

Meeting: Transport for the North Board Meeting

Subject: Strategic Transport Plan Development Programme

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Meeting Date: Wednesday 29 September 2021

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 This paper seeks Board approval to establish a Strategic Transport Plan (STP) development programme.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 The Board is asked to agree the proposed programme to develop, consult and agree a new STP by 2024.
- 2.2 The Board is also asked to review and comment on the principles outlined in section 4 of this report.

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 is 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. This paper is seeking confirmation that TfN should establish a defined programme towards the next STP with the objective of adopting a new Plan in spring 2024.
- 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. The Board and its sub committees will play a key role in supporting and directing the programme.

Producing a new Strategic Transport Plan

3.4 The adoption of the STP in 2019 was a major milestone for TfN and the STP continues to provide 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:

- 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).
- Further expanded our evidence base across a range of areas to support the strategic and economic case for transport investment in the North.
- Continued extensive design and development of Northern Powerhouse Rail, and
- 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:

- The economic assessment of the Investment Programme being undertaken this financial year,
- The refresh of the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review, currently being scoped with the NP11
- Key research programmes including Transport Related Social Exclusion (TRSE), Visitor Economy and Transport, and Health & Wellbeing,
- Decarbonisation Strategy and Clean Mobility Visions,
- TfN's Freight & Logistics Strategy,
- 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:

- The Integrated Rail Plan and Union Connectivity Review, both expected to be published in 2021.
- The Levelling Up White Paper, expected this autumn.
- 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 are also seeking initial steers on which elements of the 2019 STP should be retained and where a new approach may be required. This will be followed with extensive engagement activity with the Board and officers in the first phase of development.

4.0 Suggested principles to underpin a revised STP

The Board is invited to review and comment on the principles set out in this section of the paper.

- 4.1 The STP should continue to reflect the ambitious vision set out in the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER), to create an inter-dependent Northern economy and close the productivity gap between the North and the rest of the UK. Whilst the NPIER may need to adjust to accommodate a broader range of economic outcomes and the need to urgently decarbonise our economy, TfN's core mission should remain the correction of fundamental structural economic and social imbalances, both within the North and with the rest of the UK.
- 4.2 To achieve that balanced view of required outcomes, we should also continue to promote a "vision and validate" approach to transport planning – using the NPIER and our Future Travel Scenarios to set a realistic yet ambitious vision of future connectivity needs and working back from that. We should continue to look at the very long term, maintaining the 2050 time-horizon, unless a compelling new argument for extending the end date emerges.
- 4.3 Given the significant economic and social changes experienced since 2019, the next STP will need a much stronger articulation of why the initial vision of an inter-connected North, how change can occur over the next 30 years, and why the earlier transport interventions in the 2020s will start to make a difference to longer term outcomes (building on the SDC sequencing work).
- 4.4 We will integrate the TfN Decarbonisation Strategy into the next STP, so the opportunity of a clean efficient transport network is at the heart of our Plan. If necessary, we should be prepared to decouple economic growth from transport growth and factor in wider forms of connectivity, particularly digital and energy networks in order to secure the outcomes we need. Initial research on "clean mobility visions" is currently underway and will influence how we set the next evolution of STP objectives in 2022.
- 4.5 We will ensure a stronger voice for local people, passengers and businesses, building on the user insight programme of research and the citizen's engagement activities TfN is preparing to pilot. Alongside this we also need to ensure that our approach with the revised STP addresses the extent to which transport acts as a barrier and can

serve to exacerbate inequality within our communities. TfN's research into Transport Related Social Exclusion (TRSE) will report into Board in November and provide a robust evidence base on this topic.

- 4.6 In the "what" section – we will need to review and adjust the TfN Investment Programme in response to the outcome of the IPBA programme currently under way, and there will be significant changes to the rail section on NPR and HS2 following the publication of the IRP. Subject to the outcome of the IPBA work, we recommend continuing to promote a "programme level" approach to investment planning at the regional level, whilst continuing to actively support individual scheme development at local level.
- 4.7 We will also implement the TfN monitoring and evaluation strategy to ensure we are tracking the right outcomes across TfN interventions and linking these to specific interventions and policies to demonstrate added value.
- 4.8 The "how" section will need a much sharper focus on the next delivery period and set out clearly how TfN will help guide and support the delivery of transport interventions in the mid to late 2020s. In doing so we will work with DfT's developing view of the future role for Sub National Transport Bodies (STBs) and TfN's specific role as the only STB with statutory powers. We intend to work in close partnership with Highways England on the emerging route strategies and RIS3 programme, and with Network Rail (and then GBR) on the Control Period 7 investment programme.
- 4.9 Finally, we will integrate the Northern Transport Charter into the "how" section of the STP, so that there is a clear and agreed view of how TfN will continue to build and demonstrate capability in preparation for further devolution of powers in future.

5. Programme timeline and governance arrangements

- 5.1 We will recommend the Board agree a target date of spring 2024 for the adoption of a new STP. The timing 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.
- 5.2 The previous STP programme took around 12 months from Board approval of the draft strategy, 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.
- 5.3 A detailed timeline of the high-level milestones is included at annex 1. Clearly the timeline and the milestones will have to be responsive to change depending on events. Through the programme there will be a

number of significant staging points and decisions for the Board, including:

- Mid/late 2022, agreeing a new NPIER and agreeing the objectives and outline scope of the next STP.
- Early 2023, the Board will need to agree the key road and rail investment priorities for the North, updating the Northern Infrastructure Pipeline, and the final evidence base for the STP.
- Spring/summer 2023 Board approval of the draft STP ready for consultation.
- Summer 2023: statutory public consultation on the draft STP
- Autumn 2023: response to the consultation.
- February 2024: new STP adopted by Board

These activities will be taking place and will need to be integrated with the wider activities set out in section 4 (above).

- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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 Executive Board and the TfN Board to seek sign off to the evidence base and key policies as they are developed. Progress will be reported monthly through the TfN Monthly Operating Report.
- 5.6 An initial risk management approach has been developed, in line with TfN's overall approach to managing risks. At this stage of development, the key risks to delivery are the timetable and scale of work required in a short space of time. Uncertainty, particularly on future government policies, and failure to manage inter-dependencies with other TfN workstreams are also key risks. A full risk log will be established as a part of the programme governance and managed by the Strategic Oversight Group on behalf of the Board.

Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review Update

- 5.7 The Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER) represented a unique collaboration between the then newly formed Transport for the North partnership, the Local Enterprise Partnerships,

local authorities in the North and central government. The NPEIR showed how better connectivity could support the economic transformation of the North's economy and close the productivity gap with the rest of the UK. The NPIER has defined the Strategic Transport Plan, Northern Powerhouse Rail and the Northern Investment Pipeline, and supports the workstreams, and provides a common point of reference for local plans and strategies across the North.

5.8 Updating the NPIER is a major task given the changes seen since the NPIER was published in 2016. TfN is working with the NP11 to create a new programme for the NPIER that will update the NPIER based on the following shared objectives:

- To set out a shared programme of data, evidence, and intelligence for the NPIER to further the case for investment in the North.
- To set out the challenges and opportunities across the whole of the North in the context of Brexit, Covid recovery and the Climate Emergency.
- To widen the lens used to view the economy of the North from a focus on productivity to a broader view which includes the environment and inclusion.
- To place the NPIER on a firm footing, underpinned by updated evidence and research overseen by clear governance and oversight.

5.9 In support of the STP programme and in preparation for the NPIER programme, TfN is commissioning new work in 2021/22 to revisit the central themes of the NPIER and review progress in growing the prime and enabling capabilities since 2016. A fuller programme of research will be commissioned next year in collaboration with Northern LEPS.

Engagement activities

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

7. Corporate Considerations:

7.1 *Financial and Resource Implications*

The financial and resourcing implications for 2021/22 will be included in the latest forecast and any future financial and resourcing implications will be considered and captured in subsequent years budget and business planning process.

7.2 *Legal Implications*

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.

7.3 *Risk Management and Key Issues*

An initial risk assessment has been undertaken and the conclusions presented in section 5 of this report.

7.4 *Environmental Implications*

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. Additionally, the paper sets out TfN's intention to integrate the outputs of TfN's Decarbonisation Strategy and a number of subsequent related activities (e.g. Clean Mobility Visions) into the new STP.

7.5 *Equality and Diversity*

There are no new equality and diversity implications for TfN as a result of this report.

7.6 *Consultations*

A consultation is not required at this time.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None.

9. Appendices

9.1 Annex 1: STP Programme Timeline

Activity	Start Date	End Date
Develop programme to revise STP	March 2021	August 2021
TfN Board approval of plan to revise STP		Sept 2021
STP page turn with partners and identify authors	Jan 2022	March 2022
STP stakeholder engagement plan	Nov 2021	June 2022
Further refinement of STP objectives & aims of plan	Nov 2021	Sept 2022
Agree refreshed Investment Programme		Dec 2022
Finalise policy positions and start STP redraft		Dec 2022
Drafting the 'What' section of the STP	Sept 2022	Dec 2022
Complete STP Evidence Base		Dec 2022
Drafting the 'How' section of STP	Nov 2022	Jan 2023
Close out first STP by producing a 'you said, we did'	Jan 2023	March 2023
Drafting 'Why' section of STP	Jan 2023	March 2023
TfN Board approval word version of draft STP		April 2023
Designed version of draft STP for consultation	April 2023	May 2023
Commission external support to manage consultation	Jan 2023	May 2023
STP Public Consultation	June 2023	Aug 2023
Revise STP following public consultation	Sept 2023	Nov 2023
Word version of final STP through TfN governance	Dec 2023	Jan 2024
Designed version of final STP	Dec 2023	Jan 2024
TfN Board adopts final STP		Feb-24
Launch of final STP		Mar-24

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.

Great British Railways – GBR

Northern Transport Charter – NTC

Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER)

Transport Decarbonisation Plan - TDP

Transport Related Social Exclusion – TRSE

Senior Responsible Officer – SRO

Strategic Transport Plan – STP