.

These extra trains are not as essential to the December 2018 timetable as the Chase Line electrification scheme, but had they been delayed there would likely have been crowding on several routes across the region.

8. Communication Plan

The deferral of the December 2018 timetable to May 2019 may generate some negative commentary from stakeholders and the media. However, any such challenge would pale into insignificance compared to the coverage WMRE would receive in the event that the December 2018 timetable followed the pattern of May 2018.

We have already begun to engage with WMT and DfT's communications teams to ensure that our public position on the deferral is consistent with that of our industry partners. The plan is to focus on the benefits that the new timetable will bring, and whilst acknowledging that ideally we would all have preferred them to be introduced sooner, emphasise that the need to protect passengers from any potential delay and disruption is of paramount importance.

If you would like any more information, or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Malcolm Holmes (malcolm.holmes@wmre.org.uk) or Tom Painter (tom.painter@wmre.org.uk).

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