

Part B: General Meeting of Rail North Limited

Meeting date: Thursday 16 March 2017

Item: 7.0

Subject: Rail Franchise Update

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1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This paper updates the Rail North Association on key franchise issues since the last meeting.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Association is recommended to note the contents of this report.

3. Information

Commercial Management

- 3.1. The Rail North Partnership (RNP) team has continued its programme of monthly franchise meetings with TOC senior management as well as direct issue by issue contact on a daily basis.
- 3.2. There is also a well-developed relationship, through reporting and discussion, between RNP representatives and the Department for Transport on management, franchise delivery and variation development and a recognition within the department of the RNP's distinct position given devolution of rail in the north of England.

Resources

- 3.3. The Rail North Partnership has completed the recruitment of the Rail North Partnership Director, with the arrival of the appointee Gary Bogan on 6 March 2017 and a brief period of handover with Julie Mills, who will depart RNP on 10 March. Recruitment of a Finance Manager and identification of further shared resource within the DfT to assist in ministerial/department liaison will complete the Partnership staff compliment.

Interface with Rail North Member Authorities

- 3.4. The Partnership Management Team has worked well with Rail North Members' representatives over the first year of each franchise to ensure a greater level of local and regional input and accountability in franchise management through a series of Groups and meeting cycles. In addition, we are looking to enhance this and open up further opportunities for engagement across a range of topics – train performance, services and quality. This is intended to assist in further management transparency and accountability and also in the identification of further options for improvement or investment.

- 3.5. RNP are developing several working groups with Rail North members to enhance the level of involvement and local input into key workstreams of performance and service quality. There is further information on the new and existing meeting cycle in Annex A.

Franchise Year One Delivery

- 3.6. The Northern franchise has delivered approximately 7% of franchise committed obligations. The key obligations delivered to date include:

- Commenced their programme of fully refurbishing their existing trains with first partially refurbished train in service.
- New ticket gates at Liverpool Lime Street, Wigan Wallgate, Salford Crescent & Central, Bolton, and Bradford Foster Square
- Introduction of the new STAR mobile ticketing machines for on-board staff.
- Opened a 24/7 Customer Experience Centre.
- Commencement of delay repay.
- Expanded off-peak day return tickets and the introduction of more advance purchase routes.
- A new user-friendly app including barcode ticketing
- Introduction of 55 Travel Safety Officers.

- 3.7. TPE has in excess of 120 committed obligations in Year One. Since the last report TPE has delivered a wide range of committed obligations, a selection of the customer facing deliverables are shown below. The Franchise Management Team continues to work with TPE to ensure full delivery at the earliest possible opportunity of their range of Technology commitments reliant on website and app provision.

- Extended booking horizon on the Anglo-Scottish route with advanced purchase tickets available up to 24 weeks prior to travel
- 25 new ticket vending machines across the network
- Measures to mitigate risk of suicides at stations
- Reduced selected fares by 10% between stations on the Manchester –Leeds via Stalybridge route
- Integrated rail and bus discounted season ticket between Leeds and York for students.

Looking forward to Year 2 and beyond – Key Deliverables

- 3.8. The Northern franchise plan to deliver over the coming franchise year the following improvements:

- September 17 to March 2018 – installation of over 600 Ticket Vending Machines
- Station improvements commence from Station Improvement Fund
- Installation of additional 8 ticket gate locations outside of franchise obligations
- New uniform roll out

- December 2017 timetable launched.

3.9. A selection of TPE Year Two and beyond committed obligation key deliverables are outlined below:

- Hull Station retail development completion
- Additional car parking - 125 spaces in aggregate at Brough, Thornaby and Selby
- Free Wi-Fi on the train fleet (excepting older Mkiii coaches)
- 535 new secure cycle spaces at Huddersfield, Middlesbrough, Selby, Malton, Northallerton, Scarborough and Thirsk stations
- Manchester Airport retail development.

Annex A

Interface with Rail North Member Authorities

There are currently three main routes of engagement for the Rail North Partnership Contract Management Team with Member Authorities:

- Rail North Officer Steering Group
- Quadrant meetings
- Working Groups.

Rail North Officer Steering Group

The Rail North Partnership Contract Management Team continues to report on franchise performance and delivery of committed obligations to the Rail North Officer Steering Group (OSG) which has representation from each of the Member Authorities.

The OSG is also consulted on infrastructure or customer facing benefit schemes which arise from franchise funding opportunities, e.g. the OSG is currently being asked to recommend schemes in their areas which might be delivered through the TPE franchise. Opportunities for Local Authority match funding are being encouraged to maximise impact of this spend.

Quadrant meetings

The North of England is split into 4 quadrants, and a Quadrant Group established for each to facilitate meaningful engagement to influence the delivery of local aspirations for current and future rail services in their area by aligning and integrating Rail North Business Plans and Local Transport Plans for local authorities, including Member Authorities. Attended by TOC's they are also an opportunity to review service performance, and to discuss the progress of committed obligation and franchise programme delivery.

The objectives of Quadrant groups include:

- To collaborate in relation to local rail policy and delivery within the North, linked to the wider Rail North Ltd franchise management and long term rail strategy;
- To review franchise performance and committed development progress;
- To keep each authority senior transport officers and members apprised of local, regional and national rail plans and issues;
- To engage collectively with the local train operating companies and Network Rail to improve the local rail services for the benefit of existing and future passengers;
- To engage with Community Rail Partnerships to improve the local rail services and stations for the benefit of existing and future passengers;
- To promote and help deliver better rail transport as a driver for future economic growth;
- To provide a coordinated approach to issues affecting rail in the North;
- To produce and monitor the quadrant business plans; and
- To produce and monitor the quadrant delivery plans.

Working Groups

The Rail North Partnership Contract Management Team are currently in the process of introducing three working groups for more specialised engagement with Member Authorities:

- Performance Working Group
- Train Service Advisory Group
- Service Quality Working Group

Performance Working Group

The main objectives of this group are:

- To enlist Rail North Members' expertise and resources in assessing TOC performance, in order to better inform the Rail North Partnership team in managing the TOCs;
- To inform Rail North officers of key performance issues and trends;
- To identify strategic issues that can be taken forward in Quadrant meetings and/or the investment plans of Rail North, rail industry or local authorities.

Train Service Advisory Group

The main objectives of this group are:

- To brief Rail North Members on forthcoming timetable changes, in advance of TOCs' required stakeholder consultations;
- To brief Rail North Members on any emerging issues on rolling stock and infrastructure delivery; and
- To consult Rail North Members on train services/rolling stock franchise agreement changes or proposals for future service options.

Service Quality Working Group

The main objectives of this group are:

- To enlist Rail North Members' expertise and resources in assessing Northern's service quality performance, in order to better inform the Rail North Partnership team in managing the TOCs;
- To inform Rail North officers of key service quality issues and trends;
- To support the Rail North Partnership in witnessing independent service quality audits; and
- To identify strategic issues that can be taken forward in Quadrant meetings and/or the investment plans of Rail North, rail industry or local authorities.