

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

REPORT FOR RESOLUTION/INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Policy and Resources
DATE: 19th March 2010
SUBJECT: Update on Delivery of Railway Carriages
REPORT OF: Deputy Clerk, GMITA and Interim Bus & Rail Director, GMPTE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of the status of discussions with DfT on the delivery of additional railway rolling stock.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

1. Note the likelihood of some modest early announcements regarding the progress in delivery of extra capacity, and in this context the announcement made on 8 March regarding DfT funding the retention of the 10 “Oldham Loop” vehicles.
2. Note that any early announcements will not resolve overcrowding on many routes, such that PTE, predictions are that the number of overcrowded trains will continue to rise in the period to 2014.
3. Note the need to continue to press vigorously for extra capacity in the GM area, and for that work to be increasingly integrated with other rail workstreams including refranchising, Northern Hub and electrification. Note that given the national economic situation and likely hostile public spending position that our aims should be to ensure we are treated as a par with other parts of the country and that the priority afforded to GM in (as set out in current Government policy).
4. Note the need for this Authority to continue to develop effective support across the north including via MPs, other ITAs, and through our lobbying programme.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Report on Railway Rolling Stock Capacity – GMITA 12TH February 2010
Britain’s Transport Infrastructure –Rail Electrification – July 2009

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Background

1. Members were given a summary of the key issues relating to delivery of railway rolling stock at the Authority meeting last month.
2. Members will recall that the DfT had chosen to split the delivery of additional carriages for Northern into two phases.
3. Phase 1 was to be resourced from (a) existing diesel stock, and from (b) electric stock mainly cascaded from the Thameslink programme. DfT has received a proposal from Northern for phase 1, which whilst it is confidential, has been shared with officers. Members have been told previously that the scope of Phase 1 is likely to involve 80 to 100 vehicles.
4. Work is also underway on Phase 2. DfT have commissioned forecasting work with PTEs and this work is concluding that previous DfT forecasts were unjustifiably cautious. DfT is incorporating these forecasts into its work on a second phase. Currently DfT has no delivery plan for any additional carriages in Phase 2, although it intends to develop over the next 18 months. A delivery plan for Phase 2 might involve more electrification, which will cascade further diesel vehicles, or new builds of electric or diesel trains.

Current Position

5. A cross-party group of ITA lead members and MPs met Secretary of State on 24 February to discuss our concerns. The group challenged Secretary of State on the scope of, and commitment to, the various elements of the rolling stock programme.
6. Secretary of State is only prepared to define the scope of those elements of the HLOS programme for which DfT has signed contracts with train operators.
7. With respect to Phase 1 there is advanced progress with respect to those carriages that might be delivered into service in the next 12-18 months. This is likely to include vehicles cascaded as a result of new diesel trains being delivered elsewhere in the country, which will result in a cascade of Class 142 and Class 150 vehicles. Secretary of State is hopeful of making some announcements around these vehicles over the next few weeks. In this context it was announced on 8 March that DfT would take on the costs associated with retaining the 10 "Oldham Loop" vehicles beyond June. The plans may also include strengthening of the Liverpool, Manchester, Stockport, Sheffield East Midlands Trains services. The scope of the arrangements outlined above will not be known until announcements are made – it is likely to be no more than half of the phase 1 plans set out above (including the East Midlands Trains). Whilst these additional trains will fall short of our needs in keeping pace with growing demand any announcement is nevertheless to be welcomed.
8. The remainder of the Phase 1 proposals are dominated by cascades of electric trains from the Thameslink project. The Secretary of State for Transport is very confident that risks we portrayed regarding the scope of that project were

unfounded, but that until contracts were signed for the Thameslink trains it was not possible to be certain about the scope of the extra capacity delivered to the north. The expectation was that these commitments to Northern would be made towards the year end.

9. There is greater uncertainty around the Phase 2 plans. DfT have not yet identified a delivery route for Phase 2 rolling stock – although work is in-hand to define such plans. Secretary of State, both in the meeting, and in correspondence, has expressed continuing confidence in the need to further develop electrification plans – and it is apparent that these plans are being judged increasingly on their ability to cascade further diesel commuter trains. Furthermore the cost of new diesel trains is becoming prohibitively expensive and has risen quickly over the past 12-18 months. Unless this situation is remedied it looks unlikely that an order for new diesel trains is likely. The timescale to contract plans for Phase 2 is currently 2011.
10. It is very clear that any firm announcements regarding the quality of additional capacity to be delivered to the GM area will be linked to the agreement of contracts with train operators. DfT's approach to Northern is no different to the approach they have taken to the Intercity Express programme where a recent statement has set out that no firm announcements will be made until contracts are signed after the election.
11. In the light of this it is very likely that in the period of the current Government the only commitments that will be made will cover only a small proportion of the demonstrated needs to address current and predicted overcrowding on train services into GM.

Next Steps

12. Our need to secure carriages for Greater Manchester commuters must continue with the Secretary of State of the next Government. Clearly, given the near certainty of a review of public expenditure commitments by Government after the general election, the case for additional capacity in Greater Manchester will have to be made with increasing vigour. The fact that the joint forecasting work has vindicated our earlier position will put us in the best position to make these arguments.
13. The Northern PTEs and ITAs have recently prompted the creation of a cross party parliamentary Northern Rail group to press the case for rail in the North. At the first meeting of this group on 2 March railway capacity was agreed as key topic for lobbying the future Government (together with Hub).
14. Furthermore officers intend to draw together the related strands of rail activity in order to secure the best outcomes possible. The key strands of actively related to capacity, in the GM area include continuous HLOS discussions, rail electrification, re-franchising, the Route Utilisation Strategy Programme (RUS) and the Northern (Manchester/Hub programme). As an example of this approach Network Rail work on the Manchester Hub and Northern RUS is to adopt the revised forecasts.

15. Officers intend to develop the rail protocol with DfT (under the Statutory City Region banner) to press this case. Furthermore officers have proposed that Network Rail adopt a similar approach to major projects in the GM/NW area.

Recommendations

See front sheet of report for recommendations.

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