
Meeting:	Rail North Committee Consultation Call
Subject:	Infrastructure Update
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Meeting Date:	Wednesday, 20 November 2024

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the State of Play workstream and associated recommendations endorsed at Rail North Committee in September 2024.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 That progress on the State of Play and associated Task Force Boards and Conditional Outputs is noted.

3. Context

- 3.1 The State of Play, produced by Transport for the North (TfN) and presented to the September meeting, was the first time the Committee had a single overview of planned and proposed infrastructure schemes, rolling stock introductions and service changes across the North of England over a 25-year horizon to 2050.

- 3.2 The State of Play identifies a series of issues, primarily with regards the integration of schemes underway across the North of England. In welcoming the State of Play this Committee endorsed recommendations as to how these issues should be managed, including:

- Establishing Task Force Boards for Sheffield, Leeds and Liverpool, overseeing the integration, development and delivery of schemes in these regions
- Establishing Place-Based groups, supporting partners in Newcastle, York, Doncaster, Preston, Crewe and Chester to secure investment and deliver improvements to these key regional stations.
- Development of network outputs for 2050, informed by the Strategic Transport Plan, providing a target for the industry to work to in terms of connectivity, capacity and frequency of services needed to meet aspirations, ultimately unlocking the Norths economic potential.

- 3.3 Each of these recommendations can be framed in the mindset of “service led infrastructure”, where we determine as a collective with the industry which level of service is required at various points in time, informed by data and insights, and then develop the infrastructure and service offer to deliver this, aligning investment in the network with rolling stock and resources.

- 3.4 This will represent a significant shift from established practices where currently infrastructure solutions are determined based on service outputs for that intervention, and work is then undertaken to determine what level of service can be accommodated across a wider geography, often leading to trade-offs and compromises when additional investment in associated infrastructure cannot be secured or occurs later in a programme.

- 3.5 It is possible to cite several examples of where this has occurred previously, and continues to be the case:

- Manchester Hub
- East Coast Main Line

- Hope Valley Upgrade

- 3.6 The rail industry is supportive of moving to a new approach and recognises the benefits of a cohesive long-term plan for the North's rail network where infrastructure, rolling stock, and resource need is informed by service outputs. Network Rail is keen to work with TfN to adopt, and enhance the State of Play, with the ambition to determine a series of future network states against which the industry can mobilise with confidence. It is also keen to support TfN in securing support for this workstream from both operators and funders. This will need to consider both enhancement schemes and renewals work to ensure all opportunities for synergies, efficiencies and best possible sequencing of works are explored.
- 3.7 This is both encouraging and of critical importance. Recent work by Network Rail on the opportunities that will arise with the completion of the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) has shown the extent to which a pan-regional overview is so important. The work to date has highlighted – as the State of Play highlights – that realising the full benefit of the investment in TRU will require consideration of further investment and/or service choices across the wider network in the North, including but not limited to Manchester, Sheffield and on the East Coast Mainline. The benefit of the State of Play for this Committee is that such tensions will start to be identified earlier and in a co-ordinated way, enabling a better-informed debate that empowers Political leaders to take necessary decisions.
- 3.8 Similarly, Network Rail's Strategic Advice on sections of the West Coast Mainline including Routes to Chester, Routes to Liverpool and South Manchester Area all find that substantial investment is needed to alleviate congestion on the route in light of the cancellation of HS2 Phase 2.
- 3.9 The Rail Freight Routing Study, jointly commissioned by TfN, Transport for Greater Manchester and Department for Transport identified significant potential for rail freight growth across the north of England but has highlighted several rail network capacity constraints on the West Coast Mainline (south of Crewe, between Crewe and Preston and North of Preston), in the Manchester area and in Sheffield. This study has highlighted that the government's 75% rail freight growth target for 2050, announced in December 2023, is unlikely to be reached without adding new capacity to the rail network.
- 3.10 Also, Network Rail is concluding work on the Sheffield Single Rail Strategy which seeks to identify the multitude of schemes in development and delivery in and around Sheffield, including Midland Mainline electrification.
- 3.11 The scale, complexity, and interdependency of the investment taking place across the North reinforces to use the State of Play as the basis for integrating the planning and delivery of all major programmes. In this way where decisions about the North are required, they are taken in the North, by the North. A key next step therefore is securing a commitment from the Department for Transport that nationally significant schemes such as Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2 are included within the scope of the State of Play approach, and form part of the discussion at all Task Force Boards.
- 3.12 Without sufficient integration of these programmes it will be very difficult to fully determine the target state and agree the stages which must then be worked through to deliver this.
- 3.13 As Co-Sponsor of Northern Powerhouse Rail, TfN will be strongly advocating this approach be taken for the benefit of the programme, by ensuring the necessary investments are made in advance to deliver the maximum benefits from Northern Powerhouse Rail at the earliest opportunity.

4. Task Force Board Implementation

- 4.1 The approach of the Manchester and North West Transformation Programme (MNTP) managed through the Manchester Task Force (MTF) has demonstrated the value of determining Configuration States to align infrastructure investment with changes to train services. It also acts as a clear home for network and service development and delivery work in the region, including Strategic Advice.
- 4.2 Adopting this approach across the North will help to resolve the integration challenges between the various programmes by taking an aligned place-based approach.
- 4.3 An early deliverable of each Task Force Board will therefore be the production of a target state for 2050, informed by the outputs required by Northern Powerhouse Rail, HS2, Transpennine Route Upgrade and other critical schemes, from which a phased approach to delivery can be determined. This requires common understanding of assumptions, e.g. train service specification and rolling stock, envisaged to form part of TfNs Conditional Output work targeted at 2050.
- 4.4 With an aligned target across the North, ensuring the interventions needed to unlock network wide benefits can be better sequenced, helping to avoid situations where investment benefits cannot be released due to the need for additional infrastructure delivery elsewhere on the network. The proposed sequencing is set out below:

Sheffield Area Task Force

- 4.6 Sheffield Area Task Force will be established first, with the aim of holding an initial meeting in late 2024/early 2025.
- 4.7 Currently, there is no governance focused on Sheffield, with scheme implementation managed through a series of different Programme Boards dependent upon the origin location of the scheme, e.g. Midland Mainline Electrification.
- 4.8 Sheffield therefore lends itself to early establishment, especially given the imminent publication of the Sheffield Single Rail Strategy. Discussion with South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority is exploring whether the remit of this board should be broadened to be a South Yorkshire Task Force Board, overseeing developments across a wider geography than just Sheffield.
- 4.9 The Terms of Reference for the Task Force Board have been drafted, and we are developing proposals to support the appointment of an independent chair along with technical support. Again, representatives from South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority are engaged in this process.

Leeds Area Task Force

- 4.10 It is the intention that Leeds Area Task Force will be established in 2025. There are various meeting structures currently in place managing a variety of schemes across Leeds and West Yorkshire, some of which are recommended to be incorporated into the new Task Force Board. Engagement with West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Leeds City Council and City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council about the most effective way to transition from the current structure to a new Task Force Board is underway.
- 4.11 Engagement is also required with the train operators, freight operators and industry representatives to ensure they understand why we are advocating a Task Force Board for Leeds, and to engage them in the change process and future activities.

- 4.12 As with Sheffield, the Terms of Reference for the Task Force Board have been drafted, and we are in the process of planning for an independent chair along with technical support.

Liverpool Area Task Force

- 4.13 An additional ask from Rail North Committee in September, the proposal for Liverpool Area Task Force is in draft, and discussion with officers in Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is taking place to shape the proposition.
- 4.14 It is the intent that a Liverpool Area Task Force take effect during 2025, following the establishment of Sheffield and Leeds.

5. Place-Based Groups Implementation

- 5.1 In collaboration with York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA), we are looking to establish the first of six endorsed place-based groups, starting with York, acting as a pilot for bringing together local and industry representatives to determine a future state for the station.
- 5.2 With draft Terms of Reference previously presented to Rail North Committee, focus is shifting to the structure of the meeting and suitable representation from the identified organisations, working with YNYCA officers.
- 5.3 The aspiration is for an initial meeting to be held in early 2025, and at regular intervals thereafter with the primary focus being to identify the target state for the station informed by the requirements across schemes.
- 5.4 Work to initiate other recommended place-based groups for Newcastle, Doncaster, Preston, Crewe and Chester requires further discussion with relevant partners, with the intent to initiate meetings or refocus existing forums throughout 2025. The current proposed approach is for these groups to be resourced by officers from both TfN and partners, negating the requirement for additional spend but will require the prioritisation of resources

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 A further update with a more detailed implementation programme for Task Force Boards and the development of the State of Play will be brought to Committee in Spring.

7. Corporate Considerations

7.1 Financial Implications

Other than the resource implications, which will be considered as part of the 2025/26 business planning process, there are no direct cost implications to TfN.

7.2 Resource Implications

The resourcing implications will be considered as part of TfN's 2025/26 business planning process.

7.3 Legal Implications

The legal implications are contained within this report.

7.4 Risk Management and Key Issues

TfN is managing a risk at corporate level in relation to individual programmes not being aligned and expected benefits therefore not being realised. Continuing to develop the State of Play is a mitigation action identified for this risk.

7.5 Environmental Implications

This report details proposed recommendations to TfN's partners and the Department for Transport on organisational structures that may influence planned rail investment in the North but does not constitute a plan or programme in its

own right. It therefore does not set 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 or EIA.

All proposed infrastructure developments will be subject to screening for the need for EIA by the relevant development authority as part of the design development and consenting process.

Both passenger rail and rail freight have an essential part to play in achieving our decarbonisation objectives within TfNs Decarbonisation Strategy, particularly around reducing private car vehicle mileage.

7.6 Equality and Diversity

Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as required during the process of establishing Task Force Boards and Place-Based Groups.

7.7 Consultations

None

8. Background Papers

None

9. Appendices

None

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used

a)	<i>MNTP</i>	<i>Manchester and North West Transformation Programme</i>
b)	<i>MTF</i>	<i>Manchester Task Force</i>
c)	<i>YNYCA</i>	<i>York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority</i>
d)	<i>TRU</i>	<i>TransPennine Route Upgrade</i>
e)	<i>EIA</i>	<i>Environmental Impact Assessment</i>
f)	<i>SEA</i>	<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment</i>
g)	<i>TfN</i>	<i>Transport for the North</i>
h)	<i>STP</i>	<i>Strategic Transport Plan</i>