
Meeting:	Scrutiny Committee
Subject:	Integrated Rail Plan
Author:	Tim Foster, Strategy and Programme Director
Sponsor:	Martin Tugwell, Chief Executive
Meeting Date:	Wednesday 12 January 2022

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 Transport for the North's provisional assessment of the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) as presented at the TfN Board at the meeting on 26 November 2021, and the subsequent statutory advice from the TfN Board to government.
- 1.2 Officers will attend Scrutiny on 12 January to update members on progress since the Board meeting and any subsequent developments on the IRP.

2. Recommendation:

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the information in the report including the economic and environmental assessment of the IRP (para 3.6), and the plan to respond to the Transport Select Committee inquiry (para 3.7)

3. Initial Assessment:

- 3.1 Following the publication of the Integrated Rail Plan on 18 November 2021, officers undertook an initial assessment of the potential economic consequences of the Plan, and key findings were presented at the TfN Board meeting on 24 November 2021.
- 3.2 The initial assessment of the IRP provided by Officers to Board concluded that:
 - the level of investment and connectivity provided by the IRP is not sufficient to deliver the level of growth outlined in the Strategic Transport Plan, or to deliver the outcomes in the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review of £100m GVA, 850,000 jobs and 2m more homes by 2050.
 - In removing key elements of the eastern leg of HS2, and only committing to a partial and limited investment in NPR, the IRP has fundamental consequences for both rail connectivity and the wider objectives of TfN's Strategic Transport Plan, including several key trans-Pennine corridors and links to the North East. The IRP offers only limited certainty with stronger commitments in the West and more uncertainty for Yorkshire and the North East.
 - There are large gaps in connectivity with major omissions including Bradford, Hull, and Leeds to Sheffield. NPR investment is focused on the existing Liverpool to York corridor. Key stations and route options are unfunded. The fragmented and poorly defined approach in the IRP raises questions about reliability, resilience, and disruption for the travelling public. There is limited commitment to east-west freight connectivity beyond Transpennine Route Upgrade.
 - There will be immediate wider regeneration and development implications because NPR and HS2 have been built into local economic plans and growth strategies. The additional uncertainty will exacerbate the risk that wider investment flows to those areas with greater certainty (for example as Birmingham has benefited from the anticipated arrival of HS2 phase 1).

- In terms of environmental considerations, there is some value from delivering benefits earlier than anticipated and plans for some early electrification is to be welcomed. However, by choosing to focus investment on upgrading existing routes, the North is likely to see sustained closures and disruption through the next 10 to 15 years at a critical time for encouraging behaviour change and use of rail for longer distance trips.
- While there will be passenger benefits from the investment proposed in the IRP, the absence of technical detail means it is unclear if the IRP proposals will result in a network that can work for passengers and freight, or if it will enable the North to decarbonise its transport system in line with legal requirements.

3.3 The Board noted the absence of the technical documentation supporting the IRP proposals. The environmental, economic and regeneration impacts of the IRP proposals do not appear to have been assessed. Without further information, TfN officers remain unable to determine how key decisions have been reached.

3.4 Immediately following the November Board meeting, the Interim Chair provided statutory advice to government emphasising the Board's unanimous concerns about the IRP and seeking a constructive way forward (Appendix 1).

3.5 In responding to government, the Board has noted the absence of the technical documentation supporting the IRP proposals. The environmental, economic and regeneration impacts of the IRP proposals do not appear to have been assessed. Without further information, TfN officers remain unable to determine how key decisions have been reached or if the approach outlined in the new HMT green book has been followed.

3.6 At the November Board meeting, the Chief Executive was asked

"to prepare a report to the Board on the impact the Integrated Rail Plan will have on the North's economic and decarbonisation ambitions."

This is likely to include the implications for connectivity and economic productivity, local plans and strategies, redevelopment around stations, freight and international connectivity, and decarbonisation.

3.7 The Transport Select Committee announced an inquiry into "the implications of the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) for the economy and rail capacity and connectivity." Officers are developing an evidence submission on behalf of the Board and will seek the views of Scrutiny members at the meeting on the 12th, as well as providing a further verbal update on the IRP as required.

4. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

4.1 No direct financial implications of this report.

Resource Implications

4.2 Additional work on the Integrated Rail Plan economic assessment in this report does not require additional resources.

Legal Implications

4.3 This paper does not require a legal assessment.

Risk Management and Key Issues

4.4 This paper does not require a risk assessment. TfN's Monthly Operating Report presents the risks to TfN delivery associated with the IRP.

Environmental Implications

4.5 A full assessment is not required at this stage. The report outlines plans to undertake an initial environmental assessment.

Equality and Diversity

4.6 A full assessment is not required at this stage. The report outlines plans to undertake an initial economic assessment of the IRP and that will include equality and diversity.

Consultations

4.7 TfN Board members were consulted at the November Board meeting and the members' agreed position is reflected in the statutory advice to government.

5. Background Papers

5.1 N/A

6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1 – Statutory advice to government

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) HMT – Her Majesty's Treasury
- b) HS2 – High Speed 2
- c) IRP – Integrated Rail Plan
- d) NPR – Northern Powerhouse Rail