



## Transport Delivery Committee

<b>Date</b>	9 September 2019
<b>Report title</b>	Rail Business Report
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<b>Report has been considered by</b>	Councillor Roger Lawrence – 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 WMRE 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 March and August 2019.

## **3.0 Section B – Williams Rail Review and West Coast Partnership**

### **Williams Rail Review**

- 3.1 On 16 July the Williams Rail Review made their most recent public pronouncements on the emerging conclusions of the review. At a speech in Bradford, review chair Keith Williams advocated a more limited role for the DfT in the running of the railways, with government involvement limited to overall policy and budget decisions. In its place he proposed an arm's length body or bodies to run the industry and provide a 'single guiding guide'. However, Mr Williams used his speech to rule out giving Network Rail control over the operation of services, arguing that 'you don't create a customer focused railway by putting engineers in charge'.
- 3.2 Prior to Mr Williams's speech, WMRE responded to the Rail Review's second "Call for Evidence". In this the following key points were made:
- The case for further devolution of decision-making
  - Addressing the fragmentation, unclear accountability and lack of "guiding minds" in the industry
  - Capturing and promoting rail's wider economic, environmental and social benefits
  - Addressing poor productivity and high industry costs
  - Improving focus on passengers and freight customer
  - Encouraging innovation
  - No "One Size Fits All" solution
  - Using the West Midlands Grand Rail Collaboration as a test-bed for Rail Review
- 3.3 WMRE remains in close contact with the Review Team which is expected to report its full findings in the Autumn. We are also working with UTG and the Rail Devolution Network to ensure that any recommendations for a future Autumn "White Paper" take full account of aspirations for greater regional influence over local rail services and infrastructure.

### **West Coast Partnership**

- 3.4 On 14th August 2019 the DfT announced the winner of the competition to operate the new West Coast Partnership Franchise (WCP). The new contract, which will commence in December 2019 and run until 2031, has been awarded to a joint venture between First Group and Italian state operator Trenitalia.

- 3.5 The First/Trenitalia bid beat off competition from a consortium led by Hong Kong's MTR Corporation (including junior partners Guangshen Railway Company of China and Spain's Renfe). The field had been thinned to two bidders after West Coast Partnership Ltd - a joint venture between Stagecoach Group, Virgin Group, and French firm SNCF - was disqualified by DfT in April after submitting a non-compliant bid.
- 3.6 The new WCP franchise will be responsible for both the current inter city services and for designing and running the initial High Speed 2 services for the first 3 to 5 years of HS2 operation from 2026. In the longer term, the partnership approach requires First/Trenitalia to collaborate with HS2 Ltd to design, launch and operate the initial HS2 train services.
- 3.7 Crucially First/Trenitalia will play in key role in the development of future timetable changes on the West Coast Main Line to take advantage of the extra capacity provided by HS2 Phase 1, especially on the core Birmingham – Coventry – Milton Keynes – London corridor.
- 3.8 WMRE is already working with Network Rail, DfT and the wider rail industry to ensure that our regional aspirations for such Post HS2 timetable changes, as set out in our new West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy, form a key part of such future timetable plans.
- 3.8 Key benefits for the West Midlands are:
- New trains will replace the Super Voyagers, and the Pendolino fleet will be fully refurbished
  - The First Class lounges at Birmingham New Street, Birmingham International, Coventry, Rugby, Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent to be refreshed
  - Free station Wi-Fi at Coventry, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford, Rugby, Crewe and Birmingham International
  - New ticket vending machines at Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent, Rugby, Crewe, Coventry, and Birmingham International
  - Improved station facilities such as waiting rooms, seating and shelters at Birmingham International, Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent, Rugby, Crewe, and Coventry
  - A direct service to and from Walsall and London Euston Monday to Sunday from December 2020, with an additional northbound service from London Euston by December 2022
  - Additional direct services between Shrewsbury and London Euston from December 2022
  - Remodelled ticket offices at Rugby
  - New digital way finding at Birmingham International
  - Increased car parking at Birmingham International

## **4.0 Section C – West Midlands Franchise**

### **Ministerial Appointments**

4.1 On 24 July 2019 it was announced that Boris Johnson MP had won the race to succeed Theresa May as leader of the Conservative Party, and thus also Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. As part of the new Prime Minister's first cabinet, Secretary of State for Transport Chris Grayling MP was replaced by Grant Shapps, MP for Welwyn Hatfield. He will be supported by Chris Heaton-Harris MP (Minister of State with responsibility for rail) and Paul Maynard MP (Under Secretary of State and responsible for HS2, East-West Rail, and Crossrail). Mr Maynard briefly served as Rail Minister between 2017 and 2018.

### **May 2019 Timetable**

4.2 The introduction of WMT's new timetable on 19 May 2019 represented the most significant change in services in the West Midlands since 2008 and included a multitude of service changes and improvements for passengers.

4.3 The changes included the operation of new services on a number of routes, the linkage of services across New Street and Coventry, splitting and joining of services at New Street and changes to the timings and formations of certain peak service.

4.4 The complexity of the changes has meant that there was a high degree of scrutiny prior to the implementation of the timetable, and a high degree of monitoring has been occurring since then. It was always recognised that some aspects of the timetable had the ability to import operational risk onto services, which needed to be balanced against the passenger benefits of better services.

4.5 While the new timetable is successfully delivering new journey opportunities, there are two broad areas of concern:

- Service performance has declined
- Certain trains are suffering from overcrowding

4.6 Performance has seen a decline since the start of the new timetable. Initial teething problems were always likely to occur, especially considering the splitting/joining and other new operational arrangements. However, now that the service has had a chance to bed in, it is possible to identify more underlying performance issues that need to be tackled.

4.7 Performance for the 4 week period ending 20 July shows the following levels of PPM (0-5 minutes late):

Cross City Line	86%
Birmingham – Walsall - Rugeley	78%
Hereford Line	75%
Shrewsbury Line	78%
Snow Hill Lines (Stourbridge/Dorridge/Stratford)	81%
Stourbridge Town Branch	100%
Nuneaton - Coventry - Leamington	89%
<b>Overall West Midlands Railway</b>	<b>86.5%</b>

4.8 This represents a decline in performance from pre-timetable change levels of around 3-12% depending on the route.

4.9 Services on the Coventry line, Chase line and Wolverhampton line form part of London Northwestern Railway service groups and have been performing more poorly than the WMR services, with individual service groups varying between 53% and 82% performance. The direct Euston-Rugeley services for example recorded a PPM of 64% in period ending 20 July.

4.10 The overall performance levels also mask some specific issues with both the Chase Line and Coventry Line being particularly impacted. On the former, late running trains have often been terminated at Hednesford, resulting in lengthy periods without a train to Rugeley Trent Valley. This has resulted in specific scrutiny over the services on these routes and a Chase Line taskforce has been set up within WMT to tackle the issues on this route. This taskforce includes representation from WMRE, and is reporting regularly to Amanda Milling MP and other stakeholders. The Taskforce is a task and Finish group and will be disbanded as soon as its initiatives are either delivered or embedded as business as usual.

4.11 Despite the increase in unreliability, passenger growth has continued to be strong, especially on LNR. Growth on WMR is less even, but impressive patronage increases have been seen on a number of routes, including Cross City (7.6 to 8.4%), Hereford (6.5% in period 5), and Shrewsbury (all periods above 30% since the timetable change). Despite the difficulties experienced by

customers on the Chase Line, passenger numbers are averaging 90,000 per period.

4.12 There is no simple solution to bringing performance back to high-performing levels, and will require a focus by both WMT and NR across a number of areas. The approach being taken is looking across four specific workstreams:

- Performance – Tactical: Short term wins to improve how the railway is operated
- Performance – Strategic: Medium/Longer term interventions to improve how the railway is operated
- Timetable – Tactical: Short term amendments to improve timetable integrity and/or capacity
- Timetable – Strategic: Medium/Longer term changes to the structure of the timetable to materially improve resilience

4.13 The performance actions will focus on issues such as improving infrastructure resilience, optimising train regulation, operational contingency plans, train crew deployment, etc.

4.14 The timetable amendments include some short-term capacity changes, but will also be exploring options to make alterations to timetables at the next timetable change in December.

4.15 While the short term changes will deliver many performance improvements, a step change in performance is only likely to be possible with a more radical change to the timetable which is designed to mitigate the propagation of delays across the network.

4.16 West Midlands Trains has therefore been actively developing plans for making changes to the current timetable structure for the May 2020 timetable. The rail industry has long lead times for the development of timetables and West Midlands Trains submitted its planned timetable for May 2020 to Network Rail on the national timetable deadline of 9 August 2019.

### **Safety and Security**

4.16 WMT's renewed focus on revenue protection has continued during the summer months. In June alone the Birmingham New Street team undertook 1,349 hours of revenue protection work at stations and 427 hours on board trains. In total, 532 Penalty Fare Notices were issued and there were nine reports for

prosecution (MG11s), saving over several thousands of pounds in revenue that would otherwise have been lost.

4.17 On Sunday 9th June, the WMR Revenue Protection Team was out in force to support the Cosford Air Show, which saw over 4,000 spectators travel by train and they protected revenue to the tune of £1.5k that might otherwise have been lost. The team also augmented the customer service team on duty for the event, distributing promotional sweets to arriving customers, and safely managing the queuing system for those returning home after the event.

4.18 Joint working with other TOCs during the period included superblocs at Birmingham Snow Hill, Birmingham Moor Street, Jewellery Quarter, Small Heath and Tyseley stations. As well as sending a powerful deterrent to those who intend on de-frauding the system (which contributes to higher fares for everyone else), the events show how the rail industry in the region is working together to successfully improve the experience for customers.

## 5.0 Section D – Rail Programme

5.1 Updates on the principal projects as per the table below:

Scheme	Update
<p><b>Snow Hill 3<sup>rd</sup> Access</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed design works ongoing.</li> <li>• Planning permission granted.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Willenhall and Darlaston</b></p> <p><b>Darlaston</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved in Principle design work progressing.</li> <li>• Performance and detailed timetable work commenced.</li> <li>• Local community engagement session positively received and followed up.</li> <li>• Planning application submission on track for August 2019.</li> </ul>

Scheme	Update
<p><b>Willenhall</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• OBC submitted.</li></ul>

Scheme	Update
<p><b>Camp Hill Line stations</b></p> <p><b>Moseley</b></p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approved in Principle design work progressing.</li><li>• Performance and detailed timetable work commenced.</li><li>• OBC submitted.</li></ul>
<p><b>Kings Heath</b></p>  	

Scheme	Update
<p><b>Hazelwell</b></p>  	

Scheme	Update
<p><b>University</b></p>   	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved in Principle design work commenced.</li> <li>• Detailed survey works underway and initial surveys completed on Canals and Rivers Trust land and University Land.</li> <li>• Ground investigation trial holes completed.</li> <li>• Baseline Programme confirmed by Programme Board with all building works complete and watertight by Dec 2021 and fit out complete by May 2022.</li> <li>• Works ongoing to agree the CWG configuration state.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Perry Barr</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPTION A CURRENT DRAWINGS</b></p> <p>A view of the station from across the A34 illustrating the idea of large pivoting doors to provide access to the station and the potential to support / hang the roof from the lift shafts to remove the need for columns on the concourse.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option selection completed and design is now moving</li> </ul>
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Scheme	Update
	<p>into single option development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Left are the new design concepts following recent reviews.</li> <li>• Baseline Programme confirmed by Programme Board. All construction works complete by Dec 2021, after which there will be a short period for entry into service</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aldridge</b></p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GRIP2 work underway by Network Rail, completion due October.</li> <li>• Discussions underway with Rolling Stock Leasing companies regarding possible bi-mode train opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dudley Port</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Network Rail GRIP1 study awaited</li> <li>• NR working with partners to identify scheme benefits and develop SOBC</li> <li>• Strategy for taking forward wider development of station, metro stop and wider connections being developed for agreement with partners</li> </ul>

Scheme	Update
<p><b>Cannock</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tender exercise extended, consultant appointment imminent.</li> <li>• GRIP1/SOBC study to be undertaken Autumn</li> </ul>
<p><b>Solihull</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mott MacDonald undertaking study on behalf of Solihull MBC</li> <li>• Initial stakeholder workshop and Steering Group held</li> </ul>
<p><b>Moors St, Curzon St and 'One Station'</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry Working Group considering scope and process for next phases of work</li> <li>• Different projects will need coordinating:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NR capacity study</li> <li>- MRH new platforms</li> <li>- HS2 Curzon St new link</li> <li>- "One station" link to New St</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 6.0 Section E – West Midlands Grand Rail Collaboration (GRC)

6.1 The second GRC Strategic Board meeting took place on 17 July. The main item of discussion was the performance of the region's rail network following the May 2019 timetable change. The GRC is ideally placed to lead on restoring a higher performing railway to the West Midlands, as it includes as members all of the organisations who can make a difference to reliability and punctuality. This includes Network Rail, WMT, Virgin Trains, CrossCountry Trains, Chiltern Railways, WMRE, and Transport Focus.

- 6.2 Through its agreed behaviours and principles, the GRC is also the safe space where partners can put commercial and contractual considerations momentarily aside, explore each other's insights, and be willing to get to the root of the challenges facing the region's rail network.
- 6.3 Consequently, the Board agreed to create a taskforce of GRC partners to develop and implement solutions to the current challenges. Whilst being cognisant of the commercial and contractual barriers facing each of the GRC partners, this taskforce will not be beholden to them and will instead be encouraged to approach problems from the perspective of what is the right thing for customers.
- 6.4 It will also work on the delivery of quick wins on routes with the potential for high performance (such as the Snow Hill Lines) to buoy up the region's performance metrics and restore confidence in the network.

### **Rail Industry Partnerships**

- 6.5 Latest meetings of the Virgin Trains and Chiltern Railways partnership boards took place in June. Work to drive forward short term improvements to the Moor Street-New Street St. Martin's Queensway tunnel (originally identified as part of the Chiltern Railways partnership) is moving forward. An initial stakeholder meeting has taken place and project management and sponsorship resource, as well as funding, is being identified.
- 6.5 WMRE continues to use the partnerships with Virgin and Chiltern to good effect in supporting management of events. Wider industry involvement is being tested as part of the development of the Regional Transport Co-ordination Centre (RTCC), which recently supported the management of transport to/from Edgbaston Cricket Ground for the Cricket World Cup. Cross rail industry co-ordination enabled a well organised event plan, including provision of additional services to support the event from Virgin Trains.
- 6.6 12<sup>th</sup> June saw the successful launch of the new Vintage Trains partnership agreement. Attended by the Mayor and in the presence of one of Vintage Trains' steam locomotives, the event at Moor Street station garnered widespread local media coverage. Attention is now turning to setting deliverables for the partnership and establishing governance arrangements.
- 7.0 Section F –Rail Investment Strategy and West Midlands Stations Alliance**
- 7.1 The Rail Investment Strategy continues to form a useful framework for the development of the network and the economic benefit modelling will continue to support work on longer-term optioneering.

- 7.2 The Rail Enhancement Advance Planning Group is overseeing a variety of medium and long-term projects for developing the rail network. These include the Midlands Connect Midlands Rail Hub. During July the SOBC was formally submitted to the DfT and publicly launched with support by WMRE. The proposals have generated a high degree of public and political interest.
- 7.3 A number of early deliverable schemes have been identified to seek development funding from DfT. These include:
- Snow Hill Platform 4
  - Kings Norton remodelling
  - Kingsbury freight terminal
  - Birmingham – Leicester journey time improvements
  - Barnt Green remodelling
- 7.4 WMRE is attending the DfT's West Coast, West Midlands and Chilterns Programme Board Meeting on 4 September which will be seeking DfT agreement (and funding) to progress projects through the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline process. This meeting is attended by representatives of Network Rail and TOCs as well as DfT. The agenda items will include the Midlands Rail Hub accelerated delivery projects and Snow Hill Line decarbonisation study.
- 7.5 Following endorsement by the West Midlands Stations Alliance (WMSA) Exec and approval – including budgetary provision – by the WMSA Board, the 'Stations as Places' pilot programme has commenced. Stations as Places is the answer to the 'Masterplan' objective of the WMSA, and will see all of the region's stations benefit from this approach over the next two years, subject to further funding being committed.
- 7.6 The first stations in the programme are a mixture of sizes/footfall levels split between rural and urban locations across the WMRE area. This ensures that the WMSA's attention remains focused in the wider region and allows the WMSA to learn from a variety of different station types.
- 7.7 A significant part of the Stations as Places activity is stakeholder and customer surveys, which are being undertaken by West Midlands Trains' customer service apprentices. This novel approach allows us to understand in much more detail what current and prospective users of stations would like to see.
- 7.8 The outputs of the programme will be a Station Prospectus for each location that, amongst other things, will show a menu of options for development/improvements that can be taken forward with suitable funding. It is important to remember that some/all of the potential interventions will be outside of the railway boundary/station lease area.

## **8.0 Section G – Equalities Implications**

8.1 There are no equality impact as a result of this report.

## **9.0 Section H – Geographical Scope**

9.1 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.