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**Meeting:** Scrutiny Committee Consultation Call  
**Subject:** Rail Investment Planning Update  
**Author:** Chris Mason, Interim Head of Investment Planning  
**Sponsor:** David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director  
**Meeting Date:** Wednesday 12 January 2022

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**1. Purpose of the Report:**

- 1.1 This report is to provide Members of the Committee with an update on two key Investment Planning issues in the North.
- 1.2 This includes proposals for service changes and upgrades to the East Coast Main Line north of York and the expected publication by the Department for Transport of an update of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline following the Comprehensive Spending Review.

**2. Recommendations:**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
  - a) Note the progress with development of the case for capacity upgrades to the East Coast Main Line and the impact of the Integrated Rail Plan;
  - b) Note the proposal that the Transport for the North Board advise the Department for Transport and Network Rail that a collaborative working model for development of the infrastructure for the East Coast Main Line north of York is created, on the same model successfully being used in Manchester including a 'Blueprint' identifying a co-ordinated long-term service and infrastructure solution to deliver the capacity and connectivity required across the North;
  - c) Note the pending update of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline in relation to rail projects in the region.

**3. Main Issues:**

**Background**

- 3.1 Transport for the North (TfN) have a vision for the on-going transformation of the North of England's railway, laid out in the Strategic Rail Plan and Long-Term Rail Strategy. This describes how the rail network should be improved to realise its potential to support and facilitate a growing and more vibrant Northern economy, and to enhance the North's quality of life, all in an environmentally sustainable way.

Core to this is a prioritised sequence of investment in a way that delivers the early foundations of a modernised rail system for the region, improving capacity and connectivity across the North and with the Midlands.

- 3.2 The Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) was established by the government in 2018, setting out a new approach for rail proposals that require government funding. This approach created a rolling programme of investment, focused on outcomes that provide benefits for passengers, freight users and the economy. RNEP is how the Department for Transport (DfT) funds all major infrastructure enhancements, including the Transpennine Route Upgrade.

- 3.3 Since that time, TfN has worked with the industry and partners to shape the pipeline of investment projects in the north. DfT have now reviewed the impact of the IRP on the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.
- 3.4 TfN made a strong response on behalf of the North to the original consultation on industry plans for a significant timetable change on the East Coast Main Line from May 2022. Capacity constraints mean that the proposed additional LNER service to London (3 per hour in total) would be at the expense of a reduction in the number of Transpennine Express (TPE) trains north of Northallerton to one per hour.
- 3.5 The May 2022 change has now been deferred and the rail industry has been developing an alternative to the May 2022 consulted timetable for the East Coast Main Line (ECML), targeted for implementation in May 2023.
- 3.6 Following the Comprehensive Spending Review the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands (IRP) was published by the Government on 18 November 2021. This sets out the government's proposals for the rail network, including for the ECML, specifically in the context of changes proposed by the Government to HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR). The IRP also stated the view that the case for re-opening the Leamside Line would be best considered as part of any future city region settlement on the basis of available evidence and value for money analysis.
- 3.7 TfN Board agreed a response to the IRP at its meeting on 25 November 2021 with a letter and advice sent to the Secretary of State.

### **East Coast Main Line North**

#### **May 2023 Timetable Services Options Update**

- 3.8 An alternative timetable proposal is still under development by the industry with a target implementation date of May 2023. In the meantime, members have reiterated their priorities as being:

- Greater emphasis on East-West connectivity;
- Resolving local station calls (to maintain connectivity); and
- Retaining the existing 2 trains per day to/from Bradford.

- 3.9 TfN has also commissioned Atkins to support input to this work including reviewing the opportunity to deliver 7 trains per hour north of Northallerton with 2 x TPE trains.

#### **Infrastructure Development**

- 3.10 Given the network constraints on running more services north of York, Transport for the North and North East Leaders wished to take a proactive approach to progressing work to identify the infrastructure required to accommodate both increased North-South services and existing East-West services.
- 3.11 Transport North East thus commissioned Network Rail, with financial support from both TfN and Network Rail, to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the 7th path between Northallerton and Newcastle.
- 3.12 This work has recently commenced and was anticipated as taking 6 – 9 months to complete. The remit is now being reviewed following the publication of the IRP which refers to 7 or 8 trains per hour being explored.
- 3.13 The IRP proposes:
- Improvements at York;
  - Extending the current 4-track railway to end just north of Northallerton, rather than just south of the station;

- An additional through platform on the eastern side of Darlington station, with bays to reduce the number of local services that cross in front of fast trains, which is consistent with the existing proposals being developed by Network Rail with Tees Valley Combined Authority;
- Upgrading the Stillington route to allow more freight use, and restoring a 3rd track north of Chester-Le-Street and a former chord at Bensham to enable a greater degree of segregation between freight and fast passenger trains; and
- Lengthening some of the bay platforms at Newcastle to enable NPR trains to terminate in the station.

3.14 Network Rail has been asked by DfT to take these proposals forward for development and delivery. TfN, Transport North East and the other regional stakeholders will now work with Network Rail to support the development of these proposals and understand what service output enhancements they could support.

3.15 Further dialogue is required with partners on how to take forward both ECML improvements and the Leamside Line reopening to maximise the benefits for the traveling public and regional economies.

### **East Coast Main Line North Blueprint**

3.16 Various service requirements and supporting infrastructure enhancements would be required to support different combinations of services on the ECML. It is therefore proposed that a 'blueprint' is developed on the same principle as the blueprint (previously known as the 'Railmap') successfully developed by the Manchester Recovery Task Force, that clearly links the infrastructure changes necessary to the required passenger and freight service outputs.

3.17 The blueprint would show how the services required to improve capacity and connectivity across the north could be developed over time in line with the enabling infrastructure enhancements and allow stakeholders to see the long-term plan to deliver service requirements.

3.18 The blueprint would identify how and when services can be enhanced as 'points of opportunity', for example through further service changes or the delivery of infrastructure schemes and show when members will be consulted on which amended and additional services should operate.

### **The Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP)**

3.19 Appendix A to this report includes a simplified representation and high-level summary of Transport for the North's infrastructure investment pipeline derived from the previous issue of RNEP, TfN's investment programme and the Long-Term Rail Strategy.

3.20 This includes:

- Capacity improvements at the key network hubs of Manchester and Leeds, as well as the other major hubs such as Bradford Forster Square, Chester, Darlington, Hull, Sheffield, Stockport and Preston;
- Major upgrades to the transpennine route and east and west coast main lines;
- Improvements in route freight gauge clearance and capacity to key ports and across the pennines;
- New stations, line re-openings, journey time and reliability improvements across the north for routes such as Wrexham-Bidston/Liverpool and on the Esk Valley and Lakes lines.

- 3.21 At the date of this report the anticipated update of the DfT's Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline for the north had not been published. The update is now anticipated to be published in January 2022.
- 3.22 When published, TfN will conduct an analysis of the implications of the revised RNEP on the TfN investment pipeline and partner investment priorities.
- 3.23 If the RNEP update is published before the 12 January 2022, a verbal update will be given at the Committee meeting.

#### **Next Steps**

- 3.24 Work is progressing on the ECML 7<sup>th</sup> path business case work including the role of the Leamside Line alongside the ECML improvements proposed in the IRP.
- 3.25 Transport for the North Board to advise the Department for Transport and Network Rail that a collaborative working model for development of the infrastructure for the East Coast Main Line north of York is created, on the same model successfully being used in Manchester including a 'blueprint' identifying a co-ordinated long-term service and infrastructure solution to deliver the capacity and connectivity required across the north.
- 3.26 Conducting an analysis of the implications of the revised RNEP when published and provide a further update to Members.

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

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

- 4.1 The utilisation of the modelling function and input into schemes is not anticipated to have financial implications over and above those captured within the latest budget revision for 2021/22. Any financial implications in future years will be captured by the 2022/23 budget and business planning process.

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

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

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

- 4.3 There are no obvious legal implications arising other than raised within the report.

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

- 4.4 This paper does not require a risk assessment, however, risks relating to the December 2022 timetable are being identified, managed and monitored through the Rail North Partnership.

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

- 4.5 This report does not constitute a plan or programme which sets the framework for future development consents of projects listed in the EIA Directive and therefore does not stimulate the need for SEA 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.

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

- 4.6 A full impact assessment has not been carried out because it is not relevant to the type of work referenced.

##### ***Consultations***

- 4.7 No consultation has been carried out this review.

## **5. Background Papers**

5.1 There are no background papers to this report.

## **6. Appendices**

6.1 Appendix A - TfN's outline rail infrastructure investment pipeline.

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

a) TfN	<i>Transport for the North</i>
b) RNEP	<i>Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline</i>
c) DfT	<i>the Department for Transport</i>
d) TPE	<i>TransPennine Express</i>
e) ECML	<i>East Coast Main Line</i>
f) IRP	<i>Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands</i>
g) NPR	<i>Northern Powerhouse Rail</i>
h) SOBC	<i>Strategic Outline Business Case</i>