

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee – 3 September 2013  
Executive – 11 September 2013

**Subject:** Consultation on the Network Rail Manchester Piccadilly and  
Oxford Road Capacity Scheme

**Report of:** The Chief Executive

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**Purpose of Report**

To inform members of Network Rail's proposals to construct two new through platforms at Manchester Piccadilly Station and lengthen platforms 1-4 at Manchester Oxford Road Station as part of the next phase of the Northern Hub capacity improvement works.

To enable members of the Scrutiny Committee to consider the Council's proposed response to the consultation

**Recommendations**

That the Scrutiny Committee members note the content of this report

That the Executive:

- a. reiterates the Council's strong support for Network Rail's proposal to deliver the next phase of the Northern Hub;
  - b. asks officers to continue to work with Network Rail to further refine the current outline proposals for Piccadilly and Oxford Road and as detailed designs are brought forward to have particular regard to the issues identified in section 8 of this report;
  - c. acknowledges the major impacts that this project will have during construction on local residents, businesses and Council regeneration projects and urges Network Rail to ensure ongoing dialogue with all affected parties;
  - d. asks officers to continue to work with Network Rail to ensure that as detailed designs are brought forward that they are in line with the Council's wider economic and regeneration objectives for the Regional Centre and to ensure that this requirement is taken into account and incorporated in proposals to be included in a future Transport and Works Act Order application; and
  - e. authorises the Chief Executive to finalise the Council's formal response to consultation in consultation with the Leader and the Executive Member for Environment.
  - f. recognises the impact that these proposals would have on the City Centre environment require that the highest design solutions are delivered.
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**Wards Affected:** City Centre

Community Strategy Spine	Summary of the contribution to the strategy
Performance of the economy of the region and sub region	The Northern Hub will improve connectivity across the north of England. As such it is forecast to bring economic benefits to the city, Greater Manchester and the UK as a whole.
Reaching full potential in education and employment	The development will create direct employment opportunities and drive further indirect jobs growth.
Individual and collective self esteem – mutual respect	Additional opportunities are forecast to arise as a result of the scheme across the city region that will be of benefit to city residents.
Neighbourhoods of Choice	The chord will enhance the connectivity of the city improving its accessibility. The Council will wish to ensure that the design and construction of the scheme minimises local impacts and that the impact on the city's heritage assets is also minimised.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

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**Financial Consequences – Revenue**

None

**Financial Consequences – Capital**

None

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**Contact Officers:**

Richard Elliott  
Policy & Strategy Manager  
0161-219-6494  
r.elliott@manchester.gov.uk

Dave Whyte  
Principal Policy Officer (Transport)  
0161-234-3394  
d.whyte@manchester.gov.uk

Dave Roscoe  
City Centre Development Manager  
0161-234-4567  
d.roscoe@manchester.gov.uk

Pat Bartoli  
Head of City Centre Regeneration  
0161-234-3329  
p.bartoli@manchester.gov.uk

**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Report to Executive on the Transport Strategy for Manchester City Centre (July 2010)

Network Rail Manchester Piccadilly and Oxford Road Capacity Scheme Consultation Documentation (July 2013) including:

- Consultation Pack
- Manchester Piccadilly Options A, B, and C
- Oxford Road Options A and B
- Manchester Piccadilly Construction Route
- Oxford Road – Option A Construction Route
- Oxford Road – Option B Construction Route

## 1.0 THE NORTHERN HUB

Additional platforms at Manchester Piccadilly and longer platforms at Manchester Oxford Road form the next planned phase of the £560m Northern Hub package of rail infrastructure improvements in and around Manchester. The benefits of this total package are significant. It has been estimated that the total Northern Hub investment will translate to £4 billion of benefits to Manchester and the North of England. This translates to an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 new jobs.

The number of rail commuters into central Manchester has grown significantly over the last decade – by more than 50% on some lines – resulting in serious overcrowding on many services. Forecasts suggest that there will be a further 37% of growth by 2019 and the Northern Hub proposals including the Ordsall Chord and the capacity enhancement works at Oxford Road and Piccadilly will be a critical element of absorbing this growth and supporting local strategies such as the Transport Strategy for Manchester City Centre.

The package has a very good benefit to cost ratio – Network Rail have estimated that it will boost the economy by £4 for every £1 spent. These proposals will remove a critical bottleneck from the Manchester rail network and will enable:

- Two new fast trains per hour between Manchester Victoria and Liverpool with journey times reduced by 10-15 minutes
- Six fast trains per hour between Leeds and Manchester with journey times reduced by about 10 minutes
- New direct services from the Calder Valley and Rochdale to Manchester Airport
- Faster journey times to Hull, Newcastle and the North East.

The individual projects around Manchester that make up the Northern Hub include:

- The Ordsall Chord
- Redevelopment / upgrade of Manchester Victoria Station
- Two additional Platforms (15 & 16) at Manchester Piccadilly Station
- Platform extensions and other upgrades at Manchester Oxford Road Station
- A fourth platform at Manchester Airport
- New passing loops between Manchester and Liverpool and in the Hope Valley
- The “North West Triangle” electrification works

## 2.0 OXFORD ROAD AND PICCADILLY

Network Rail is currently undertaking the first phase of consultation on major proposals to construct two new through platforms at Manchester Piccadilly adjacent to platforms 13 & 14 and to extend platforms at Manchester Oxford

Road to increase the number of passenger and freight trains that can run through this critical rail corridor.

It is intended that that construction of the package of works would start in 2016 and be completed in 2018. In due course Network Rail will be making a Transport and Works Act Order application to the National Infrastructure Directorate to deliver these works. The Council is being formally consulted on the proposals and, in due course, will receive a Listed Building Consent application in its role as Local Planning Authority. This application would be considered by a public inquiry.

The Piccadilly and Oxford Road proposals remove a critical bottleneck from the Manchester rail network. In addition to the benefits outlined above they would enable more trains to run along the most congested corridor on the local rail network. The scheme would relieve this major bottleneck and cause of delay on the rail network in Manchester and would deliver benefits for train services operating across the whole of the North of England.

The Piccadilly scheme will involve :

- The construction of two new through platforms (15 and 16) on a new viaduct parallel to the existing platforms 13 & 14. The new platform would be located to the south of platforms 13 & 14 and accessed by extending the existing waiting area which is at the entrance to those platforms;
- The two additional platforms would allow for an increase in the number of trains along the Castlefield Corridor therefore increasing capacity and speed .
- The introduction of bi-directional signalling which would improve operation of the railway during periods of maintenance work or during incidents.
- a newly designed concourse that will cater for the forecast increase in the number of passengers using the station.

The proposals for Oxford Road involve:

- removal of platform 5 (a terminating platform) to allow platforms 1 – 4 to operate more effectively;
- introduction of bi-directional signalling to improve operation of the railway during maintenance work or during incidents;
- provision of sufficient capacity for 14 passenger trains and 2 freight trains per hour to operate through the station; and
- implementation of a design that will cater for the forecast increase in the number of passengers using the station.

The current consultation exercise has identified three potential design options for Manchester Piccadilly and two for Manchester Oxford Road. Following this round of consultation, a preferred more detailed option will be developed by Network Rail which will then engage in subsequent rounds of consultation

before making a formal application for a Transport and Works Act Order in order to obtain the necessary powers to construct the scheme.

### **3.0 CONSULTATION TO DATE**

The Council has been engaged in officer-level consultation with Network Rail for the last five to six months. The project team has been liaising with officers and sharing high-level information on the emerging plans. This has enabled this consultation to be conducted around a more limited number of options.

A working party was set up by Network Rail in December 2012 with the Council, English Heritage and Transport for Greater Manchester. Its purpose is to share information about the scheme as it develops and it is anticipated that it will continue to meet throughout the life of the project.

### **4.0 OPTIONS ASSESSMENT**

As part of the design development process, Network Rail and other partners (including the Council) have considered a number of options for both Piccadilly and Oxford Road which would deliver the requirements of the project. These requirements are considered to create sufficient capacity for 14 passenger paths and 2 freight paths per hour in each direction. This equates to 32 paths – an increase of 8 paths (33%), as compared to the current situation. Once Network Rail had concluded that increasing capacity along the Castlefield Corridor was the preferred option, a number of options were developed and then assessed against a number of criteria including sustainability, engineering, economic and operational benefits. This process concluded that additional platforms at Manchester Piccadilly and a remodelling of the layout at Oxford Road was the best approach.

Through a process of consultation and challenge both within the rail industry and with the Council, a significant number of options have been considered which, following extensive assessment, have been reduced to three at Piccadilly and two at Oxford Road. These options are set out below and plans are available in appendices A (Piccadilly) and B (Oxford Road).

#### **Piccadilly**

Option A would provide an elevated viaduct which would tie into the existing railway viaduct at Altrincham Street, crossing London Road, passing to the south of the existing railway viaduct and to the north of the Macdonald Hotel. From here, it would pass over the electrical substation, which would be reconfigured as part of the scheme, and tie back into the existing railway alignment to the north east of the Star and Garter at the junction of Fairfield Street and Temperance Street. This option would require the demolition of the Star and Garter in order to facilitate the structural alignment and the realignment to the Fairfield Street road layout at street level.

This option would significantly alter the layout of the highway at the Travis Street and Fairfield Street intersection and would result in the carriageway

being made narrower than its existing state. During the construction phase and once operational, this alignment could potentially remove the waiting area for taxis on Baring Street. Temperance Street and Altrincham Street would be permanently impacted.

Option B is similar to option A but would not require the demolition of the Star and Garter public house. It would, however change its contextual setting. To preserve the Star and Garter, the Fairfield Street road alignment would be realigned. Significant alterations would be required to the highways layout at the Travis Street and Fairfield Street intersection.

Like option A this option would significantly alter the layout of the highway at the Travis Street and Fairfield Street intersection and during the construction phase and once operational, this alignment could potentially remove the waiting area for taxis on Baring Street. Temperance Street and Altrincham Street would be permanently impacted.

Option C is again similar to options A and B Like option B it would avoid the need to demolish and while impacting on its contextual setting it would not have such a significant impact as option B. This option would result in an altered alignment of Fairfield Street but would not impact on the Travis Street and Fairfield Street intersection functionality or reduce the width of the existing carriageway. As with options A and B during the construction phase and once operational, this alignment could potentially remove the waiting area for taxis on Baring Street. Temperance Street and Altrincham Street would be permanently impacted.

### **Oxford Road**

The current consultation exercise is seeking views on two possible options at Oxford Road.

Option A would remodel the existing rail alignment so that the existing railway is extended in a north westerly direction over Whitworth Street to allow for reconfigured platforms and signalling alterations. Option A would allow the retention of a Grade II cast iron bridge over Gloucester Street, although widening to the north and south of the bridge would enclose the bridge and limit the ability to see it from the highway.

The new structure to widen the viaduct would be easily maintainable and provide a covered walkway along Whitworth Street. This option would have an impact on road traffic on Whitworth Street West during the construction period and would require a temporary traffic management system in place for the duration of the construction period. This option would have minimal temporary and permanent impacts on the River Medlock and, whilst requiring some widening of the viaduct to the south, would minimise visual and noise impact on First Street.

Option B would remodel the existing rail alignment so that the railway is extended in a south westerly direction over a part of New Wakefield Street.

The existing viaduct would be extended over the River Medlock, spanning Gloucester Street and impacting on the structure of some of the low level buildings associated with the Hotspur Press. It would then tie back into the existing railway alignment within the curtilage of First Street. The extent of this alignment would allow for larger platforms and signalling alterations at Oxford Road station.

Option B would result in the remodelled platform to the south of Oxford Road Station being approximately 1.7 metres from The Green Building on New Wakefield Street. There could be significant temporary and permanent impacts to the River Medlock and possibly permanent land take to the low level buildings on the Hotspur Press site. This option would also impact on the buildings and activities at the First Street Development during the construction phase and once the proposed new railway is operational. In particular it could have an adverse impact on the Home project and affect the operation of the building.

## **5.0 CONSTRUCTION ISSUES AND IMPACTS ON EXISTING USES**

As with the proposals for the Ordsall Chord there will be significant challenges for Network Rail in delivering these projects within the Regional Centre. Furthermore, as with the Ordsall Chord, both sites are overlooked by residential premises which are, in the case of Oxford Road only a few metres from the railway. Clearly there is significant potential for disturbance, particularly during the construction phase, and it is imperative that the lessons learned and processes adopted through the Ordsall Chord consultation process are carried through to Piccadilly and Oxford Road. It will also be imperative that Network Rail develop robust plans for haul routes and site compounds to minimise the risk of disruption to local residents and the highway network. As with Ordsall Chord Network Rail will be asked to develop a Construction Management Plan to minimise the risk posed to vulnerable road users by construction traffic.

Whitworth Street West forms part of the National Cycle Network Route NCN6 (London to Lake District). It also forms an important east-west cycle route from Salford and Trafford towards Oxford Road and Piccadilly railway stations. In this location the designated cycle route is not of high quality as it comprises largely on-road, advisory cycle lanes and there are frequent conflicts between parked vehicles, hackney carriages and other road users. Network Rail's proposed works in these two locations will require long-term traffic management and it will be essential to ensure that cyclists (and other vulnerable road users) are adequately accommodated or, if diversions are required, that they are of a suitable quality. As part of this project consideration should be given to improving cycling facilities – in particular on Whitworth Street West and through the First Street development – in line with the approach set out in Velocity 2025 and the Interim Strategy for Cycling in Manchester.



## **6.0 INTERFACE WITH OTHER REGENERATION PROJECTS**

All options at both stations will need to be integrated with major regeneration projects in the surrounding area. At Piccadilly, the new platforms would be constructed adjacent to the Mayfield Strategic Regeneration Area and, potentially could deliver, in part, a new entrance to the station from Mayfield. A new streetscape could also link Mayfield through enhanced public realm to the Fairfield Street entrance to the station and the upgraded Metrolink undercroft. Longer term, there will be links through the High Speed Two station at Piccadilly and the wider regeneration of the land around Piccadilly Basin and the Piccadilly Trading Estate. The master-planning work currently underway for the wider Piccadilly area takes this into account.

The proposals for Oxford Road Station will have an impact on the First Street regeneration programme – in particular on the “Home” project for the Cornerhouse and the Library Theatre given the close proximity of the buildings to the railway lines. Furthermore, one of the Oxford Road options will significantly change the streetscape on Whitworth Street West.

## **7.0 HERITAGE, URBAN DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

The Northern Hub would inevitably involve the development of significant components of infrastructure in the City Centre at Ordsall Chord, Oxford Road Station and Piccadilly Station. These will all be in highly visible and prominent locations and be located in close proximity to peoples homes, a number of important cultural institutions and some of the City Councils most important regeneration priorities. The proposals would also have a significant impact on the Citys heritage and affect a number of listed structures, conservations areas and other heritage assets.

This presents many design challenges as the structures will be some of the most invasive development projects in the city centre for many years. Whilst the technical requirements and engineering solutions have to be appropriate, it will be equally important to ensure that the appearance of these structures is of the highest quality and consistent with the high standards of design that have been delivered elsewhere in the City.

Regarding environmental impacts, the Council's Environmental Health department has considered the consultation documentation and has noted that a number of assessments will need to take place in advance of any works. In particular, it is imperative that a full noise and vibration assessment is carried out as part of the environmental impact assessment to identify residential receptors in close proximity to the proposed works. This will need to be carried out in line with both national and Council guidance. Appropriate consultation and mitigation strategies will be required to minimise the impacts for local residents.

Finally, Network Rail will need to consult the Environmental Health Team on the proposed Environmental Impact Assessment with particular regards to noise, vibration, air quality and contaminated land.

## 8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

The proposals that Network Rail are bringing forward are in line with the Council's strategic objective of continuing to improve the city's connectivity. When implemented they have the potential to boost the local economy and provide a rail network that is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The proposals will however have a significant permanent impact on key parts of the city centre and it will be essential that in developing the more detailed designs the proposals are fully and properly integrated with regeneration initiatives. Officers believe that further design work is required before a specific preference could be identified in either location and consider that in developing its detailed response the Council should in particular stress the following requirements to Network Rail.

At Piccadilly:

- the key requirement for the scheme to be effectively Integrated with the Mayfield regeneration initiative;
- the need to minimising the impact on the setting of the listed Star and Garter public house;
- the need to minimise the impact on the operation of Fairfield Street, in particular the important bus access along the route; and
- the need to minimise impacts on residents and businesses both during construction and operation.

At Oxford Road;

- the need to Minimise the impact on local residents both during construction and operation;
- minimising the impact on the First Street regeneration initiative; and
- minimising the impact on Whitworth Street West, its residents and businesses.

As regards next steps, Officers will continue to work with Network Rail to review and refine their proposals, having particular regard to the above issues in advance of the next round of consultation prior to them submitting a Transport and Works Act Order submission.

## 9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations appear at the front of the report.