

GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: 18 February 2022

Subject: Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail and Whole Industry Strategic Plan Update

Report of: Simon Elliott, Head of Rail Programme

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

This report summarises recent discussions with the rail industry on the implementation of Greater Manchester's (GM) rail reform plans and engagement with Great British Railway Transition Team (GBRTT). It also provides a brief outline of GM's response to the Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP) Call for Evidence released by GBRTT in December; and seeks endorsement of the approach to develop plans for the formation of an enhanced Greater Manchester Rail Partnership with our Rail Industry partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The GMTC is requested to:

1. Note and comment on the contents of this report;
2. Endorse the approach on working with the rail industry in establishing our plans for the development of an enhanced Greater Manchester Rail Partnership and GM Rail Prospectus Refresh; and
3. Note and comment on the Whole Industry Strategic Plan Call for Evidence response.

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Equalities Implications

Not applicable

Climate Change Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures

Not applicable

Risk Management

Not applicable.

Legal Considerations

Not applicable.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Not applicable.

Financial Consequences – Capital

Not applicable.

Number of attachments to the report: – (GM Whole Industry Strategic Plan Call for Evidence Response).

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Not applicable.

Background Papers

Nil.

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution?

No.

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

No.

GM Transport Committee

Not applicable.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Not applicable.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail sets out sweeping reforms to the structure of the rail industry to improve customer focus and accountability. The reforms will require legislation and the formation of a new rail body, Great British Railways (GBR), which is unlikely to be fully implemented until 2023/24. However, the Government has set up a transition team headed by Andrew Haines who is also Chief Executive of Network Rail to oversee the changes and, where possible, deliver some of the desired outcomes ahead of structural change.
- 1.2 Transport for Greater Manchester has been working alongside the Transition Team and its industry partners, to further establish its position, and begin developing a partnership with GBR and the wider industry that helps us cement our 2040 Transport Strategy and Bee Network aspirations.
- 1.3 Since the announcement of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, positive discussions have taken place, including workshops with Transition Team, Greater Manchester Combined Authority Officers, Transport for the North and Network Rail. The workshops have highlighted that there is a real opportunity now for devolved transport authorities to build upon the good work that has previously been done and seize on the opportunity to set out a clear vision and structure for decision making for rail across Greater Manchester.
- 1.4 To develop this vision and structure, TfGM officers are working alongside rail industry partners, to establish the formation of the Greater Manchester Rail Partnership (GMRP), which if endorsed by members, will help shape a better rail offering for Greater Manchester's residents, businesses, customers and communities, by providing clear accountability and decision making within rail across Greater Manchester.
- 1.5 This report outlines in further detail the Greater Manchester Rail Partnership proposal; and plans for a Greater Manchester Rail Prospectus Refresh later this year for members' input and endorsement. The report also acknowledges our response to

the recent WISP Call for Evidence released by GBRTT, which will form the basis of our plans for rail across Greater Manchester going forwards.

2. THE GREATER MANCHESTER RAIL PARTNERSHIP

Overview

- 2.1 With structural reform taking place as a result of the William-Shapps Plan for Rail and the formation of GBR; it is pivotal that the Greater Manchester Combined Authority sets out its position on rail and seizes on the opportunities to help shape and influence decision making for rail across Greater Manchester and the North.
- 2.2 Going forward it is essential that we act as one voice across Greater Manchester and influence decision making with clear justification that will put the interests of GM residents, the north of England and business at the forefront.
- 2.3 Acting immediately with a pro-active approach that will establish a deeper and more influential role with local rail industry leaders, will help officers shape and form a partnership with GBR, as it begins to take fruition over these next 2-3 years, and help us cement our 2040 Transport Strategy and Bee Network ambitions.

Approach

- 2.4 The Greater Manchester Rail Partnership (GMRP) will bring together key industry partners across the Greater Manchester region and travel-to-work boundary, streamline existing governance and empower decision makers at the local / regional level, allowing us as an industry to act as one voice in the interests of Greater Manchester's residents, communities and business.
- 2.5 The Partnership will set the tone for a positive realigned relationship across local leaders in the rail industry and local government, embedding at a senior level, a mutual understanding of respective challenges and opportunities that assure we are delivering a collective vision that aligns with local-city regions and the national strategy.
- 2.6 The very core of this Partnership will establish a governance structure that aligns rail industry geographies and incentives and positions us strongly for what will be a period

of flux during the implementation of GBR. Without this we will not be a part of effective decision making across the industry.

Delivering through a Partnership

- 2.7 To ensure that the foundation of the Partnership is strong and in line with the developments of the GBR organisation and wider TfN/RNP governance structure, a Partnership Taskforce will be created to carry out a short delivery sprint, to quickly establish the governance, assurance, programme, funding and working practices of the partnership. Recently Andrew Haines Chief Executive of Network Rail, as committed resource to helping establish the Partnership, which TfGM officers are now beginning to work with, including other industry partners such as Northern, Transpennine Express, Transport for the North (TfN), Rail Freight Group (RfG) and Transport Focus.
- 2.8 The timescales for the establishment of the GMRP Taskforce are to be determined with the GBRTT and once the details are established, it will be the proposed senior industry leaders who will sit on the GMRP board to sign-off the arrangements and form the formal Partnership.

Greater Manchester Rail Partnership - Next Steps

- 2.9 To progress our Greater Manchester Rail Partnership plans and establish our position for a deeper and more accountable role within the railway:
- GM Officers will begin to work with industry partners and GBRTT in establishing a Partnership Taskforce to develop the working practices and foundation of the GMRP;
 - We will continue to engage with GBRTT and rail industry partners to ensure our 2040 Transport Strategy vision and Bee Network ambitions are accustomed to wider industry plans and thinking; and
 - Begin developing the GM Rail Prospectus Refresh that will outline our plans for partnership working with the rail industry – with a view to release in autumn this year.

3. Whole Industry Strategic Plan

- 3.1 Alongside releasing the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail in May 2021, the Government also announced its plans to develop a sector-wide, long-term strategy for rail: the Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP).
- 3.2 The Strategic Plan will be the first strategy of its kind, a 30-year high-level plan shaped by five strategic objectives: meeting customers' needs, delivering financial sustainability, contributing to long-term economic growth, levelling up and connectivity, and delivering environmental sustainability.

Overview of Response

- 3.3 In our response we outline the necessity for rail to play a much greater role within the Greater Manchester Bee Network, as a low-carbon, mass transit system, with seamless transition between cycle hire, Metrolink and bus operations by 2030. We also state that a growth orientated railway is vital in ensuring the prosperity of the Greater Manchester economy and achieving our 2040 Transport Strategy principles and Right-Mix vision.

Whole Industry Strategic Plan: Strategic Objectives

- 3.4 The five strategic objectives outlined in the WISP are meeting customers' needs, delivering financial sustainability, contributing to long-term economic growth, levelling up and connectivity, and delivering environmental sustainability. TfGM has tentatively supported the objectives, however, we would like to see further emphasis on modal shift and growing the market as a key objective. The below outlines in greater detail GM's summary response to each of the five objectives:
- Meeting customers' needs – we have highlighted the growing expectations of customers in terms of accessibility, more flexible service offerings and a shift towards leisure markets post-COVID. For both passenger and freight, the industry needs to have a forward-looking approach to tackling issues such as infrastructure constraints and decarbonisation to meet the needs of the customer.

- Delivering financial stability – we have highlighted that the industry should focus its efforts on recovering its lost farebox revenue post-COVID and capitalising on the fast-recovering leisure market. In the longer term, the industry should revisit its fare structure to better optimise patronage and revenue, reduce ‘gold-plating’ in infrastructure delivery and embrace digitalisation to reduce industry costs.
- Contributing to long-term economic growth – highlighted the role in rail in the Regional Centre and how it facilitates inward investment and development. We have referenced how rail has a role in supporting areas further away from the city centre by providing connectivity to jobs, further education and healthcare.
- Levelling up and connectivity – we have highlighted TfGM’s aspirations with regard to greater local accountability and control over rail services, including integrated transport as part of the Bee Network and fares and ticketing.
- Delivering environmental sustainability – we have highlighted the important role that rail can play in reducing overall transport emissions by increased modal shift from private cars and also stressed the need to fully decarbonise the rail network through proven technology.

3.5 Full details of our response to the call for evidence are attached.

4. Recommendation

4.1 We recommend that the Committee:

- Note and comment on the contents of this report;
- Endorse the approach on working with the rail industry in establishing our plans for the development of the Greater Manchester Rail Partnership and GM Rail Prospectus Refresh; and
- Note and comment on the Whole Industry Strategic Plan Call for Evidence response.

Simon Elliott,

Head of Rail Programme, TfGM