

# Transport for the North Board Agenda

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Thursday 14 December 2023</b>
<b>Time of Meeting</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>The Hacienda Suite, Holiday Inn, Manchester City Centre, 25 Aytoun Street, Manchester, M1 3AE</b>

## Filming and broadcast of the meeting

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Item No.	Agenda Item	Page
<b>1.0</b>	<p><b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b></p> <p>The Chair to welcome Members and the public to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Chair</p>	
<b>2.0</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Members are required to declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they may have relating to items on the agenda and state the nature of such interest.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Chair</p>	
<b>3.0</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2023 and to consider the matters arising update and the Quarterly Operating Report.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Chair and Martin Tugwell</p>	3 - 30
<b>4.0</b>	<p><b>Transforming the North</b></p> <p>To consider the implications of the Government's recent policy statement 'Network North' in the context provided by Transport for the North's role as to prepare and publish the Strategic Transport Plan.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Martin Tugwell</p>	31 - 42
<b>5.0</b>	<p><b>Strategic Transport Plan Update</b></p> <p>To consider the update on the development of the second Strategic Transport Plan (STP), and the revised timescale for adoption given recent government announcements.</p>	43 - 46

	<b>Lead:</b> Katie Day	
<b>6.0</b>	<p><b>Strategic Transport Plan Implementation</b></p> <p>To consider the update on the development of advice to Government focused on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation of the Strategic Transport Plan.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Katie Day</p>	47 - 52
<b>7.0</b>	<p><b>Rail North Committee Update</b></p> <p>To consider the update following the Rail North Committee on 14 November, including the proposed change to the East Coast Main Line timetable.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Darren Oldham</p>	53 - 56
<b>8.0</b>	<p><b>Governance Update</b></p> <p>To consider matters relating to the membership of the Audit and Governance Committee.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Julie Openshaw</p>	To Follow
<b>9.0</b>	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 20 March 2024, 10.30am, Hilton City Leeds.</p>	

# Transport for the North Board Minutes

**27 September 2023  
Leeds Hilton City**

**Present:**

Lord McLoughlin (Chair)

**Attendee**

Cllr Phil Riley  
Cllr Craig Browne  
Cllr Louise Gittins  
Cllr Denise Rollo  
Mayor Andy Burnham

Cllr Mark Ieronimo  
Cllr Rupert Swarbrick  
Mayor Steve Rotheram  
Mayor Jamie Driscoll  
Cllr Keane Duncan  
Mayor Oliver Coppard

Cllr Russ Bowden  
Cllr Neil Hughes  
Mayor Tracy Brabin  
Cllr Peter Kilbane

**Local Authority**

Blackburn with Darwen;  
Cheshire East;  
Cheshire West & Chester;  
Cumberland;  
Greater Manchester Combined  
Authority;  
Hull;  
Lancashire;  
Liverpool City Region;  
North of Tyne Combined Authority;  
North Yorkshire;  
South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined  
Authority;  
Warrington;  
Westmorland and Furness;  
West Yorkshire Combined Authority;  
York;

**Rail North Authorities Attendees**

Councillor Carolyn Renwick  
Councillor Tom Smith

Derbyshire County Council  
Lincolnshire

**Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Attendees**

Alyson Armett  
Justin Kelly  
Mark Rawstron  
Helen Simpson

Cumbria LEP  
Greater Manchester LEP  
Lancashire LEP  
York and North Yorkshire LEP

**Also in Attendance**

Mayor Sadiq Khan  
Robin Gisby  
Graham Bell

Mayor of London  
DOHL  
Audit & Governance Committee Chair

**Partners in Attendance:**

Andy Rhind  
Amy Williams

DfT  
National Highways

**Officers in Attendance:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
Martin Tugwell	Chief Executive
Gary Rich	Democratic Services Officer
Katie Day	Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications
Paul Kelly	Finance Director
Julie Openshaw	Head of Legal
David Hoggarth	Head of Strategic Rail
Rachel Ford	Head of Strategy, Policy and Research
Lucy Jacques	Principal Policy & Strategy Development Officer
Darren Oldham	Rail and Road Director
Joanne Barclay	Senior Solicitor

**Item No:**

**1. Welcome & Apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Members and apologies were noted from Cllrs Handley, West, Gannon, Miller, Lynn Williams, Mark Smith, Swinburn, Mitchell, David Willams and Pritchard as well as Rob McIntosh, Siobhan McArdle.

The Chair extended a special welcome to the Mayor of London (Sadiq Khan) and Mr Robin Gisby (Chief Executive DOHL). The Chair explained that this is a timely meeting given that things in relation to the future of HS2 are under consideration. He suggested that the Board needs to be focused on what will bring the best benefit for the transport system across the North in support of realising the North's potential.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 There were no Declarations of Interest.

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Transport for the North Board held on 22 June 2023 were considered.
- 3.2 Members received at the same time the written update on matters arising (Including a copy of the quarterly Operating Report) from the Chief Executive who suggested that the Board might wish to discuss the uncertainties associated with the future of the HS2 project.
- 3.3 The Chair thanked the Mayor of London for finding time to join the meeting. In introducing the Mayor the Chair highlighted the positive

impact that the opening of the Elizabeth Line is having on London and the wider South East.

Mayor Khan commented that it was not sensible for the North to be reliant on what was essentially 19th Century rail infrastructure in the 21st Century. He set out his full support of TfN in championing the need for HS2 and NPR 'in full'. He then shared his frustrations at the impact that the uncertainty associated with HS2 was having on London. He set out the upheaval that has been caused in and around Euston where HS2 was due to terminate and explained that homes had been demolished and businesses destroyed by the works to date. And yet now the rumour was that the project would terminate six miles west of central London at Old Oak Common. Additionally, he noted that if the HS2 project was scaled back it would result in trains taking longer to get to Birmingham than on the current West Coast Main Line. He continued by highlighting the impact on London if latter phases of HS2 were to be curtailed. He set out that London would no longer reap the benefits of greater connectivity and capacity between the North and the South.

He informed Board that he has been inundated with calls from concerned businesses as a result of the uncertainties with the HS2 project and argued that this was a massive failure of public policy and squandering of taxpayers money if the rumours were proved to be true. He emphasised that the success of North is crucial to London's success and stated that he stood alongside the North's Political leaders to form one voice in support of HS2.

- 3.4 Cllr Gittins presented her motion to the Board and in doing so she highlighted that the greatest strength of Board is that it speaks with one voice for the North, its residents and businesses. She argued that for the North to benefit from the investment being made it was essential that Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) and HS2 'in full' were delivered together. To illustrate the importance of both she highlighted the benefits of HS2 for Cheshire and Warrington alone, which was expected to realise an additional £2 billion GVA per annum, create 27,000 new job and enable delivery of 6 million square feet of new commercial floor space and 25,000 new homes in just this one area. She emphasised the importance of the leaders of the North all standing together, even those not directly unaffected by the potential cancellation of HS2 to the North.

Cllr Gittins moved the motion that "Transport for the North reaffirms its unanimous position as set out in our statutory advice to government; that we must transform the North by building both HS2 and NPR in full."

In seconding the motion Cllr Swarbrick stated that Lancashire's position is one of solidarity. He emphasised the importance of the projects for multiple generations ahead.

- 3.5 Mayor Driscoll moved an amendment to the motion: proposing that it should be explicit in identifying investment in NPR as the priority. He explained that there is currently only one (twin-track) corridor serving the North-East which is 166 years old. He suggested that should Leaders be successful in persuading the Government to continue building of HS2

to Manchester, it was still unknown when that work would be completed. He argued that this would mean no increase in capacity on the East Coast Main Line until the later 2040s or 2050s. It was on this basis that he stated that HS2 gives no benefits to the North-East without NPR being built.

The amendment to the motion was seconded by Cllr Duncan.

- 3.6 The Board debated the motion and amendment. Members consistently highlighted the impact that the cancellation of HS2 would have on investor confidence as well as the much wider impact on the North's economy. Cllr Browne highlighted that the continued speculation and delay is eroding public confidence. He, together with Mayor Rotherham and Mr Rawstron all highlighted that HS2 is not about an increase in speed but about freeing up capacity to enable economic growth. Mr Rawstron emphasised the need for the Board to be more vocal concerning the importance of increased capacity when discussing and supporting HS2./Mayor Rotherham and Cllr Ieronimo highlighted the importance of building both HS2 and NPR for the ports of Liverpool and Hull and specifically the role that increased capacity would play in moving freight off the roads and on to rail.
- 3.7 Whilst understanding the reasons behind Mayor Driscoll's proposed amendment, speakers consistently set out their concerns that by stating a priority for NPR (over HS2) may weaken the position of the North. In particular there was a concern it would suggest that the North accepted that it was possible make choice between the two projects. Mayor Burnham expressed concerns that there is not yet an agreement between Board and Whitehall as to what NPR will look like, noting that the Integrated Rail Plan did not include NPR 'in full' as recommended by the Board. In this context he believed stating NPR as a priority may result in the Board being forced to make choices.
- 3.8 In support of the amendment, Cllr Ducan stated that the amendment was looking to provide a compromise and not looking to force a choice between NPR and HS2. He emphasised that the amendment was merely asking for the delivery of NPR to be prioritised and stated that he believed that this would be a means to secure HS2.
- 3.9 Mayor Driscoll stated that the motion with or without the amendment shows a commitment to both HS2 and NPR, but that without the amendment there would be no development taking place for the northern part of the NPR network for decades. This he believes will have a negative impact on the future of the North-East as businesses would look to prioritise investment in areas with greater connectivity.
- 3.10 In supporting the original motion, Cllr Gittins reiterated that the Board has always been unanimous and that she has always stood with colleagues on issues that haven't benefited Cheshire West and Chester to ensure that the Board is speaking with one voice for the North. She reiterated the position that the Board has always held that HS2 and NPR need to be delivered in full.

3.11 The Chair in seeking a show of hands concluded that it was clear that if a weighted vote was held, the amended motion would not be carried. He therefore determined that a formal weighted vote was not necessary, and the Chair concluded that the amended recommendation would fall.

On a further show of hands, Members supported the motion as originally moved, without any vote to the contrary.

3.12 On summarising the debate the Chair stated that the Board's position would form the basis of on-going conversations with Government. He emphasised the importance of restating that HS2 is not about speed but about capacity and freeing up the system to allow development in the region to come forward to the benefit of the UK as a whole.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That the minutes of the Transport for the North Board held 22 June 2023 be approved as a correct record.
- 2) That the written Matters Arising update and the Quarterly Operating Report, be noted.
- 3) That Transport for the North reaffirms its unanimous position as set out in our statutory advice to government; that we must transform the North by building both HS2 and NPR in full.

Taken together, these projects are critical to unlocking the North's economic potential by addressing the poor connectivity that holds the region back. It is the communities and businesses across the North of England who are suffering most by any delay or inaction in delivering these schemes.

Delaying delivery of infrastructure investment ultimately adds cost to the public purse, and delays the benefits of that investment to those communities and businesses.

**4. Trans Pennine Trains: Next Steps**

4.1 Members received the covering report from the Head of Strategic Rail.

4.2 The Chair welcomed Mr Gisby to the meeting and invited him to provide an update on the current situation and the recovery plan for TPE. Mr Gisby began by acknowledging that TPE is running its services on behalf of the passengers and communities they serve. And whilst caring about levels of subsidy, revenue and costs they want to ensure that they are providing the best possible service.

He stated that the situation they inherited when taking control of TPE was difficult and several things which should not have happened need to be unpicked. He suggested that this may take some time and so requested patience whilst TPE stabilises the business.

On the issue of industrial relations, he informed the Board that short term progress had been good but further work is required to improve these in order to reach a similar place as other operators. This will be a focus for them over the next few months.

Mr Gisby explained that the focus of the business was on getting across the Pennines quickly. He highlighted a number of issues that need to be addressed including serving local stations with TPE services that might be better served by other operators, complicated rolling stock diagrams and industrial relations.

With the regard to the plans from December 2023 he explained that they are modest but that after December, whilst they may be running fewer services initially, TPE was committed to growing the business and that they aspire to run more services in time.

He suggested that TPE would be back to the pre-Covid position in the next 6 to 12 months. He further stated that he wants to restore some services in December 2024 that have been dropped in December 2023.

On the situation with the Nova 3s, he expressed his view that these trains should not be running on this network. He highlighted their lack of reliability and the difficulties in maintaining them, as well as the high financial and environmental costs that they have.

He continued, stating that he wants to rebuild TPE as an inter-urban service, connecting places across the Pennines and up to Scotland on the East and West Coast Main Lines. He committed to reporting back to Board during 2024 on progress with the restoration of some services. He stated that he wanted to see TPE succeed and hoped TPE can catch up and overtake LNER.

- 4.3 Following Mr Gisby's update successive Members of the Board stated that they had been proved right that it was the right decision to move TPE into the Operator of Last Resort. However, Members were concerned about the possibility of losing the Nova 3s including the impact this might have on available capacity, the perception that it would represent a backwards step in terms of rolling stock and the need to be satisfied that the alternatives would be acceptable.

In response to Members' comments on the Nova 3s Mr Gisby was clear that the decision had not yet been made. He highlighted that the costs of the trains are £30 million per year and spoke about what could be done with rolling stock around the network with the savings realised, as well as highlighting the opportunity for reinvestment in other areas of the business. He stated that retention of the rolling stock would not solve the capacity issue and that transferring services away from TPE that they shouldn't be running, together with better planning would help with capacity issues.

Addressing the environmental issue, Mr Gisby explained that had the infrastructure been electrified then the units would not have been purchased. He further stated that if he could find a battery or hydrogen vehicle to use he would replace them straight away. He informed the Board that the lease for these trains ends in May 2024 and what happens to them will need a discussion unless a solution can be found earlier.

He highlighted that there is a significant amount of new rolling stock that the industry needs to put onto the network over the coming



years. Ensuring the new stock is ordered on time and that the infrastructure to accommodate it is ready for them is of great importance.

- 4.4 Mayor Burnham raised the issue of reinstatement of services previously lost and stated that he would want to see this as the improvement plan works through and for it to happen by the December 2024 at the latest.
- 4.5 Mayor Rotherham and Cllr Kilbane raised the issues of passenger trust and confidence, with Mayor Rotherham calling for a concerted effort to provide better information for passengers.
- 4.6 The Chair thanked Mr Gisby for the progress that has been made and his openness and looked forward to continuing to work with him.

**Resolved:**

That the Board's comments be noted.

**5. Rail North Committee Update**

- 5.1 Members received the report from the Head of Strategic Rail. The Rail and Road Director then outlined the key points from the Rail North Committee Consultation Call on 13 September.
- 5.2 Mayor Burnham (Chair of the Rail North Committee) provided the Board with an update on the matters discussed at the meeting.

On the issue of proposals to close ticket offices, he stated that this remains huge concern for the Committee, with Members believing that the proposals and consultations are flawed. He explained that the Committee is not against reform but the proposal for reform has to be based on the principle that there will be no loss of staff and no reduction in the support provided for passengers. He also expressed concern that under the proposals too many stations would be deserted for large parts of the day, citing this as further evidence of 'managed decline.'

He then updated Board on the work of the Committee in looking at accessibility of stations across the North: he encouraged Board Members to look at the Committee papers if they haven't already done so. He highlighted some of the major issues in the report including the number of stations without desirable step free access and/or induction loops. He stated that the Committee was concerned that the railways do not see removing all accessibility issues as a priority issue. He informed the Board that a Member taskforce has been established to look at these issues and that it will report back regularly to the Committee on progress.

Mayor Burnham requested that a discussion on disability access be brought to the TfN Board in the near future.

- 5.3 Cllr Gittins raised the issue of women and safety on the railways and questioned whether concerns about safety are putting women off using trains. She requested a further discussion on this at Board in due course.

- 5.4 Mayor Brabin stated that taking ticket offices away at this time makes no sense with the disruption that will be caused by the work taking place on the Transpennine Route upgrade (TRU). She argued that this will be a time, more so than ever before, when people will need to have access to staff on stations. She then raised the issue of congestion in the West Yorkshire area and requested that TfN look at these pinch points and that this be included in the next statutory advice.
- 5.5 Cllr Hughes and Cllr Smith both spoke about the importance of, and the need for ticket offices to remain open. Cllr Smith stated that he considered there needs to be an increase in the number of ticket offices.
- 5.6 Mr Rawstron highlighted that when you exclude people from purchasing tickets you drive down revenue and therefore make travelling uneconomic. He suggested the need to promote additionality on the railways in order to drive revenue. He then went on to highlight the importance of ticket offices in supporting visitor economy, in particular noting the need for people who don't speak English to be able to access support at the station.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That the feedback from the Rail North Committee including discussions with TransPennine Trains Ltd on their recovery plan be noted
- 2) That Board endorses the response to the Ticket Offices Closure proposal
- 3) That Board Agrees the updated Statutory Advice (to the Secretary of State) on Manchester Congestion issues.

**6. Strategic Transport Plan Update**

- 6.1 Members received the report of the Principal Policy & Strategy Development Officer. The Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications thanked Members and their teams for their continued support and input. She then outlined the key points of the report and looked to Members for a steer on four specific areas associated with the STP: these were the strategic outcomes, the right share and vision zero metrics, the potential amendments identified post the consultation and potential new areas of work.
- 6.2 Cllr Gittins requested greater ambition in terms of the Vision Zero metric and would like an earlier date than 2050 to be set if possible. The desire for a more ambitious vision zero was supported by other Members of Board.
- 6.3 Mayor Brabin welcomed inclusion of light rail within the amendments proposed. Cllr Hughes requested that TfN also consider light rail in rural areas as this could help reduce congestion on roads and within town centres.
- 6.4 Mr Rawstron was pleased to see the recognition of the challenges faced by rural areas and the emphasis on freight and logistics included within the Plan. On the right share metrics, he expressed his concern that Board is signing up to a net zero overall regional increase in private car

mileage and he was concerned that this might act as a restriction on parts of the North.

- 6.5 On Mr Rawstron's point on the right share metric for private car mileage, the Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications proposed a further conversation on this offline. On the metrics more generally, she stated that as regional values they offered the ability for variation across to reflect the local circumstances: the key role of the STP is about the cumulative impact/progress across the region.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That Board notes the outcomes from the statutory consultation, summarised in section 3, and the detail provided in Appendix 1;
- 2) That Board's comments on the STP are noted and that they will guide its revision post consultation;
- 3) That the arrangements for finalising the STP ahead of TfN Board in December are noted.

**7. Strategic Transport Plan Update**

- 7.1 Members received the report of the Finance Director who outlined the key elements in his report. He highlighted to the Board that as in previous years, sign off the accounts by the auditors will not be possible until the Greater Manchester Pension Fund had itself been signed off. He anticipated that these will be signed off in October and proposed that the accounts be approved subject to the sign-off of the Pension Fund.
- 7.2 The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee Mr Graham Bell then presented the Committee's Annual Report to Board and highlighted the key areas of this report.
- 7.3 Mayor Brabin highlighted that a number of red RAG ratings appeared in the risk register and requested an informed discussion about how TfN was addressing these going forward.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That Board approves Transport for the North's Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts for financial year 2022/23, subject to the sign-off of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund.
- 2) That the Board notes that the report is supported by an appended report from Transport for the North's independent external auditor that provides an unqualified, clean opinion.
- 3) That the report should also be considered alongside the Annual Report from the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee which recommends approval of the Accounts.

**8. Governance Update**

- 8.1 Members received the report from the Head of Legal.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That Ms Jo Reed and Mr Richard Thomas be appointed as Independent Members and co-opted onto Audit and Governance Committee for a period of 3 years.
- 2) That Board notes the work commenced by General Purposes Committee to consider future development of the Constitution, and notes that recommendations will be presented to Board in due course.

## **9. Corporate Risk Register and Risk Management Strategy Report**

9.1 Board received the report from the Finance Director.

### **Resolved:**

That Board notes TfN's corporate risks and the updates to the Risk Management Strategy in relation to reporting changes and inclusion of the TfN - Three Lines of defence assurance model.

## **10. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Thursday 14 December 2023

10.30am

Holiday Inn Manchester

## **1. Chief Executives Update**

- 1.1. To provide the opportunity for the Chief Executive to update the Board on matters arising from the previous meeting, as well as any other significant issues not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

## **2. Quarterly Operating Report**

- 2.1. The Executive produce a Quarterly Operating Report the purpose of which is to provide an update on progress against the milestones set out in the Business Plan. The QOR is presented to and discussed at the Audit and Governance Committee as part of their regular cycle of meetings. It is also provided to this meeting for information.

## **3. Rail Reform**

- 3.1. A draft Rail Reform Bill was included in the King's Speech delivered to Parliament on 7<sup>th</sup> November. The draft Bill will legislate for the establishment of Great British Railways as an arm's-length body overseeing the railway sector. The draft Bill will also include changes to national passenger operating contracts, which GBR will oversee and award, and ticketing systems.
- 3.2. The Government announced the draft Bill to enable it to be subject to pre-legislative scrutiny. The scrutiny arrangements have yet to be confirmed, but it is anticipated that this will take place early in the New Year. The draft Bill follows on from the consultation on the scope of the required legislation that took place in summer 2022, to which TfN responded.
- 3.3. TfN's interest in the draft Bill is two-fold: firstly, in terms of TfN's statutory role as a partner to the Secretary of State in terms of advising on investment priorities for rail (and road). And secondly in terms of its role alongside DfT in the oversight of the contracts for Northern and TPE services. In the latter role, TfN hosts the Rail North Partnership team.
- 3.4. TfN will need to respond to the contents of the draft Bill and seek to ensure that its roles are considered as part of the scrutiny process. Timescales are yet to be confirmed for the pre-legislative scrutiny: the Chief Executive will continue to liaise with the Chair and Vice-Chairs in this regard.

## **4. Buses**

- 4.1. The Board has previously emphasised the importance of TfN supporting its partners as they look to secure the role of local bus services. As part of that support TfN launched the 'Better Buses for the North (BBN)' forum on 8<sup>th</sup> November. This forum allows Local Transport Authorities to share knowledge and experience in the development and delivery of Bus service Improvement Plans and its supporting evidence base. Partners can also provide direction and input into TfN's ongoing bus-related workstreams including work on the TfN Public Transport Model and the Connected Mobility Strategy. The first session was well attended with over 40 representatives from Local Transport Authorities plus guest speakers from

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Department for Transport Bus Team, Transport Focus, and the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT).

- 4.2. Following discussion at the Forum TfN is exploring how Transport Focus data could be applied to TfN's public transport model. Members also shared their experience on driver training, such as the CPT's work with 'Realise' to provide pre-employment training.
- 4.3. Response to the initial Forum, from partners across the North and nationally, has been very positive and its next meeting will be held in January. In addition, the TfN executive is preparing draft statutory advice in relation to local bus services for consideration at the March Board meeting.

## **5. Road Investment**

- 5.1. The next key milestone for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) is publication of the draft RIS: this is expected soon.
- 5.2. TfN's input into RIS3 process to date has built upon evidence of the 'level of service' performance of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) as discussed at the March Board, and TfN's response to the DfT consultation on the Strategic Road Network initial report and National Highways Route Strategies and Connecting the Country masterplan.
- 5.3. TfN's recommendations to DfT and National Highways included the importance of completing the dualling of the A66 from the A1 Scotch Corner to M6 near Penrith, the need for investment to tackle congestion issues in/around North-West Manchester, as well as a programme of smaller scale interventions focused improving safety, reliability, and consistency of regionally important routes such as the A628/A616 Woodhead Pass and the A590.
- 5.4. TfN is also continuing to input into the development pipeline for RIS4, as well as contributing to a National Highways pilot study focused on developing a framework for delivering active travel improvements on the SRN.
- 5.5. The Network North document announced funding for a future programme of local authority owned Major Road Network (MRN) investment, with £1bn of funding identified for the North. TfN will input to DfT guidance on the MRN programme and will coordinate development of a programme of recommended MRN interventions in the North. DfT publication of the MRN guidance is expected in the Spring.

## **6. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI)**

- 6.1. TfN's EVCI framework and online visualiser tool is being used by partners to inform their EV strategies and Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) bids. TfN will launch an update to the tool in December, providing TfN partners access to information on current EV charging locations, CO2 emission reductions and forecast demand for chargers mapped to local areas and for rapid chargers on the Strategic and Major Road networks.

- 6.2. A key output from our next phase of work, planned for completion by April is the development of an electricity grid digital twin, providing evidence on the grid capacity needed to support EV charging demand.
- 6.3. An Ordnance Survey member of staff is also being seconded into TfN in January and will work on advancing TfN's spatial and land use data.
- 6.4. Through our Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) work, we've engaged with Ofgem and other energy partners to discuss Grid connection and capacity. In the course of this work, we've been pleased to share with Ofgem our experiences, and the benefits of, working pan-regionally to inform their own policy work on the future of local energy institutions and governance.
- 6.5. Specifically, we explained the local knowledge and experience that can be shared through political and business leaders by working at the regional level. Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs) are referenced in Ofgem's recent publication on this policy work, acknowledging how the STB model provides useful foundations for spatial energy planning. Importantly for TfN, working regionally allows us to connect across infrastructure priorities and join up policy areas like transport, energy and digital, and we continue to explore those opportunities as we update our Future Travel Scenarios.

## **7. Proposed Pan-Regional Partnership**

- 7.1. The TfN executive continues to work with representatives from the NP11 as they look to develop their proposal for a Pan-Regional Partnership. The importance of respecting the statutory role that TfN has with regards to pan-regional infrastructure has been recognised in those discussions. TfN's analytical and research capabilities are key foundations for the North as a whole: something that has also been recognised in those discussions.

December 2023

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# Quarterly Operating Report November 2023



## **1 Chief Executive's Introduction**

- 1.1 We continue to develop the format of our revised Quarterly Operating Report: this being the second edition following the initial August production. The primary purpose remains the same: to report on progress against the delivery of Business Plan objectives and enable TfN's partners to gain an overview of the work of TfN.
- 1.2 This quarter has been understandably impacted by the announcement by the Prime Minister on the 4<sup>th</sup> October of the cancellation of HS2 Phases 2a and 2b. The Government set out its approach to reallocating the funding previously identified for HS2 in its 'Network North document.
- 1.3 There is a need to reflect on the implications of the Government's policy announcement: both in terms of what it means for the revised Strategic Transport Plan and for realising the transformation in connectivity and capacity across the North's transport system. The evidence underpinning the STP is clear: investment in transforming our transport system is fundamental to enabling the North to realise its economic potential in a way that improves social inclusion and reduces environmental impact.
- 1.4 Following the success of the consultation on the draft STP over the summer months, the autumn has seen the team analyse the responses and identify the need for the document to be refined prior to its consideration by the TfN Board. That will now take place in March next year, a slight delay in order to ensure there is sufficient team to enable due consideration of the Network North document.
- 1.5 In addition to providing an update on progress with the delivery of our Business Plan we have also taken the opportunity in this QOR to include the more detailed half yearly Treasury Report as part of our financial reporting.

## **2 BP1: Consult on revised Strategic Transport Plan - Summer 2023**

- 2.1 In March 2023 the TfN Board approved a 12-week statutory consultation: this took place between May and August 2023. An independent Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) was also prepared and consulted on at the same time.
- 2.2 Stakeholders across the North were engaged using a number of mechanisms including promotion via our digital channels and news media. Some 648 responses, including statutory consultees, user groups, members of the public and our Northern Transport Voices panel: this is an increase on the engagement achieved with the first Strategic Transport Plan (STP).
- 2.3 Analysis of the consultation responses have been analysed throughout September and October. This enabled key messages and themes to be identified which require consideration in preparing the final draft. Discussions with TfN Members and wider partners took place at a September meeting of the Partnership Board and the main TfN Board the same month.

## **BP2: Publish Connected Mobility Strategy – Summer 2023**

- 2.5 The Connected Mobility Strategy was published on 30 October 2023 with communications planned into November 2023, alongside a programme of work to the end of financial year.

- 2.6 A suite of reports and policy positions were published, including papers on Interoperability in contactless payments, information provision for passengers and policy positions on both rail retail reform and rail fares reform in the North.

**BP3: Secure Adoption of the Revised Strategic Transport Plan – December 2023**

- 2.6 It was intended to present the final draft of the STP to the TfN Board for adoption in December 2023. However, on 4<sup>th</sup> October, the Government announced the cancellation of Phases 2a and 2b of High Speed 2 (HS2). The announcement was accompanied by the publication of Network North document by Government.
- 2.7 The STP must demonstrate it has due regard for Government policy. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the implications of the Network North document with the TfN Board and ensure the STP has due regard to the most recent Government policy.
- 2.8 Following careful consideration by the TfN executive we are confident that the draft STP vision, strategic ambitions and outcomes remain valid, based as they are on a comprehensive and robust evidence base. Cancellation of HS2 phases 2a and 2b does not remove the need for investment in improved connectivity and capacity between the North and the Midlands. To ensure adequate time to determine how best to reflect this in the final version of the STP, and to reach an agreed position with the TfN Board, presentation of the final draft for approval is deferred until March 2024.
- 2.9 Following the consultation, the document has been updated to reflect feedback including amending the headline metrics, making a stronger case for freight and better articulating that the environmental benefits we seek are beyond decarbonisation.

**BP4: Rail reform – Issue Proposition for the North – December 2023**

- 2.10 Policy position papers on Rail Reform continue to be developed and the TfN Rail Reform Programme Board has been re-established: this is being used to develop the North's proposition which will be developed further by December 2023 and shared with members at the start of 2024
- 2.11 The Government included a draft Bill for Rail Reform in the King's Speech delivered on 7<sup>th</sup> November. The draft Bill will be the subject of pre-legislative scrutiny, expected to take place in the New Year.

**BP5: Provide Annual STP Action Plan – March 2024**

- 2.12 Initial discussions have been held with Partnership Board and Executive Board on the proposals for implementation advice that will accompany the final STP. This will include an annual action plan that amongst other things will set out the actions that TfN will do to support the delivery of the STP. It is planned that draft advice on implementation will be presented to the TfN Board for its consideration in March 2024.
- 2.13 The draft STP was accompanied by a modelling and evaluation framework, which set out plans for how the key metrics in the STP will be monitored. Work has been undertaken subsequently to develop an interactive dashboard that will enable progress against these key metrics to be presented

on a regular basis to the TfN Board. A first iteration of the dashboard has been shared with partners for comment.

**BP6: Update Future Transport Scenarios – March 2024**

- 2.14 The project team has been undertaking evidence reviews and lessons learned exercises to inform this work. Local authority partner engagement sessions are scheduled to take place by mid-December 2023. The project to update the scenarios will ensure we take account of future uncertainty within our work and embed this capability in TfN’s analytical tools and evidence base.

**BP7: Consult on and then publish final Strategic Rail Report – March 2024**

- 2.15 A draft of the Strategic Rail Report was published in May 2023 as part of the supporting documents for the draft STP consultation. Revisions to the document have been made in response to the consultation. The intention remains to present the final document to the TfN Board in March.

**BP8: Ensure a strong case is forwarded for recommended RIS investment in the North – March 2024**

- 2.16 TfN submitted regional responses to the series of RIS 3 consultations published by the Department for Transport in the summer. This included statutory advice on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) initial report, and a response to National Highways Route Strategy Reports and Connecting the Country masterplan. At the time of writing, we are awaiting publication of the draft RIS by the Government.

**BP9: Publish Transport for the North’s Bus Policy Position – March 2024**

- 2.17 TfN has consulted partners and key stakeholders on ambitions for improving bus services and patronage. The TfN executive has identified a series of opportunities where TfN can support its partners. These will feed into the development of TfN’s Bus Policy Position and statutory advice on measures to transform bus services in the North. These are on track for presentation to the TfN Board in March.

**BP10: Implement an online local public transport data toolkit – March 2024**

- 2.18 Launched in September 2023, this sets out the tools, data and information available to local authorities. The offer includes details of the “Off the Shelf Menu” which provides an in-depth overview of the various evidence, tools and policies. This includes our Transport Related Social Exclusion (TRSE) and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) tools.

- 2.19 More bespoke guidance and support is also available through the TfN ‘offer’, including advice/guidance/ training on the application of our tools; and (topic specific) pan-regional partner engagement. A series of workshops on the application of the TRSE tool have recently been completed.



- 2.20 We have launched our Clean Mobility Tool, which is intended to assist on modal shift appraisal, and our Carbon Baseline tool.

### 3 Functional Reports

#### Strategy and Research

- 3.1 There has been a continued focus on developing the revised STP and the launch of the Transport for the North Offer and associated tools. The wider strategy and research programme continues to progress as set out below.
- 3.2 The 10 recommendations in the **Freight and Logistics Strategy**, are being progressed with focus on five work packages including stakeholder engagement, our evidence base and analytical capability and quick wins, primarily through our freight and logistics group. We also responded to the Future of Freight Planning call for evidence in October 2023.
- 3.3 Implementation of our **Decarbonisation Strategy** includes the release of the Clean Mobility and Carbon Baseline tools, as well the development of a Hydrogen Refuelling for Mobility visualiser which will assist partners identify locations for hydrogen refuelling stations.
- 3.4 The summary document for the **Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER)**, is due to be published late 2023. This sets the new transformational vision of the economy of the North in 2050. We are working with partners, to shape the next stage of this programme.
- 3.5 The **Transport-Related Social Exclusion (TRSE)** survey, which engaged over 1,400 respondents was recently completed. It examined transport behaviours and perceptions, and the impacts that poor quality transport has on everyday life. The outcomes will be used to improve our TRSE tool methodology and will be published in March 2024.
- 3.6 Our **Northern Transport Voices (NTV)** panel continues to be an invaluable research tool for scoping public opinion. The panel provided input to the STP consultation, as well as views on the £2 bus fare cap, station ticket office closures, electric vehicles, and rural mobility hubs.
- 3.7 We have developed the **rural mobility evidence base** to support our partners in business cases for rural areas. A final report will be used to inform our review of DfT's policy paper for innovation in rural transport.

#### Priorities for next Quarter

- 3.8
- The STP will be finalised alongside an updated evidence base, Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and monitoring and evaluation dashboard;
  - We will develop implementation advice, which will consider the strategies and actions emerging from the STP;
  - We will commence scoping for the update of the Decarbonisation Strategy;
  - The Carbon Assessment Playbook will be published for partners to use alongside our carbon baseline; and
  - Draft our research strategy, establishing our programme of activity for economic, social and environmental research for next 12 months.

## **Strategic Rail**

- 3.9 The team has continued to support work by TransPennine Express (TPE) to stabilise and improve performance in the short term (including analysing options for the future of Nova 3 trains) and continues to monitor and report train performance against operator recovery plans.
- 3.10 Work has continued via the TRU Stakeholder Forum to support first and last mile improvements and identify local stakeholder feedback. This has resulted in customer experience improvements being implemented at stations and online.
- 3.11 We have supported TfGM and DfT as they commission consultants to undertake a Rail Freight Routing Study. This study will help identify recent changes to the total freight market, update the future rail freight forecasts.
- 3.12 Information has been provided by TfN into the various timetable options analysis work now being undertaken for the predicted post 2025 travel demand scenarios.
- 3.13 We had finalised TfN's revised Statutory Advice for Manchester, however there is a need to consider whether that in turn needs to be subject to amendments following cancellation of HS2 Phases 2a and 2b.
- 3.14 Completion of NPR Core-Full Bridge workshops with partners which will now help inform Transport for the North's response to HS2 announcement.
- 3.15 Building on the work of the Rail North Committee, the main Board endorsed TfN's response on the Ticket Office Consultation proposals published by the operators. The response was submitted to the Secretary of State in October 2023. Subsequently the Secretary of State, following receipt of advice from Transport Focus instructed the operators to withdraw their proposals.
- 3.16 The TfN executive has worked closely with its partners in response to proposals for recasting the East Coast Main Line timetable from December 2024. The proposals were assessed in terms of how they had addressed the concerns raised by TfN (and partners) when the proposal had last been put forward. A report on the new proposals and their impact on rail services (including opportunities presented to enable additional services) was considered by the Rail North Committee at its meeting in November. A final decision on the proposal was remitted to the TfN Board in December.

## **Priorities for next Quarter**

- 3.17
- Progressing the Connected Mobility Strategy programme with a focus on providing support for TfN partners through the 'Hub' - a support service to assist LTAs developing new ticketing initiatives;
  - Finalisation of the Strategic Rail Report in line with comments received during the Strategic Transport Plan consultation;
  - Establishment of a Task and Finish Group on rail station accessibility;
  - Understanding the implications of the Network North document;
  - Establishment of a new Future Infrastructure and Services Group bringing together Transport for the North and RNP colleagues;

- Working through the Rail North Partnership to ensure that TfN’s strategic priorities are reflected in the Northern and TPE Annual Business Plans; and
- Development of an initial Rail Reform proposition and programme of engagement with GBRTT.

### **Major Roads**

- 3.18 The TfN executive has worked with Partners to prepare and then submit a statutory response to the Government’s consultation on the SRN Initial Report. A response was to **National Highways** consultation on their Connecting the Country and Route Strategies Reports.
- 3.19 TfN has contributed to on-going National Highways studies, including the Transpennine study(A628/A616); RIS pipeline business cases and to piloting an approach to identifying Active Travel improvements.
- 3.20 A response to the Government’s Future of Freight consultation, was prepared and submitted, in which TfN set out the importance of freight and logistics to the North’s economy.
- 3.21 A range of advancements to the **Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) toolkit** have been delivered The toolkit continues to support local authority planning and strategic decisions.
- 3.22 The team is working with Transport for the South-East and Midlands Connect, as the first recipients of the EVCI tool rollout.
- 3.23 Partner engagement activities focused on **increasing bus patronage** in the North were completed, with the output presented to Partnership Board in September. This will support a development of TfN Bus Policy Position by March 2024.
- 3.24 Work continues to further develop the functionality of the **public transport modelling tool**, which covers bus and light rail.

### **Priorities for next Quarter**

- 3.25
- Engage with DfT /National Highways as work to prepare the next Road Investment Strategy continues;
  - Seek clarification on planned Major Road Network (MRN) investments following the Network North announcement;
  - Develop recommendations on the criteria for a further round of MRN funding and complete a ‘level of service’ analysis;
  - Progress Bus Working Group actions;
  - Release of EV Charging Infrastructure toolkit advancements for Northern partner use and open public access; and
  - Partner engagement in the work to update the Future Travel Scenarios begins.

### **TAME (NPR contract)**

#### **Progress in this Quarter**

- 3.26 Additional resource capacity focused largely on delivering Transport for the North service ‘offer’ to partners.

- 3.27 Appointment of two contracts - Aecom- the Northern Model Integration Tools (NorMITs) Land Use contract and WSP- Visualisation contract.
- 3.28 The Northern Behaviour Study contract is out for tender. This is an extensive data collection exercise to provide behavioural data in advance of a major re-calibration of the NoRMS variable demand model.
- 3.29 Work has commenced on Bradford Stations Analysis planning and scoping. This is a major study to appraise various new rail station locations in Bradford.

***Priorities for next Quarter***

- 3.30
- Working with DfT to understand and agree next phases of the NPR programme (including freight requirements);
  - Appoint Northern Behaviour Study supplier;
  - Appoint NorMITs Demand Partner supplier;
  - Continuing with the roll-out of analytical products to sub-national transport bodies;
  - Providing support to LTAs with decarbonisation analysis and evidence for Local Transport Plans;
  - Agree further work on Rotherham Station programme; and
  - Business planning activities for FY 2024/2025.

**Rail North Partnership**

***Progress in this Quarter***

- 3.31 **Northern Service Agreement** - The Northern Team has been working through NTL’s delivery of its commitments for this year as well as readying for the commencement of the Annual Business Planning round, incorporating a “Levelling Up” section intended to describe activities and deliverables that capture rail’s role in the levelling up agenda.
- 3.32 **TPT Service Agreement** - Working with TPT on the impacts of their recovery plans – including the Nova 3 train fleet, the correct service mix on East and West Coast Mainlines from Dec 2024 and new initiatives around terms and conditions. TPT’s new Annual Business Planning round has begun, whilst completing complex contract-close-out discussions with former operator First TPE.
- 3.33 **Transpennine Route Upgrade** - Working with the programme and operators to frame out next year’s Business Plan activities for both whilst focussing on smoothing the funding mechanism through which our operators are funded by NR for TRU activities.
- 3.34 **Planning and Procurement Programme** – Undertaking the governance around the replacement of hundreds of life-expired “I5x” trains; work continues on the introduction of “scorecards” into our public-sector operators.
- 3.35 **Stakeholder and Comms** - Continuing to support the establishment of regional business units; working with TfN and stakeholders on the development of operators’ business plans and timetable development on the East Coast Main Line; working with WYCA on a pilot basic skills for rail



programme; continuing to respond to correspondence from MPs and other stakeholders on operators' performance; and working with DOHL, Northern and TPT on improving co-ordination between operators, TfN and the Northern public on communications around operational changes including timetables.

3.36 **Finance** - the team is focussed on forecasting to year end to keep NTL and TPT to their budgets.

#### **Priorities for next Quarter**

- 3.37
- Progressing TPT's request for changes to terms and conditions;
  - Implementing the final decisions on Timetables to run for both operators into 2025;
  - Working through Business Planning process including RNC members; and
  - Progress on Rolling Stock Replacement (NTL) and New Rolling Stock (TPT).

#### **Communications and Engagement**

##### ***Progress in this Quarter***

3.38 The team continues to liaise with TRU Comms to ensure information flow between the programme and Transport for the North Comms is working so that risks and opportunities to be captured.

3.39 Liaison with DfT Comms and HS2 continues to ensure that key milestones are identified and exploited.

3.40 Drafted and disseminated media lines on the decision to delay A66 upgrade funding; on the decision not to bring forward proposals to close rail ticket offices; on Connected Mobility; on HS2 cancellation to the North; and on the National Infrastructure Assessment Report.

3.41 Issued regular dashboard updates to RNC members on performance; provided updates where necessary on key select committees, parliamentary statements and pertinent media stories.

3.42 Regular liaison with Comms/Engagement teams in partner organisations: in particular HS2 comms; National Highways; STB colleagues.

3.43 Provided communications support on TfN executive visits to partner colleagues in Crewe; Bradford and others.

3.44 Set up Rail North Committee briefing sessions as part of the development of a response to the Ticket Office consultations and to brief Members on the implications of the Network North document. .

#### **Priorities for next Quarter**

- 3.45
- Organise a Community Rail event to convene those groups across the North at a Transport for the North hybrid event to ensure this key stakeholder group is covered off;
  - Liaise with Strategic Rail over NPR Comms Plan in the light of the cancellation of HS2 to the North, the publication of Network North and how these impact the on-going work associated with the SOBC for NPR and subsequent DfT consultation;

- Refresh the Transport for the North NPR pages, with updates on our co-sponsor role and key milestones in the project as above;
- Planning for new year events including, Transport for the North’s annual conference, Convention of the North, and others; and
- Continue to hold the chair of the STB Comms Group for 2023/4.

**People and Finance**

**HR Metrics – 2023/24 Year-to-Date:**

3.46

**Establishment - Permanent/Fixed-term Posts**

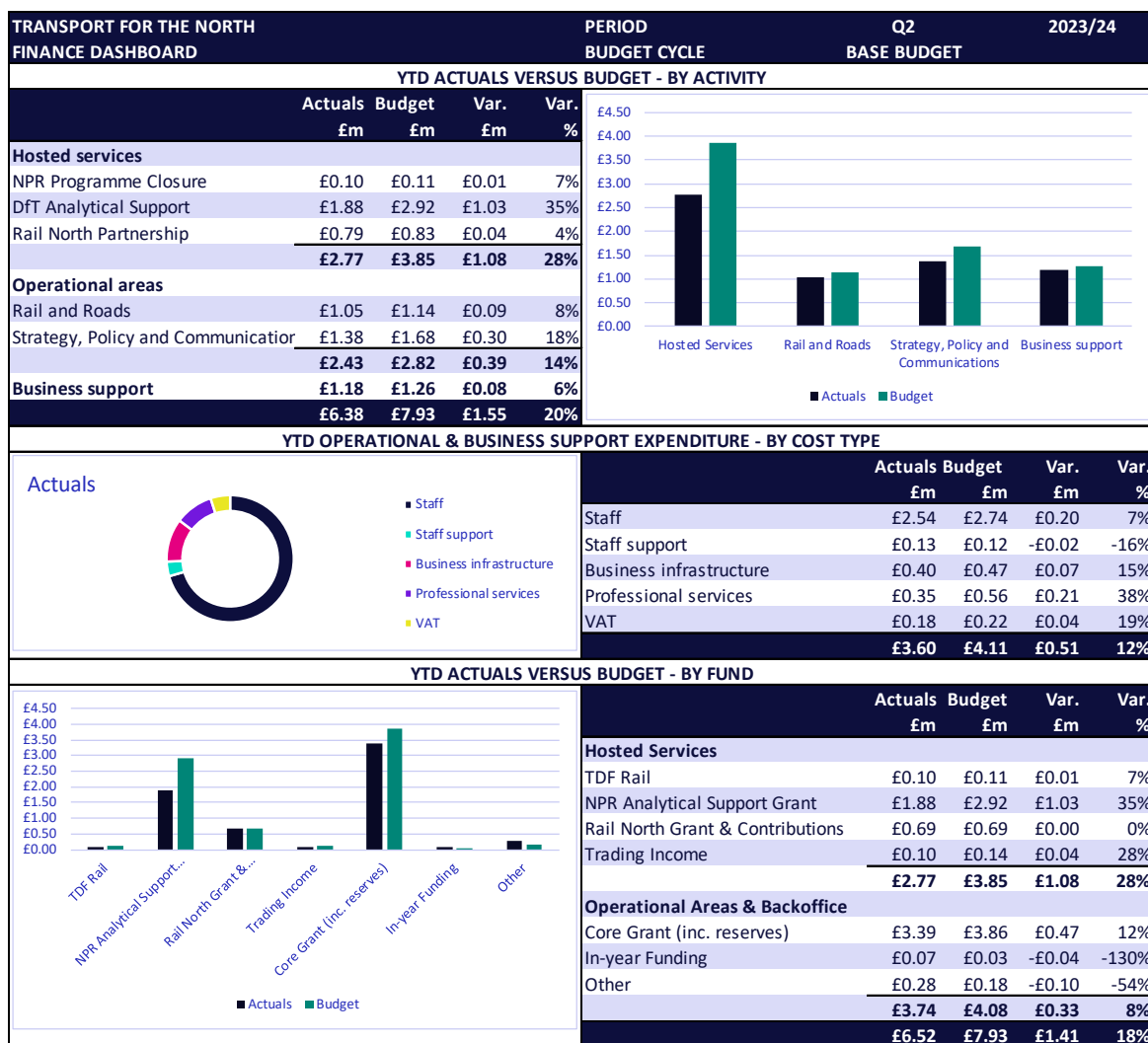
<b>Area</b>	<b>Permanent (&gt;2 years)</b>	<b>Fixed-Term (&lt; 2 Years)</b>	<b>Total Posts</b>
<b>CEO Office</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Support Services</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Operational &amp; Delivery</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>DfT Data Services (Hosted)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Rail North (Hosted)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Total Establishment</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Strength (In Post)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Appointed (Start Date Pending)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pending/Active Recruitment</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Vacant – On-hold</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6</b>

*HR KPI's – 2023/24 Year-to-Date:*

<b>Corporate Sickness Level:</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
<b>Employee Turnover (Voluntary Leavers):</b>	<b>5.1%</b>
<b>% of Employees from an Ethnic Minority Background:</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>% of Employees declaring a Disability:</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Gender Mix - % of Female Employees:</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>% of Male Employees:</b>	<b>62%</b>

**Finance**

3.47



3.48 Total expenditure YTD is £6.4m, £1.6m (20%) below base budget.

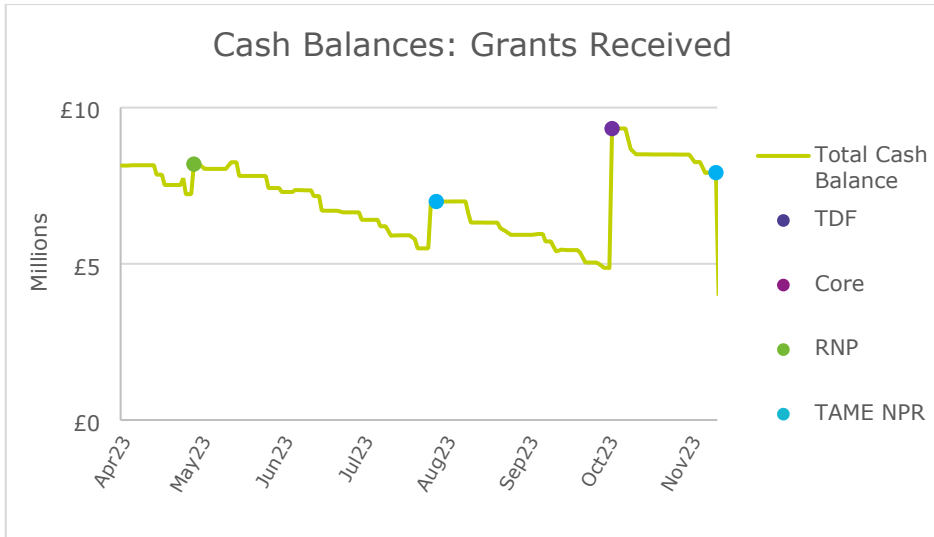
3.49 The underspend is mainly due to DfT Analytical Support, partly due to vacancies in the team but primarily because of the delay in agreeing the workplan for the year (it was agreed in Q2).

3.50 From an operational and business support perspective, staff underspends are the key driver resulting from delays in recruitment. Any savings to date are being monitored and where possible, mitigated through reallocating to new opportunities/new priorities as they arise.

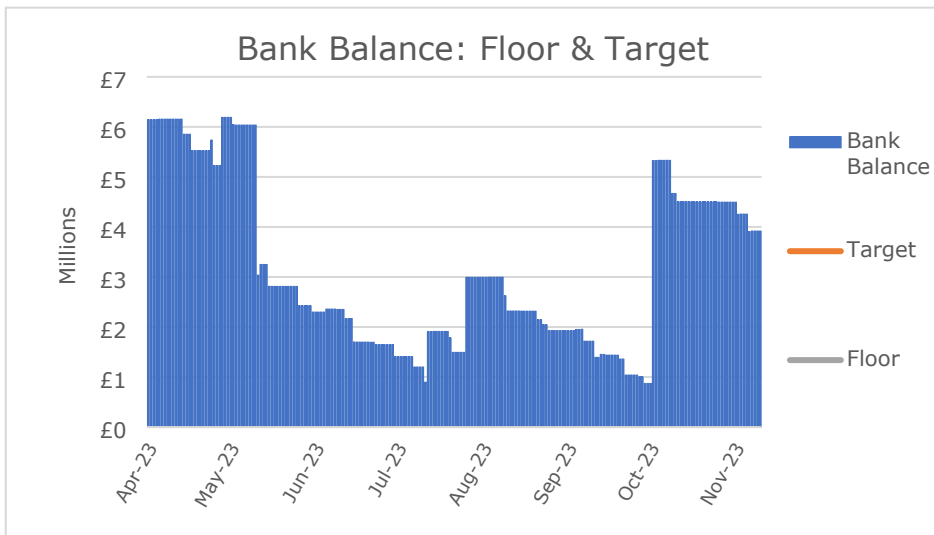
### Mid-Year Treasury Management Update:

3.51 The constitution obliges officers to report to Board at the mid-year mark on performance against the Treasury Management Strategy. Unlike many partner bodies, we are prohibited from borrowing, therefore the strategy directs how we manage cash and investments. To date, we have operated within the parameters set out in our Treasury Management Strategy.

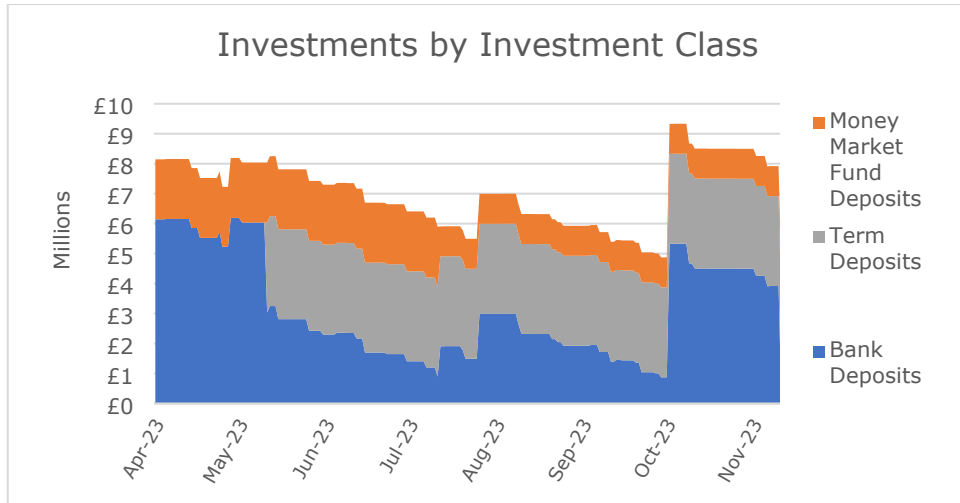
3.52 The following charts show performance against key parameters. It shows that TfN has managed cash and investments within its counterparty criteria, placing cash deposits with secure bodies and institutions on liquid terms.



3.53 The principal source of income is grant from DfT which is received periodically leading to the pattern of cash balances shown above i.e. a peak on receipt of grant followed by a gradual run down of balances until the next grant instalment is received. £2.7m of our core allocation for 2023/24 was received on 31 March 2023.



3.54 We aim to ensure that an adequate but not excessive balance is maintained in the main business bank account. This gives us a target of holding between £1m and £5m. In full compliance with our Treasury Strategy, at times we have held a balance above £5m, invariably linked to optimising our investment strategy. Yields have further improved this year, with the interest return on our business account only slightly lower than the alternatives at a similar level of security.



- 3.55 During the year we have sustained a suitable balance in Barclays, our business bank account. In July 2023, due to the delay in receipt of our second tranche of core funding, £1m was released (from the money market fund) to cover forthcoming liabilities.
- 3.56 We will continue to keep the position under review; there is no intention at present to change the focus of our Treasury Management Strategy and its prioritisation on security and liquidity over yield.

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**Meeting:** Transport for the North Board  
**Subject:** Transforming the North  
**Author:** Martin Tugwell, Chief Executive  
**Sponsor:**  
**Meeting Date:** Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023

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**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1. To consider the implications of the Government's recent policy statement 'Network North' in the context provided by Transport for the North's role to prepare and publish the Strategic Transport Plan.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. In terms of immediate next steps, it is recommended that the Board approve the following; namely:
- a) To advise the Secretary of State that:
    - i) Until such time as an alternative set of proposal(s) for improved connectivity and capacity between the North and the Midlands has been identified, safeguarding associated with HS2 should remain in place.
    - ii) Where there is agreement with the relevant local transport authority(ies) that it is appropriate, the safeguarding associated with HS2 should be lifted at the earliest opportunity.
    - iii) Where funding is allocated through Network North this should be ring-fenced for transport purposes, and authorities should be allowed to manage allocations as a programme of investment.
    - iv) As the Secretary of State's statutory partner, the Department for Transport should look to the TfN Board to provide oversight and leadership in co-ordinating activities of pan-regional significance arising out of the Network North document.
  - b) That to improve efficiency of delivery, TfN should work with the Department for Transport, the National Infrastructure Commission and other Government Departments, to build on TfN's existing analytical capability to develop a Northern Appraisal Framework: one that whilst consistent with the requirements of HMT, better reflects the situation in the North.
  - c) TfN should publish the revised Strategic Transport Plan at the earliest opportunity, to ensure that the statutory framework within which specific proposals, including those identified through the Network North document, are brought forward is up to date.
  - d) TfN work with the Department for Transport to update the Co-sponsorship Arrangement for Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) so as to strengthen the role of partners in agreeing and then taking forward the NPR proposal in light of the Network North document.
  - e) TfN should engage with the National Infrastructure Commission on their proposed rail study for the North arising out of the National Infrastructure Assessment 2 (NIA2).

- f) TfN should work with the Welsh Government to determine the priorities for investment on the North Wales Main Line.
- g) TfN should work with its partners to identify the resource requirements (both financial and skills) arising from the need for additional work to be undertaken in order to develop specific proposals as a consequence of the Network North document.

### **3. Scrutiny**

- 3.1 This report reflects comments made by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November, and the Executive Board at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November.
- 3.2 A common theme heard from TfN partners in preparing this paper has been the importance of maintaining a 'one voice' approach for the North in the wake of partners' disappointment with the detail of the announcement. Partners across the North have also been consistent in stating the importance of avoiding asymmetric levelling up. Linking to both points, is the importance given by Northern partners to having, through TfN, a central role in providing oversight and leadership on how individual proposals are managed as a co-ordinated and sequenced programme of investment.

### **4. Background**

- 4.1. On 4<sup>th</sup> October the Prime Minister delivered a policy announcement, accompanied by a document entitled *Network North: Transforming British Transport*. The policy announcement confirmed the decision to cancel High Speed 2 Phases 2a and 2b. The high-speed link to the East Midlands Airport area was also cancelled.
- 4.2. At the same time the announcement set out how the funding previously identified for the delivery of HS2 Phases 2a and 2b would be ring-fenced for investment in transport improvements. Subsequently Government has clarified that the proposals identified in the document are largely suggestions and that it will be for local leaders to identify specific proposals.
- 4.3. The Network North document is clear that any proposal brought forward will still require assessment and consideration through the normal processes. This means that proposals will require additional work to be undertaken by their promoters to prepare business cases and demonstrate value for money. Experience shows that proposals put forward for consideration in the North can struggle to make the case for investment if the traditional approach to business case development is followed.
- 4.4. Investment by National Highways in the Strategic Road Network (SRN) will continue to be managed through the Road Investment Strategy. Determination of the programme for 2025-2030 (RIS3) is reaching its final stages, with a draft RIS for that period expected to be published shortly. It is worth being aware that a few of the road investments included within the current Major Road Network (MRN) programme, as identified by TfN, are sitting with Government awaiting confirmation of funding.
- 4.5. Investment in rail maintenance and renewals by Network Rail continues to be determined through the 5-year Control Period, the most recent of which (Control Period 7 – CP7) has just been finalised: this covers the period between 2024-2029. Investment in infrastructure enhancements is managed separately through the Rail Network Enhancement Programme (RNEP).
- 4.6. It is worth remembering that funding allocations for investment delivered by National Highways and Network Rail are ultimately set within the Department for Transport's funding envelope that is itself determined by Government Spending Reviews.
- 4.7. Reaction to the decision to cancel the latter phases of High Speed 2 has led to many in the transport sector emphasising the importance of infrastructure



proposals being brought forward within the context provided by a long-term plan and/or framework. Commentators have emphasised the importance of such an approach in providing confidence to private sector investors to continue to make their own investments.

- 4.8. It is worth noting that the Network North document did not specifically mention strategically important infrastructure projects that are already making their way forward into delivery – i.e. TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) and Midland Main Line electrification. TfN will continue to work with its partners and with Government to ensure these projects are delivered at pace.

## **5. National Context: National Infrastructure Assessment**

- 5.1. The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) is responsible for providing advice to the Government on long-term strategic infrastructure requirements: in this way the NIC provides a framework at the national level. Their advice is set out to Government as the National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA), the most recent version of which (NIA2) was published earlier this autumn. Prepared within a financial envelope given to them by HMT on behalf of Government, its recommendations set out how public investment in strategic infrastructure needs to be aligned to enable sustainable economic growth.

- 5.2. The NIA2 sets out that the productivity gap between the North and London/South-East remains a challenge (something identified in the recently updated Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review – NPIER). Key messages within the NIA2 that are relevant to this discussion include:

- A restatement of the importance of unlocking the productivity of the North's cities and towns, and the role that investment in transport has within these communities.
- A restatement of the importance of improving the connectivity between the North's cities and towns as a means of connecting people and places with services and opportunities.
- Recognition of the need to take into consideration how realising economic potential can be a catalyst for reducing the environmental impact and improving social inclusion.
- Recognition of the need to align investment in strategic infrastructure across policies areas in order to deliver placed based outcomes – i.e. realising outcomes for the transport sector are increasingly dependent upon investment in energy and digital infrastructure.

- 5.3. The NIA2 was substantially complete before the publication of Network North, it was therefore prepared based on an assumption that HS2 phases 2a and 2b were to be delivered. In recognition of the Government's decision on HS2 phases 2a and 2b the NIC has identified the need for a further piece to look at the future of the rail network in the North. The TfN executive is discussing with the NIC how this work will be taken forward.

## **6. Regional Context: Transport for the North**

- 6.1. The Transport for the North (TfN) Constitution sets out that it was established by Government as a statutory partner to the Secretary of State in both road and rail investment processes, with responsibility for setting the objectives and priorities for strategic road and rail investment in the North.

- 6.2. The five general functions assigned by Government to TfN are:
- To prepare a transport strategy for its area.

- To provide advice to the Secretary of State about the exercise of transport function in relation to its area (whether exercisable by the Secretary of State or others).
- To co-ordinate the carrying out of transport functions in relation to its areas that exercisable by different constituent authorities with a view to improving the effectiveness and efficiency in the carrying out of those functions.
- If TfN considers that a transport function in relation to its area would more effectively and efficiently be carried out by TfN, to make proposals to the Secretary of State for the transfer of that function to TfN.
- To make other proposals to the Secretary of State about the role and functions of TfN.

In addition to these general functions, TfN's Constitution identifies several additional functions, granted by Parliament, designed to complement and support its role as a statutory body. These include specific powers in relation to ticketing, highways, and the rail sector, all of which were granted to TfN so that it might support its partners with the effective and efficient delivery of their transport functions.

- 6.3. A key focus of TfN's work recently has been the preparation of a revised Strategic Transport Plan (STP): the long-term framework for the North. Once finalised and adopted by the TfN Board, the STP is used by TfN to provide advice to Government and to shape and inform the investment plans of national agencies, such as National Highways and Network Rail.
- 6.4. TfN's additional role – through the Rail North Partnership Agreement – to oversee the delivery of rail services provided by the TPE and Northern contracts, provides the opportunity to ensure the requirements of the STP are reflected in the business planning of the two operators. By extension, the Rail North Committee is increasingly interested in the business planning of other passenger operators where their work is of significance to the North, given the interdependencies that exist on what is a heavily congested rail network.
- 6.5. The revised (draft) STP is underpinned by an extensive evidence base that ensures it reflects the needs of the North, of relevance to this discussion are:
- *Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER)* – prepared in partnership with the NP11, as noted above the NPIER evidences the extent to which the productivity gap between the North and London/South East remains, whilst identifying the economic potential of the North as being an additional £118bn GVA per annum by 2050
  - *Decarbonisation Strategy* – sets out the scale of the challenge facing the North in pursuit of achieving nearly net zero by 2045, TfN's work on Future Travel Scenarios (which is being updated) highlighted that central to all plausible future scenarios was the need to double, if not treble the role of rail, whilst recognising the continued importance of investment in the North's highway infrastructure
  - *Connected Communities* – building on TfN's ground-breaking work on Transport Related Social Exclusion, the key driver here is the importance of capturing the role of investment in transport within communities to enable people and businesses to realise their own potential.

The evidence base assembled by TfN, working with its partners, has enabled the revised STP to identify the key infrastructure issues that need to be addressed in order to realise the North's economic potential and to do so in a way that benefits its residents and businesses in a way that is sustainable for the longer-term.

- 6.6. Fundamental to the draft STP is the need to invest in improving connectivity and capacity – both within and across the North, and between the North and the rest

of the United Kingdom. Decisions in relation to UK investment in the North's strategic infrastructure should continue to take account of the context provided by the STP.

- 6.7. As mentioned earlier in this report, the technical work undertaken by TfN has highlighted the extent to which the delivery of preferred outcomes for the transport system requires alignment with investment in other strategic infrastructure networks – of which energy systems and digital infrastructure are arguably of the most immediate importance.
- 6.8. The revised STP embeds an outcome-led approach that is place-based and user-centred. In parallel with its work on the STP, the TfN executive has been working with partners to develop proposals that will improve the implementation of the STP. This is designed to support the leadership of the Metropolitan Combined Authorities (MCAs), County Combined Authorities (CCAs) and Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) which is key to delivering place-based outcomes.

## **7. Delivering Transformation**

- 7.1. The first STP established that transforming the North's transport infrastructure is central to realising its economic potential. It was in this context that it set out the role that Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) and HS2, in combination, would have in delivering the required increase in connectivity and capacity.
- 7.2. When the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) was published by the Government, the investment associated with it was seen by the TfN Board as stepping stones towards achieving that ultimate end state. In responding to its publication, the TfN Board reaffirmed the need to deliver NPR 'in full'. It welcomed the concept of an 'adaptive pipeline' as the basis on which further elements of the NPR 'in full' might be added to the proposals set out in the IRP.
- 7.3. In a similar way the publication of the Network North document by the Government should be viewed as representing further progress toward delivering the ultimate end state identified by TfN in the STP.
- 7.4. Aspects of the Network North document that are to be welcomed include:
  - The extension of devolved funding through the City Regional Sustainable Transport Scheme.
  - The provision of multi-year funding settlements for Local Transport Authorities.
  - The extension of support for reduced fares on local bus services and for BSIPs (Bus Service Improvement Plans).
  - The provision of additional funding for road maintenance.
- 7.5. And notwithstanding the lack of detail at this stage, other aspects of the Network North document to be welcomed include:
  - The commitment given to investing in improving rail connectivity between Liverpool and Manchester.
  - The commitment given to a new rail station serving Bradford (identified as integral to NPR 'in full').
  - The commitment given to the mass transit system for West Yorkshire.
  - The commitment given to electrification of the railway to/from Hull (previously identified by TfN as a 'quick win' as part of NPR 'in full').
  - The support for a further round of investment in the (local authority owned) Major Road Network – guidance on which will follow, but with the expectation that TfN will be asked to once again work with partners to develop a programme for submission to the Department.

- 7.6. Discussions with partners have served to highlight two immediate practical actions that the Department could take which would assist authorities moving forward:
- a) Where funding is allocated through Network North this should be ring-fenced for transport purposes.
  - b) Authorities should be allowed to manage funding allocations as a programme of investment with an appropriate reduction in the level of additional scrutiny by the Department.
- 7.7. A key principle moving forward should be to utilise existing working arrangements wherever possible. Indeed, opportunities should be taken by the Department for Transport to simplify and reduce the administrative requirements placed on authorities, consistent with the need to maintain an appropriate level of accountability. In this way it should be possible to realise the benefits of investment sooner, at lower overall cost.
- 7.8. TfN will continue to support its partners by building on the 'TfN offer' to MCAs, CCAs and LTAs as well as the Department for Transport (including its agencies/arm's length bodies). TfN will also continue to develop its advice on implementation in parallel with the STP, with a particular focus on preparing recommendations on how to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of national funding streams, including potential system reform.

## **8. Co-ordination of Activities**

- 8.1. The TfN executive continues to work with the Department for Transport following publication of the Network North document to provide further clarity on matters as appropriate. The Department's Director General: Roads and Local Transport will be in attendance at the Board meeting to provide an update and respond to questions.
- 8.2. A key concern raised by a majority of TfN partners in preparing this paper has been the lack of clarity within the Network North document as to how the work that arises from it will be taken forward, including issues of sequencing. There is a very real concern that references within the document to specific schemes might result in work being commissioned in isolation, whereas Government having clarified that those references are 'suggestions' there is a need for the scope of work to first be agreed with the relevant partners.
- 8.3. TfN partners have been consistent in recognising the interdependencies between schemes of pan-regional significance and the importance of investment being sequenced. They have also been consistent in emphasising that where work of pan-regional significance is being commissioned it is essential it is co-ordinated at the regional level through TfN. Partners are clear that the need for co-ordination should not result in centralisation of decision making within Whitehall.
- 8.4. The draft STP includes a commitment within it for the TfN executive to prepare on behalf of the Board, an Annual Action Plan prepared on the output from an annual Monitoring and Evaluation report. This will enable the TfN Board to track progress with the delivery of pan-regionally significant investment in a manner similar to that by the Infrastructure Planning Authority at a national level.
- 8.5. This would provide the basis for the TfN Board to provide an appropriate level of oversight on the co-ordination of activities arising out of the Network North document. And with Department for Transport a key member of the TfN Board, such an arrangement would provide an appropriate level of assurance to the Secretary of State that the intent behind the investments identified in Network North is being retained.

*Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) Co-Sponsorship Board*

- 8.6. This Board was established to provide a forum in which TfN and the Department for Transport work together to take forward the Government's commitments set out in the Integrated Rail Plan.
- 8.7. The working arrangements associated with the Board continue to evolve in light of experience, with a key focus being the need to strengthen the involvement of TfN partners: a need that the Department for Transport has been receptive too.
- 8.8. Given the network interdependencies, and given the scale of works already underway or planned across the North – through TRU, investment on the West Coast Main Line north of Crewe, Midland Main Line electrification, in/around Manchester and on the ECML – TfN partners have been clear that there is a need to strengthen the role of the Co-sponsorship Board in order to give stronger voice to the views of TfN and its partners.

## 9. Unresolved Matters

- 9.1. There are several pan-regionally significant matters arising out of the Network North document where there is a need for further work to be undertaken and where a collaborative approach will be essential.

*Linking the Midlands and the North – including freight and logistics*

- 9.2. The evidence base underpinning the STP reaffirms the importance of improving connectivity and capacity between the North and the Midlands if the economic potential of the North is to be unlocked. It was on this basis that the draft STP identified the importance of delivering HS2 'in full', alongside NPR 'in full'.
- 9.3. The West Coast Main Line is already the most heavily utilised mixed-traffic corridor in the country. In addition to be a key corridor for passenger services it is one of the country's primary rail freight routes. Notwithstanding previous investment in the corridor, the limitations of the existing infrastructure are increasingly obvious, impacting on the reliability and resilience of current services, and acting as a constraint on growth.

Moving forward (after the Network North document) there is a need to identify what proposals are required to achieve the same level of connectivity and capacity that would have been delivered by HS2 Phases 2a and 2b (including the wider benefits that would have been realised across the existing network).

- 9.4. **There is an urgent need for a comprehensive review of the options available for realising the improved capacity and connectivity between the North and the Midlands.** This review needs to treat the needs of the freight sector as highly as those for future passenger growth. It must also include consideration of the consequences of infrastructure decisions on rolling stock, including implications for the existing network. The issue of rolling stock is particularly pressing given that full-length HS2 trains will not be able to continue beyond the HS2 infrastructure and given that half-length HS2 trains have significantly reduced capacity compared with existing rolling stock. **Until such time as this review has been completed, and what proposals are required to be brought forward, it should be the position of TfN that the safeguarding associated with HS2 should remain in place.**
- 9.5. On the eastern side of the region, discussion with partners have identified that there are some locations where there is support for lifting the safeguarding currently in place. **It is therefore proposed that TfN should advise the Secretary of State that where there is agreement with all of the relevant transport authorities, it is appropriate to lift the safeguarding at the earliest opportunity.**

*Crewe (and environs)*

- 9.6. Arguably Crewe and its environs is one of the biggest losers following the decision to cancel the latter phases of HS2. This is because the investment by HS2 would

have acted as a catalyst for realising wider opportunities within Crewe and its immediate area. The change in plans was the latest step back in the scale of ambition for Crewe, which had originally been identified by HS2 as being a 'super-hub' on its network.

9.7. Crewe, together with Chester and Warrington lie at the heart of an economically significant sub-region, with significant opportunities to be at the forefront of a greener economy for the UK. Partners in the sub-region are looking to develop alternative proposals that will enable this potential to be realised. Investment in transport infrastructure will continue to be central to any such plan.

9.8. Discussions with partners have highlighted the importance of TfN continuing to support partners develop their proposals and the TfN executive are in active discussions with partners. **TfN will work with partners to identify the additional resources (financial and skills) required to enable the work to develop alternative plans at pace, with a view to securing those resources from Government in support of the Network North document.**

*North Wales Main Line Electrification*

9.9. This corridor was not previously identified by the rail industry as a priority for electrification, indeed the new rolling stock being acquired by Avanti for North Wales services is bi-mode, capable of operation under electric and battery power.

9.10. However, there is a clear need for further investment in the North Wales Main Line, in particular there is a long-standing need for investment that will remove existing constraints, such as those in/around Chester Station. **There is an urgent need for TfN to meet with the Welsh Government (as well as local partners) to determine the priorities for investment along this corridor**

*Manchester (and its environs)*

9.11. The cancellation of HS2 infrastructure serving Piccadilly Station brings with it a need to assess what is the most appropriate long-term solution for the station. TfN has previously argued that the merits of an underground station at Piccadilly had not been considered on a like-for-like basis with the proposal put forward by HS2. **Given Piccadilly's key role as part of the wider NPR 'in full' proposal, there is a need to review the proposals for Piccadilly Station, including the opportunities to secure contributions from the private sector.**

9.12. However, the consequences of the decision to cancel the latter phases of HS2 serves to re-emphasise the urgent need to commitment to longer-term solutions for both the Castlefield Corridor, and the southern approach to Manchester through Stockport. TfN has previously identified the critical importance of both in its recent updated statutory advice to the Secretary of State.

9.13. In addition, there remains the question of needing to consider an appropriate alternative to the Golborne Link. Previously the Department identified, post Union Connectivity Review and the decision to drop the Golborne Link, that HS2 would be responsible for taking forward the required work. The need for this work to be taken forward at pace remains and it is recommended that, given the interdependencies involved, it should be within the remit of the NPR Co-sponsorship Board.

*Trans Pennine Connectivity*

9.14. The Government has recently confirmed the next set of funding for the TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU). The TfN Board receives regular updates from the Project Team on progress with the project given its significance to the North, with the next update is scheduled for the March meeting just over a year before the scale of works steps up significantly.

9.15. The Network North document identifies the importance of improving other trans-pennine connectivity, including enhanced rail services between Sheffield and

Manchester, an aim supported by TfN. However, based on work to date a limiting factor to delivering an uplift in service frequency remains constraints associated with the stations at either end of the route. **There is therefore an urgent need to ensure that proposals for both Sheffield and Piccadilly Stations properly take account of the commitment in Network North to uplift service frequency.**

*Leeds Station (and the Sheffield – Leeds corridor)*

- 9.16. The station layout at Leeds Station remains a major bottleneck, with Leeds regularly appearing in the top 3 locations (alongside Clapham Junction and Birmingham New Street) for delays across the entire rail network. This makes securing a commitment to the expansion of Leeds Station a national, not just a Northern priority.
- 9.17. Notwithstanding the on-going programme of investment in the existing station, the work undertaken as part of the original work associated with NPR clearly identified that **a step change in the layout at Leeds Station is required.**
- 9.18. The IRP identified the urgent need for a study to be taken forward to look at the long term needs of Leeds Station. As a consequence of the Network North document that study, the Terms of Reference for which were published earlier this year, has been superseded by another study – this one focused on improving connectivity between Sheffield and Leeds.
- 9.19. As Members of the Rail North Committee recently heard, the growth in passengers along the Sheffield – Leeds corridor continues to be very strong. Indeed, one of the benefits of the proposed recasting of the East Coast Main Line (ECML) timetable is to enable additional direct services to be laid on between the two cities. **However, the limits of the current infrastructure are clear, creating renewed urgency for taking forward the proposed Sheffield – Leeds study.**

*Leamside Line (and East Coast Main Line)*

- 9.20. The TfN Board is well versed in the strength of the recovery of rail patronage across the North. The recasting of the ECML timetable is in response to the need to provide additional services, enabled by previous investment in the corridor further south. However, it has served to re-emphasise the limitations of the ECML infrastructure north of York.
- 9.21. It is in this context that a core part of the NPR 'in full' proposal championed by the TfN Board has been infrastructure enhancements north of York, including the re-opening of the Leamside Line. Investment in the ECML is central to providing the capacity that will enable an enhanced service on the Newcastle – Manchester corridor, as well as supporting economic growth across the North-East.
- 9.22. The Rail North Committee has emphasised the need for progress to be made on delivering the infrastructure enhancements north of York, in order to ensure operators can exploit the full benefits of the TRU upgrade by providing enhanced Newcastle – Manchester services.
- 9.23. The reference to the re-opening of the Leamside Line in the Network North document is to be welcomed. **Given the pan-regional significance of this proposal, the TfN Board should continue to work with and support its partners to progress delivery of this investment at the earliest opportunity.**

*Resource Considerations*

- 9.24. There are a further set of matters that flow from the Network North document which requires consideration, again, including but not limited to:

- *Scheme development* – delivering the ambitions set out in the Network North document will require additional work to prepare business cases in short order. This will require scheme promoters to have access to sufficient resources (both revenue and skills) available to enable specific proposals to be developed and brought forward at pace. Such matters are particularly pertinent for many local authorities where financial pressures continue to be particularly high. The tools and capability put in place by TfN as part of its ‘offer’ could, subject to the availability of funding, be scaled up relatively quickly to provide support to its partners.
- *Investment for rail services* – TfN members, through the Rail North Committee, are particularly aware of the pressures on operators at present. The Network North document identifies ambitions for enhanced levels of service on a number of routes, including some where the additional services will be dependent upon delivery of infrastructure enhancements. TfN – through the Rail North Agreement – will need to ensure that where commitments for service enhancements have been made the additional revenue investment needed is secured through the relevant business planning processes.
- *Union Connectivity Review* – it is unclear how the recommendations set out in Network North relate to recommendations made by the Union Connectivity Review. This is pertinent given that progress with some specific proposals previously identified were effectively put on hold pending a series of studies.

## **10. Next Steps**

- 10.1. The funding commitments set out in Network North should be welcomed as further steps towards realising the end state set out in the Strategic Transport Plan.
- 10.2. However, it is important for TfN to remain focused on making the case for the step change in connectivity and capacity that would have been achieved through the delivery of HS2 Phases 2a and 2b. The evidence underpinning the STP is clear as to the critical importance of improving connectivity and capacity in order to realise the North’s economic potential and reduce the productivity gap with London/South-East.
- 10.3. The recommendations before this meeting bring together the immediate next steps identified through the considerations in this paper.
- 10.4. In addition, there are issues that the TfN Board may wish to consider as part of the business planning and budget setting process for 2024/25 (alongside the work identified to develop advice on implementation), including:
  - a) The importance of the ‘TfN offer’ in supporting its partners bring forward proposals arising from the Network North document, harnessing the tools and capability that form part of the Northern Appraisal Framework, subject to TfN receiving additional core funding.
  - b) The need to develop a new ‘playbook’ that uses the knowledge and experience held within TfN to ensure that the appraisal system better reflects the needs and opportunities that exist within the North.
  - c) The potential to harness TfN’s work in support of smart ticketing and connected mobility in support of the ambitions for smart ticketing set out in Network North.

## **11. Corporate Considerations**

### ***Financial Implications***

- 11.1. Financial implications for Transport for the North arising from the matters considered within the report will be considered as they materialise.



### ***Resource Implications***

- 11.2. The resourcing implications for TfN and local authority partners is set out above. The resourcing implications for TfN will be further considered as part of TfNs on going business planning process for the 2024/25 financial year.

### ***Legal Implications***

- 11.3. Transport for the North is empowered to carry out all steps identified within the report. Review of existing agreements with DfT or a new agreement may need to be considered in order to implement the arrangements described in the report.

### ***Risk Management and Key Issues***

- 11.4. TfN's corporate risk register contains several risks which relate to this report.

### ***Environmental Implications***

- 11.5. This report does not constitute or influence a plan or programme which sets the framework for future development consents of projects listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive and therefore does not stimulate the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or EIA.

Addressing accessibility of public transport is a fundamental building block of inclusive transport decarbonisation, the focus for Transport for the North within its emerging STP and Decarbonisation Strategy update.

### ***Equality and Diversity***

- 11.6. A full Impact Assessment has not been carried out because it is not required for this report.

### ***Consultations***

- 11.7. N/A

## **12. Background Papers**

There are no background papers for this report.

## **13. Appendices**

There are no appendices for this report.

### **Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used**

a) DfT	Department for Transport
b) NPR	Northern Powerhouse Rail
c) STP	Strategic Transport Plan
d) TfN	Transport for the North

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**Meeting:** Transport for the North Board  
**Subject:** Strategic Transport Plan Update  
**Author:** Danielle Bassan, Principal Policy & Strategy Development Officer  
**Sponsor:** Katie Day, Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications  
**Meeting Date:** Thursday, 14 December 2023

**1. Purpose of the Report:**

- 1.1 To provide an update on the development of our second Strategic Transport Plan (STP), and the revised timescale for adoption given recent government announcements

**2. Recommendations:**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board:
- Endorses the decision to defer the adoption of the STP (until March 2024) to enable us to work with our partners to fully consider the implications of the Network North announcement.
  - Notes the work to date to amend the document post consultation, set out at paragraph 3.6 below.

**3. Main Issues:**

- 3.1 TfN has a statutory duty to produce a STP on behalf of the North of England. Its purpose is to set out, based on robust evidence, the strategic ambitions for transport, specifically pan-regional infrastructure priorities and issues that are common to partners and where there is efficiency in tackling them regionally.
- 3.2 We had intended to bring the STP to the Board for adoption in December 2023. However, on 4 October 2023, the Government announced the cancellation of Phase 2 of High Speed 2 (HS2), from Handsacre to Manchester, and a new government policy, Network North, was published.
- 3.3 The TfN Board's position, which is reflected in the current draft of the STP, is that both Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2 are required in full. TfN is also under a legal obligation to have due regard for government policy. Therefore, given the announcement on 4 October, it is necessary to assess at an officer and Board level the implications of the Network North policy on the draft STP.
- 3.4 We are confident that the STP vision, strategic ambitions and outcomes remain unchanged as a result; however, the cancellation of HS2 phase two does mean that consideration needs to be given to the strategic connections and/or capacity that could still be required. To ensure adequate time for that assessment (which is subject to a separate Board paper), and to reach an agreed position with the TfN Board, we propose approval of the STP is deferred until March 2024. This will allow the narrative for strategic rail, and underpinning evidence (in the Strategic Rail Report), to be updated to reflect any necessary changes as a result of the HS2 cancellation.
- 3.5 We have, nonetheless, continued to work at pace to finalise the STP as far as possible, as we recognise it supports local transport planning. Also, we want to ensure it is provided to the Secretary of State ahead of any spending review. Our focus has been on addressing feedback from the consultation, which took place between May and August 2023, receiving a total of 648 responses (reduced from 649 following further analysis post September Board). The consultation found

that while some areas of the STP required amendment/adjustment, overall the STP vision and strategic ambitions were accepted.

- 3.6 Following steers from TfN Board in September 2023, officers have been working to revise the document, including:
- **Strengthening the vision** by including specific references to affordability and the need to support mode shift.
  - **Amending the headline metrics** for rail freight right share and vision zero to be more ambitious.
  - **Better articulating that the environmental benefits we seek are beyond decarbonisation**, including more emphasis on biodiversity net gain, air quality and the enhancements to the built and natural environment.
  - **Making a stronger case for freight**, embedding throughout the plan more of our existing evidence, including reference to the opportunities that inland waterways present and our aspirations for strategic rail freight interchanges.
  - **Reviewing our narrative on international connectivity**, to ensure we are presenting a fair and balanced view (in line with our agreed policy position) in light of feedback from both environmental stakeholders and airports that is conflicting in nature.
  - **Adding new text** on the affordability of transport for the user, light rail / mass transit and connected mobility.

#### **4. Corporate Considerations**

##### ***Financial Implications***

- 4.1 TfN officers will review the potential cost implications of the deferral of the STP publication to March 2024. This will consider the impact of any changes that may be required to the STP following the assessment detailed in paragraph 3.4 above.

##### ***Resource Implications***

- 4.2 TfN officers will review the potential resource implications of the deferral of the STP publication to March 2024. This will consider the impact of any changes that may be required to the STP following the assessment detailed in paragraph 3.4 above.

##### ***Legal Implications***

- 4.3 The statutory obligations on TfN under the Local Transport Act 2008 (as amended by Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016) ("the Act") in preparation of the STP will be kept under review to ensure the STP is legally sound and complies with the legal requirements.
- 4.4 The Act (section 102I8(c)) requires an STB to have regard to "*any current national policy relating to transport that has been published by or on behalf of His Majesty's Government*". By undertaking the assessment of the new Network North policy via the draft STP, TfN is complying with its legal obligations to take in to account current national policy within the STP.

##### ***Risk Management and Key Issues***

- 4.5 TfN's Corporate Risk Register includes a risk associated with the STP, and this has been adjusted to reflect the change in timescales and associated risks.

##### ***Environmental Implications***

- 4.6 A full Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment was prepared to accompany the STP, supported by external expertise. These reports were also consulted upon alongside the draft STP and the findings are included in appendix A of the September 2023 Board report.

- 4.7 The ISA will document how and where consultation comments on the ISA/HRA have been addressed. This will include updated assessments where policies within the STP have been updated in response to the consultation. The revised ISA report, will be brought back to TfN Board alongside the final STP for approval.

### **Equality and Diversity**

- 4.8 To accompany the STP, we have undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the wider Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA), and where possible the findings of these were addressed in the consultation draft.

In addition, TfN's Transport Related Social Exclusion workstream will allow TfN and its partners to better understand the distribution and causes of TRSE in the North and forms an important part of the evidence base for the STP.

### **Consultations**

- 4.9 TfN has followed the relevant statutory procedural requirements, well established legal requirements and government guidance in relation to the consultation process on the draft STP.

TfN has subsequently reviewed all consultation responses received and have updated the STP accordingly.

## **5. Background Papers**

- 5.1 TfN Strategic Transport Plan Consultation Outcomes, September 2023 Board paper.

## **6. Appendices**

- 6.1 None

### **Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used (if applicable)**

*Please include any technical abbreviations and acronyms used in the report in this section. (Please see examples below.) This will provide an easy reference point for the reader for any abbreviations and acronyms that are used in the report.*

a) STP	Strategic Transport Plan
b) HS2	High Speed 2
c) ISA	Integrated Sustainability Appraisal
d) HRA	Habitats Regulation Assessment
e) TRSE	Transport Related Social Exclusion

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<b>Meeting</b>	Transport for the North Board
<b>Subject</b>	Strategic Transport Plan - Update on implementation advice
<b>Author</b>	Katie Day, Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications
<b>Sponsor</b>	Martin Tugwell, Chief Executive
<b>Meeting Date</b>	Thursday 14 December 2023

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## **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To provide an update on the development of advice to Government focused on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation of the Strategic Transport Plan (STP), and to seek feedback/observations from the Board on the proposed way forward.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Board:
- a) Supports the development of advice focused on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation,
  - b) Comments on the proposal to focus TfN's advice around the themes of:
    - i) System Reform
    - ii) The role of TfN in enabling and supporting implementation
    - iii) The development of a strategic (pan-regional) infrastructure pipeline

## **3. Context**

- 3.1 Transport for the North (TfN) was established as a statutory partner to the Secretary of State in both road and rail investment processes, with responsibility for setting the objectives and priorities for strategic road and rail investment in the Transport for the North area. The draft STP is an outcome focused long-term strategic plan for the North's transport system that makes the case for investment to realise economic, environmental, and social outcomes. Implementation of those outcomes relies on a combination of statutory advice (to the Secretary of State for Transport), investment in infrastructure and services, and co-ordinated delivery at the national, regional, city-region and local level.
- 3.2 The draft STP recognises that transport investment alone will not achieve our collective vision for the North: there is a need for system reform to the way we plan, develop, and deliver transport investment if we are to transform our region. Reform is needed to simplify processes, remove inertia, and enable more decision making closer to the people and places it affects. In this way it will be possible to accelerate delivery, realise benefits sooner, and reduce the overall cost of investment. Our intention is to bring advice on implementation of the STP that (subject to Board agreement) will be submitted to the Secretary of State. This would then be used to work with the Department for Transport with the intention of building upon the devolution to date, including the use of pilots where appropriate.
- 3.3 The draft STP (Chapter Six) indicates opportunities for system reform (such as more local devolution and the need to exploit the greater flexibility possible within the appraisal system), as well as identifying the opportunities where TfN might itself support its partners in delivery of the Strategic Transport Plan. The TfN executive continues to gather feedback – through the consultation on the STP, and discussions with the Partnership Board, Scrutiny Committee and Executive

Board – that will be used to develop proposals on **what** TfN needs to deliver and **how** we reform the transport planning system. The strong and consistent message from partners is that we need to “do things differently”. We have been brigading ideas together, and this paper is intended to give Board early sight on our thinking and seek Members’ views.

- 3.4 Our ‘Transforming the North’ paper (a separate report also on today’s agenda) recognises the positives from the Network North announcement, such as the move towards more devolved, long-term funding settlements for Local Transport Authorities (LTAs). This is a step in the right direction. However, the work of the National Infrastructure Commission suggests that there is a need to go further if we are to realise the cultural shift that will enable things to be done differently.

#### **4. System reform**

- 4.1 At the heart of the draft STP is the need to connect people and places with services and opportunities – i.e. it is about being outcome focused, place based and user centred. Delivering outcomes for people and places will be made easier through greater devolution of funding and by enabling authorities to manage funding allocations as a programme of investment. The NIC has highlighted the importance of such a shift in its first and second National Infrastructure Assessments. Government bodies such as National Highways and Network Rail have benefited from the adoption of 5-year funding settlements for several years. Embedding the principle of 5-year funding settlement, supported by an indicative allocation for years 6-10 would enable authorities to plan with greater certainty, encourage investment in supply chains and transform the way in which transport planning might be integrated with the development of Local Plans.
- 4.2 Simplification of funding streams in this way would remove the cost and inertia associated with being required to secure funding through competitive bidding processes, as is often the case at present. Such an approach would also enable better management of interdependencies locally across policy areas (such as the interactions between investment in connectivity, education, health, and local growth strategies). The evidence in the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER) emphasises the need to align investment decisions across policy areas to unlock the North’s economic potential. Empowering local leaders further to align policy levers and investment together in place will increase efficiency and reduce avoidable costs.
- 4.3 Further devolution of local transport budgets must go alongside devolution of decision making too if we are to be truly transformational. We are already seeing the value such devolution can bring in Greater Manchester through the Trailblazer Deal. While the Network North document has been positive in terms of proposing further steps on the devolution journey, further reform is needed if we are to go beyond ‘allocation’ to actual ‘control’ at the local level. That means projects, schemes and interventions can be appraised and decided upon locally, using local experience and knowledge.

##### *Developing a New Appraisal ‘Playbook’*

- 4.4 Experience shows that notwithstanding more recent reforms to the HMT ‘Green Book’, the reality is that the economic assessment of investment proposals continues to dominate decision making in a nationally controlled system. At the heart of the North’s ambition is the need to use its economic potential as a catalyst for improving social inclusion and enabling truly sustainable development for the long-term. It is increasingly clear that having a ‘one size fits all’ approach puts the North at a disadvantage, and by extension undermines the desire to ‘level up’ the UK economy. After all, transport projects promoted in London and the South-East are seeking to relieve the effects of economic demand, whereas in



the North we seek to stimulate demand to unlock potential. The evidence underpinning the draft STP tells us there are huge productivity gains that could be made in the North through better connectivity and increased capacity. At TfN we have developed an Analytical Framework that better reflects the economic objectives of the North and gives credit to the wider social and environmental benefits of investment. A focus moving forward could be to use the expertise on behalf of the North to offer advice, and case studies (pilots) that would showcase how the appraisal framework can be reformed to better account for the driver, needs and potential of the North.

## 5. TfN's Actions and Role

- 5.1 The draft STP identified several actions for TfN to take that would support its partners in its implementation. Using the comments received through the consultation on the draft STP we've refined those actions further (captured in table 6.2 of the draft STP) with a particular focus on those issues of truly pan-regional significance, including consideration of cross-cutting matters. This includes policy areas such as: transport-related social exclusion; freight and logistics; international connectivity; rural mobility and decarbonisation. It also captures areas for further work, as previously reported to the Board, such as on the affordability of transport (from the user perspective) and the critical need to improve the bus offer given its key role in improving social inclusion. These priorities will be reflected in TfN's annual business planning and be reported upon through the new STP annual action plan.
- 5.2 More widely, as the TfN 'offer' to support LTA's work and planning continues to take shape, we are exploring other opportunities for TfN to:
- a) **Continue building and enhancing our regional evidence base**, including as guardians of the NPIER, to ensure the North has a comprehensive and robust 'observatory' of data and information to inform/influence national and pan-regional connectivity investment and associated policy areas, such as economic growth. This includes strengthening the close working with the Northern Evidence Network, NP11/future Pan Regional Partnership, as well as with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
  - b) **Utilise and expand our technical capacity & capability and analytical framework** to support local (and national) partners in their work and planning, to enable an acceleration of business case preparation and delivery pipelines (another area in which linkages with DLUHC will be important).
  - c) **Harness the powers already afforded to us (both as a statutory Sub-national Transport Body and under the Rail North Agreement) to provide more leadership and oversight** in shaping/informing national investment decisions where they are pertinent to transforming the North. For example, through:
    - The work of the Rail North Committee in terms of embedding the STP in the business planning of train operators, as well as its leadership on cross-cutting matters like station accessibility.
    - TfN's formal role as a statutory partner to the Secretary of State with responsibility for setting the objectives and priorities for strategic road and rail investment.
    - Enabling delivery of smart ticketing across authority boundaries where there is efficiency in working together to maximise shared learning and minimise duplication of effort – including utilisation of powers already devolved to TfN.

- Enhanced collaboration, via the Northern Powerhouse Rail Co-sponsorship Agreement, to strengthen the use of local knowledge and expertise in scheme design and delivery; and
- Providing thought leadership on cross-cutting matters, including the need to improve the choice available to users so as to enable mode shift.

## **6. Developing the Pan-regional Investment Pipeline**

- 6.1 The first STP (in 2019) included an 'investment programme', a long list of schemes considered to be significant for the region. Whilst a central tenet of the evidence base assembled by TfN, and supported by the work of the NIC, is the need to invest more in the North, it is also important that any such programme is cognisant of the funding envelope for public sector investment.
- 6.2 With a Spending Review on the horizon at a time of continued pressure of public sector finances, it is important that the Board can set out an evidence-based assessment of the strategic road, rail and other policy interventions required to transform the North. Feedback received during the consultation on the draft STP has served to emphasise the importance of TfN continuing to make the case for the North at each Spending Review (and subsequent Budgets) making the development of an investment pipeline even more essential. This aspect of TfN's work takes on added importance following the decision to cancel Phases 2a and 2b of HS2, and the need to identify and make the case for the alternative investment in connectivity and capacity that would have been provided by HS2. It also aligns to the NIC's recommendation for government to work in partnership with STBs and combined authorities to develop a pipeline for inter-urban road projects over a 30 year horizon.
- 6.3 The TfN executive continues to build on work we have already done with partners to inform recent funding rounds, such as RIS3, when it comes to developing the investment pipeline. Given the importance of the next Spending Review we will engage Members and officers throughout the Spring to prepare draft advice for consideration by the Board at its June meeting.

## **7. Corporate Considerations**

### ***Financial Implications***

- 7.1 Resources to prepare STP implementation advice will be provided via current TfN Executive and 24/25 business plan. If TfN was required to scale up its 'offer' to LTAs and other partners, there would be a need for additional funding/resource.

### ***Resource Implications***

- 7.2 Resources to prepare STP implementation advice will be provided via current TfN Executive and 24/25 business plan. If TfN was required to scale up its 'offer' to LTAs and other partners, there would be a need for additional funding/resource.

### ***Legal Implications***

- 7.3 Legal implications are included within the report. As implementation advice develops, legal advice will be sought as needed.

### ***Risk Management and Key Issues***

- 7.4 TfN's Corporate Risk Register includes a risk associated with the revised STP, and we will keep this updated as our work on implementation advice proceeds.

### ***Environmental Implications***

- 7.5 This report does not constitute or influence a plan or programme which sets the framework for future development consents of projects listed in the

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive and therefore does not stimulate the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or EIA.

***Equality and Diversity***

7.6 A full Impact Assessment has not been carried out because it is not required for this report.

***Consultations***

7.7 We have been engaging with partners over the summer/autumn, in addition to the direct feedback received via the STP consultation (between May and August 2023), which has informed the proposals in this paper. We will continue to engage and work with partners to continue developing this STP implementation advice, and this will be referred to the Board as set out above.

**8. Background Papers**

8.1 N/A

**9. Appendices**

9.1 N/A

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<b>Meeting:</b>	Transport for the North Board
<b>Subject:</b>	Rail North Committee Update
<b>Author:</b>	David Hoggarth, Head of Strategic Rail
<b>Sponsor:</b>	Darren Oldham, Rail and Road Director
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	Thursday, 14 December 2023

**1. Purpose of the Report:**

- 1.1 To provide the Board with feedback on the matters discussed at the Rail North Committee Consultation Call on 14 November 2023.
- 1.2 To seek Board agreement to the final response on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) timetable for December 2024.

**2. Recommendations:**

- 2.1 That the Board:
  - 1. Notes the feedback from the Rail North Committee including the establishment of an Accessibility Task and Finish Group and the discussions with Avanti West Coast.
  - 2. Following receipt of additional assurances, confirms its acceptance of the ECML timetable change planned for December 2024.

**3. Main Issues:**

**Rail Accessibility Task and Finish Group**

- 3.1 Members agreed to the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to develop a proposition to improve the accessibility of the North's railway stations. The Committee highlighted the unacceptably poor level of full accessibility available at stations in the North. The working group should take on board the experience of train manufacturers in terms of level boarding at stations, learning from best practice on the Merseyrail new trains.

**Ticket Offices Next Steps**

- 3.2 The Government's rejection of all the train operator proposals for closing ticket offices was noted. This was consistent with Transport for the North's strong rejection of the proposals. Members requested assurance that where there are vacancies being held at ticket offices these would now be filled and requested monitoring of unplanned ticket office closures as part of the regular performance dashboard.
- 3.3 Members highlighted that innovative thinking was still needed on stations and that Transport for the North had not suggested there should be no change at all. The Committee endorsed a proposal to work with Northern and TransPennine Express on a ticketing and stations reform programme, including developing Northern's 'Stations as a Place' proposition. A key focus for such a programme is seeking to integrate stations more fully with their local communities and making rail travel more attractive and accessible whilst retaining staff coverage to assist passengers.

## East Coast Main Line December 2024 Timetable

- 3.4 The Committee considered the rail industry’s proposals to introduce a new timetable on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) in December 2024. The ECML has shown the strongest post-Covid demand recovery of any long-distance route nationally and overcrowding is regularly occurring, particularly at weekends, driven by leisure demand. This reflects the continued strong growth seen in the North. To better meet these demands and to build on investment, the rail industry has developed a new timetable.
- 3.5 The proposed December 2024 timetable accommodates more London to Newcastle services with improvements to other services. It also enables service improvements off the core ECML route including additional Middlesbrough to Newcastle and Sheffield to Leeds services. There are however trade-offs in that the previously twice hourly Newcastle to Manchester service is reduced to hourly and there are some reductions to Cross Country services. In the short to medium term the former service will be affected by works associated with the TransPennine Route Upgrade.
- 3.6 Whilst not meeting Transport for the North’s minimum requirement (in respect of TransPennine Express services between Manchester and the North East), the Committee recognised the wider benefits associated with the recasting of the ECML timetable and was minded to accept the proposal subject to clarification on a limited number of points, set out in the table below. Given the timescales associated with timetable planning, the Committee remitted a final decision to the Transport for the North Board once reassurances have been received.

Written confirmation from the Department that funding is specifically earmarked in its programme for the rail enhancements required to deliver capacity upgrade works on the East Coast Main Line to release a 7th hourly path for passenger services between Northallerton and Newcastle in Control Period 7.	Letter sent to the Rail Minister seeking this commitment.
Written confirmation from TransPennine Trains that it will continue to plan on the basis of operating two trains per hour between Newcastle and Manchester, with the second hourly service to be introduced as soon as the infrastructure is available to deliver the 7th path referred to above.	Letter sent to the Rail Minister seeking this commitment.
Assurances from LNER and other operators that they will pursue options to restore other connectivity to and from North East stations that will be negatively impacted by the proposals, particularly in relation to LNER trains serving Berwick-upon-Tweed and Durham.	Discussions with rail industry partners.

- 3.7 A verbal update on any outstanding issues relating to the ECML timetable will be given to the meeting.

## Rail North Partnership Operational Update

- 3.8 Members received an update from Mr Andy Mellors, the Managing Director of Avanti West Coast. This was in response to concerns that Members had raised before the Committee regarding changes to the timetable in the period before Christmas.

- 3.9 Mr Mellors explained that planned engineering work taking place over the following 3 weekends was separate to the planned reduction in services between 11 and 18 December 2023. He highlighted that this reduction was necessary because of legacy annual leave agreements in place which they were seeking to amend to avoid a similar situation arising in the future. He highlighted that Avanti has over 600 drivers in total and was working through a plan to put this on a sustainable footing without the need to rely on Rest Day Working. The Committee was concerned about the lack of an assurance that there would be no further recurrence of the service reductions and asked Avanti to return to the February 2024 meeting to provide another update. In a response to a question about increasing the service frequency to/from Liverpool, it was stated that the new trains currently being delivered were, in part, designed to facilitate this.
- 3.10 Ms Tricia Williams from Northern provided an update on Northern's performance and priorities. She outlined that performance levels were not where they want them to be but highlighted the recent agreement to implement Rest Day Working (for drivers) which would be used to address the training backlog and which should in turn lead to an improvement in performance. Ms Williams also provided an update on Northern's new trains procurement which was focused on replacing the older fleet of diesel trains and that they would be multi-modal. Northern is keen to engage with the Committee on the design of the new trains. In addition, Members asked for a discussion on the overall rolling stock strategy for the North.
- 3.11 Mr George Thomas from TransPennine Express highlighted that they were making good progress on their recovery plan with 68% of drivers having the full level of competency required.

#### **4. Corporate Considerations**

##### ***Financial Implications***

- 4.1 There are no financial implications for Transport for the North as a result of this report.

##### ***Resource Implications***

- 4.2 There are no direct resourcing implications as a result of this report.

##### ***Legal Implications***

- 4.3 Any legal implications are included within the report. Contract management of the train operators is undertaken by the Rail North Partnership in accordance with the DfT's contractual mechanisms.

##### ***Risk Management and Key Issues***

- 4.4 This paper does not require a risk assessment, however, risks relating to the future of rail services were highlighted in the Committee meeting. A risk has been included on the Transport for the North Corporate Risk Register in relation to the future viability of rail services and Transport for the North's future role.

##### ***Environmental Implications***

- 4.5 This report does not constitute or influence a plan or programme which sets the framework for future development consents of projects listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive and therefore does not stimulate the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or EIA. Any infrastructure proposals to improve the capacity and reliability of the system will be subject (where appropriate) to EIA Screening, conducted by Network Rail as part of the consenting process for those projects.

4.6 Passenger rail has an essential part to play in achieving our decarbonisation objectives within Transport for the North's Decarbonisation Strategy, particularly around reducing private car vehicle mileage.

***Equality and Diversity***

4.7 Closure of rail station ticket offices would have had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups who are more reliant on face-to-face contact to purchase tickets, particularly customers with disabilities and those most impacted by transport related social exclusion. This was highlighted in Transport for the North's response. More broadly, accessibility of the rail network is being picked up through the proposed Task and Finish Group.

***Consultations***

4.8 There are no specific consultations required as part of this report.

**5. Background Papers**

5.1 None.

**6. Appendices**

6.1 None.

**Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used**

a) ECML	<i>East Coast Main Line</i>
b) TPE	<i>TransPennine Express</i>
c) NPR	<i>Northern Powerhouse Rail</i>