

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

REPORT FOR RESOLUTION

COMMITTEE: Authority

DATE: Friday 19th June 2009

SUBJECT: Additional Rolling Stock for Northern Rail

REPORT OF: Interim Service Delivery Director, GMPTE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of progress with the planning and delivery of additional rolling stock for Northern Rail through the High Level Output Specification process and to seek delegated powers to respond to the formal consultation by the Department for Transport.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

1. Note that PTE and ITA officers commenced discussions with DfT officials during the TIF process and these have intensified over the last six months;
2. Note that the DfT are developing a specification for the quantity of additional rolling stock required by the Northern Rail franchise and the PTE will be asked to comment on this in the near future; and
3. Delegate authority for agreeing a response to the Clerk and Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair, Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Delivering a Sustainable Railway, Department for Transport, July 2007.
Rolling Stock Plan, Department for Transport, January 2008.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Members will be aware that the number of passengers on heavy rail services around Greater Manchester has been steadily increasing for a number of years and a number of peak trains are now crowded beyond the standards set in the Franchise Agreements.
- 1.2. PTE / ITA Officers initially discussed these problems with Department for Transport (DfT) officials as part of the Transport Innovation Fund process and there have been subsequent discussion with both the DfT and train operators. These have covered the quantity of additional rolling stock that is required now and is likely to be required over the next five years.

2. High Level Output Specification

- 2.1. In July 2007 the DfT published the 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway' White Paper. This contained the High Level Output Specification (HLOS) for Control Period 4 (2009-2014), which included an estimate of the number of passengers the railway should be aiming to carry in 2014.
- 2.2. The HLOS forecast covers all train operators and assumes that in 2009 there will be 22,100 people arriving in Manchester by heavy rail between 0700 and 0959; and 10,700 of these people will arrive between 0800 and 0859. The HLOS also forecasts that by 2014 the 3-hour figure will increase by 4,100 to 26,200 and the 1-hour figure by 2,200 to 12,900.

3. Passenger Numbers

- 3.1. The DfT, however, have now accepted the HLOS figures underestimate current demand and suggest that for Northern Rail (NorR) the current 3-hour figure is 18,000 and this will increase by 2,600 to 20,600 in 2014. For the 1-hour high peak the DfT say NorR now carry 9,800 people and this will increase by 1,400 to 11,200 in 2014.
- 3.2. GMPTE believes current arrivals in Manchester over the 3-hours are 26,500 – of which 19,000 are on NorR; and this will increase to 31,200 in 2014 – of which 22,000 will be on NorR services.
- 3.3. In summary for Northern Rail in the 3-hour peak:

	2009	2014
Original DfT forecast	15,500	18,300
Updated DfT estimate	18,000	20,600
GMPTE estimate	19,000	22,000

- 3.4. It is clear from the above that there is broad agreement on the current number of passengers, but less about future demand. The DfT are adopting a more pessimistic view based on government predictions for the national economy over the next two years. Train operators in the north west of England, however, are reporting that ticket sales / passenger numbers are continuing to grow (although not as fast as a year ago) – therefore the more optimistic view taken locally appears to be more realistic. Even if the government view of growth in the north west over the next few years is correct there is still a need for some additional carriages now and the need for the remainder is only delayed for a year or two.
- 3.5. The growth in passenger numbers over recent years has led to crowding on the rail network and, which ever scenario is adopted, crowding will become worse over the coming five years (and beyond) if no additional rolling stock is provided.
- 3.6. The Franchise Agreement for NorR states the maximum number of passengers that should be carried in each type of rolling stock and that is already being exceeded on 12 journeys around Manchester in the morning peak and 7 journeys in the evening peak.
- 3.7. The discussions with the DfT are therefore about the appropriate number of passengers to aim to cater for in 2014 and the quantity of additional rolling stock needed to ensure there is no overcrowding in the future.

4. Rolling Stock Plan

- 4.1. The DfT published a rolling stock plan in January 2008 that indicated that approximately 220 additional carriages would be needed in the north of England by 2014. Although the vast majority of these will be for services operated by NorR and TransPennine Express (TPE) some are also needed by Arriva Trains Wales and East Midlands Trains. The distribution of carriages between operators is also under discussion.
- 4.2. In determining the number (and type) of additional carriages it is important to ensure that the rail services can continue to be operated efficiently, with no deterioration in punctuality / reliability. Therefore the number of 'spare' carriages for maintenance and to provide cover for unforeseen problems also has to be considered.

5. Other Considerations

- 5.1. Although it is expected that some new carriages will be provided to both NorR and TPE many of the additional carriages will be second hand (cascaded) from other train operators. Past experience suggests that cascaded rolling stock tends to be in poor condition (because the

operator disposing of the carriages adopts a policy of minimal maintenance for the last few months of operation) and therefore needs significant refurbishment before it can be considered fit for purpose. These needs and how they can be financed are also being discussed with the DfT.

- 5.2. The additional carriages will trigger the need for a number of platforms to be lengthened and also the need for additional storage, cleaning and maintenance facilities. Network Rail are funded to carry out these works and have been making general plans, but these can not be finalised until the actual numbers and types of additional rolling stock are confirmed – along with how and where they are to be used.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. The DfT are developing a new train plan specification for NorR that is intended to resolve the overcrowding problems. They have discussed this informally with PTE / ITA officers and there are a number of aspects which raise concerns. Most of these are a consequence of the DfT seeking to ensure that the plan represents value for money and is affordable in the current economic circumstances.
- 6.2. Officers are continuing to meet DfT officials and NorR staff to seek a resolution to the problems. At some stage in the near future, however, the PTE will be required to give a formal response to the DfT on a final draft of the plan; before it is submitted to NorR for them to calculate the cost of providing the extra passenger capacity.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. A detailed list of recommendations appears at the front of this report.

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