

Meeting: TfN Scrutiny Committee

Subject: Strategic Transport Plan Development Programme

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Meeting Date: Thursday 9th September 2021

1. Purpose of the Report:

1.1 Development of the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) programme.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 The committee is asked to note the proposed programme to develop, consult and agree on a new STP by 2024.

3. Main Issues:

3.1 TfN has a statutory duty to produce a Strategic Transport Plan on behalf of the North of England. The first Strategic Transport Plan was adopted by the TfN Board in Feb 2019. The frequency at which the STP should be updated is not specified in TfN Regulations or the TfN Constitution, but a five-year cycle timed to align to industry processes was considered appropriate.

3.2 Given the long lead in time to prepare, consult and finally adopt a statutory plan, the TfN Business Plan committed to producing a high-level plan and agreeing that with the TfN Board in the autumn of 2021. At the TfN Board meeting in September, the Board will be asked to confirm TfN should establish a defined programme towards the next STP with the objective of adopting a new Plan in spring 2024. A more detail period of planning and preparation will commence in the second half of 2022/23, as part of TfN's usual business planning activity.

3.3 The development of the STP will be a key priority for the organisation over the next three business years, requiring careful planning, coordination and extensive engagement with both members, stakeholders and government. We envisage that the Committee will play a key role in supporting and scrutinising the programme and would welcome an initial discussion with the Committee at the meeting on the 9 September.

Producing a new Strategic Transport Plan

- 3.4 The completion of the STP in 2019 was a major milestone for TfN and the STP has provided a powerful articulation of the North's vision and ambition to transform connectivity for the benefit of both people and business. The next STP will need to match the vision of the original Plan, building on the very significant development work undertaken since 2019. In particular TfN has:
- a) Strengthened our policy positions in a range of areas (for example decarbonisation) and been used to provide statutory advice to government (for example on the Integrated Rail Plan and Union Connectivity Review).
 - b) Further expanded our evidence base across a range of areas to support the strategic and economic case for transport investment in the North.
 - c) The design and development of Northern Powerhouse Rail is considerably more developed.
 - d) Completed development of the TfN analytical and appraisal framework, developing bespoke tools that improve TfN and our partners business cases.
- 3.5 In addition, a number of major building blocks are planned or in progress. In 2022, we will need to finalise the evidence base and agree how the strategic objectives (the "Why?" section) and substance of the STP needs to be updated to reflect:
- a) The economic assessment of the Investment Programme being undertaken this financial year,
 - b) The refresh of the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review, currently being scoped with the NP11.
 - c) Key research programmes including Transport Related Social Exclusion (TRSE), Visitor Economy and Transport, and Health & Wellbeing
 - d) Decarbonisation Strategy and Clean Mobility Visions
 - e) TfN's Freight & Logistics Strategy,
 - f) Further development of the Northern Transport Charter.
- 3.6 The new STP will also need to respond flexibly to external developments (including most critically the nature of the recovery from the pandemic), as well as changes in national policy expected over the next two years. Remaining uncertainty over key government transport policies that will shift the context in which we operate and will have a direct impact on the **What** and **How** sections of the STP, for example:
- a) The Integrated Rail Plan and Union Connectivity Review, both expected to be published in 2021.
 - b) The Levelling Up White Paper, expected this autumn.

- c) Establishment of Great British Railways (GBR) and other reforms under the Williams-Shapps Plan for rail.

3.7 In agreeing the programme with the Board we will seek initial steers on which elements of the 2019 STP should be retained and where a new approach is required.

Programme timeline and governance arrangements

3.8 We will propose the Board agree a target date of spring 2024 for the adoption of a new STP. This reflects both the time required to undertake a significant update and the importance of setting clear priorities for key road and rail programmes for the second half of the 2020s.

3.9 The previous STP programme took around 18 months, including significant time for consultation and governance. Completing the new STP may be a quicker process, but we need to factor in time to undertake a full consultation with the public, revise the draft in response and then seek Board approval to adopt the Plan.

3.10 Ensuring the programme to revise the STP is realistic and achievable, starting now we have sufficient time to produce a new draft version (by spring/summer 2023), agree through governance and consult the public in 2023. The consultation response and adoption process will take at least 6 months (suggesting a final adoption date of spring 2024).

3.11 The STP programme will help guide and prioritise policy development, research and analysis within TfN over the next three business years. The technical detail and scope of the activity will need to be scaled to TfN's overall funding level and agreed with the Board through the business plan for 2022/23. We will need to carefully manage uncertainties and external dependencies and create a flexible plan that can respond to events. We also need to align to government and partner activities as well as industry processes, particularly the creation of Great British Railways.

3.12 The day-to-day management of the programme will be overseen by TfN's Head of Policy & Strategy with TfN's Strategy & Programme Director acting as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). TfN will continue to work with partner officers to manage the roadmap on an ongoing basis but with regular updates provided to the TfN Board to seek sign off to the evidence base and key policies as they are developed. More regular progress will be reported through the TfN monthly operating report.

Engagement activities

3.13 Continued Stakeholder engagement will be critical to success of the programme. To support this an internal stakeholder mapping exercise

is being developed to understand existing relationships between TfN colleagues and partners as well as government departments. We have held initial discussions with DfT officials on the proposed approach.

- 3.14 Following initial review we will then undertake some wider engagement primarily with officers initially to explore options to enhance existing relationships and fill any gaps. In 2022 we will commence wider stakeholder engagement to seek early steers from key partner bodies and organisations.

4. Corporate Considerations:

Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.1 Experience of preparing the STP that was approved in 2019 indicates that there are significant costs associated with this process. This will be taken into account in TfN's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) submission, although the exact funding that will be allocated will be dependent on TfN's overall financial position post-CSR.

The human resource implications associated with preparing the next STP will be fully considered and worked through as part of forthcoming business planning cycles aligned to TfN's overall financial position post-CSR.

Legal Implications

- 4.2 The statutory obligations on TfN under the Local Transport Act 2008 as amended by Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 in preparation of the STP will be kept under review to ensure the STP is legally sound and complies with the legal requirements.

Risk Management and Key Issues

- 4.3 This paper does not require a risk assessment. TfN's Corporate Risk Register includes risks associated to the continual embedment of the 2019 Strategic Transport Plan (STP). TfN will undertake a risk assessment during the development of the new STP.

Environmental Implications

- 4.4 The need for an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) to accompany the STP, and the extent to which changes to the existing ISA may be required is currently being considered by TfN's Legal team.

Equality and Diversity

- 4.5 The need for an Equality Impact Assessment to accompany the STP is currently being considered by TfN's Legal team. The results of the current Transport Related Social Exclusion workstream being

undertaken by TfN will allow TfN and its partners to better understand the distribution and causes of TRSE in the North, and will form an important part of the evidence base for the STP.

Consultations

4.6 A consultation is not required at this time.

5. Background Papers

5.1 None

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.

Strategic Transport Plan – STP
Great British Railways – GBR
Transport Related Social Exclusion - TRSE
Senior Responsible Officer – SRO
Comprehensive Spending Review - CSR

