
Meeting: Transport for the North Board
Subject: Integrated Rail Plan: Transport Select Committee Report
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Meeting Date: Thursday 29 September 2022

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 The Government published its Integrated Rail Plan on 18 November 2021 setting out a programme to invest in rail connectivity in the North and Midlands.
- 1.2 The House of Commons Transport Select Committee announced an Inquiry into the IRP in December 2021. TfN gave evidence to the Committee, which published its findings in July 2022.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 The Board is invited to:
 - a) Welcome the Transport Select Committee's report
 - b) Set out to the Secretary of State its desire to work her in responding to the Committee's recommendations
 - c) Seek an early discussion with the new Government following commitments made during the summer to delivery NPR in full

3. Main Issues Arising from the Select Committee

- 3.1 The IRP sets out a programme of rail investment in the North and Midlands. It sets out the HS2 network as running between the Midlands to Manchester and to the West Coast Main Line, and between the Midlands and East Midlands Parkway. The IRP proposes a Northern Powerhouse Rail network between Liverpool and York with new infrastructure between east of Warrington and Marsden. These proposals fall short of the TfN Board's preferred HS2 and NPR networks as set out in TfN's statutory advice to government.
- 3.2 As part of its role to scrutinise Government policy, the Transport Select Committee has carried out an Inquiry into the IRP which reported in July 2022. Convention would suggest that the Government should respond to the Committee's report this autumn. The Committee's findings were informed by a call for evidence and by a series of evidence hearings. The TfN Chair and Chief Executive appeared before the Committee in February 2022 and a number of Board Members took part in other sessions. TfN's written submission to the Committee re-stated the Board's preferred network, the evidence base that supports this and also the lack of any wider economic assessment in developing the IRP plans.
- 3.3 The Committee in its report welcomes the scale of the IRP investment although it calls for a thorough re-assessment of the IRP, taking into account wider economic impacts thereby allowing a proper comparison of costs and benefits to be made. If this comparison finds that alternative NPR options, such as the Board's preferred network perform better, the Committee calls for the IRP to be revisited. The Committee is also concerned about the focus on upgrades and the level of disruption this would cause. The report casts doubt on the focus on journey times, rather than capacity, and whether these reductions are achievable on upgraded routes. Concerns are also expressed on choices on NPR sections,

stations and on the curtailment of the eastern leg of HS2. As a result, there is considerable synergy between the Committee's conclusions and the written evidence submission made by TfN to the Committee.

Golborne Link

- 3.5 Golborne Link, which connects HS2 to the West Coast Main Line, was included in the IRP subject to the findings of the Union Connectivity Review. A Government announcement in June 2022 said that Golborne Link would not now be progressed and a study of alternatives would commence, although without setting out how this would be taken forward. The Select Committee recognises that Golborne Link was not perfect but expresses concern that it was cancelled without an alternative being proposed. It calls on the Government to set out alternative plans which add similar capacity as a minimum by March 2023.

HS2 Eastern Leg

- 3.6 The IRP curtailed the Eastern Leg at East Midlands Parkway, with HS2 trains reaching Sheffield from there using upgraded existing routes. How Leeds is served by HS2 trains is to be the subject of further study. The Committee notes that the failure to calculate an updated benefit-cost ratio (BCR) raises questions over whether the case for changes to the HS2 Eastern leg have been properly assessed. It calls on the Government to publish by March 2023 an updated BCR for (a) the entire HS2 project and (b) the previous full proposals for the Eastern leg of HS2 Phase 2b. The methodology used must fully reflect impacts on regional inequalities. It also calls for a timetable for the HS2 to Leeds work, including a firm date for the final report, to be published by September 2022.

Bradford

- 3.7 The TfN Board's preferred NPR network included a new line between Manchester and Leeds via a new through station in Bradford. The IRP only commits to electrification of the existing route between Bradford Interchange and Leeds. The Committee notes the economic potential of Bradford, which has a significant labour pool, and how this potential is held back by poor connectivity, acknowledging that rail journey times today are slower than a century ago. The Committee calls on the Government to ensure that the impact of NPR decisions on Bradford in particular is robustly assessed, including producing BCR analyses for all NPR options. It also calls for the Government to revisit the case for a new through station at St James Market in Bradford which would be future proofed for future rail proposals.

Leeds

- 3.8 Plans have been developed by Leeds City Council working with Partners to redevelop Leeds Station as part of wider development plans for the southern part of the city centre. Under HS2, new terminal platforms would have been provided at 90 degrees to the rest of the station. With no eastern leg of HS2, these proposals are not currently supported in the IRP, leading to uncertainty over land allocations and future development plans. The Committee's report acknowledges the extent to which the current Leeds Station is the third largest source of delays on the national network (after Clapham Junction and Birmingham New Street). The Committee asks the Government to commit to supporting redevelopment of Leeds station by 2035 so that it has sufficient capacity to accommodate services planned under the IRP including HS2 trains arriving in Leeds.

Manchester Piccadilly

- 3.4.5 The IRP plans are for a HS2 surface station on the north side of the existing Piccadilly Station, with a turnback for NPR trains heading east. There are different views on the optimum solution for Piccadilly, with local Partners

favouring an underground station that would allow NPR trains to continue east without reversal. The impact of a surface or underground station on wider development plans for the area is also an issue. The Committee notes the issues and complexity of finding the right solution at Piccadilly but significantly recognises the benefits of a through station. It goes on to suggest that if an underground station is preferred, there is scope for local funding contributions and this should form part of a renewed, transparent conversation about the risks and benefits of the underground station option between the Government and Manchester stakeholders.

4. Implications for TfN

- 4.1 The Transport Select Committee's report picks up many of the points made in the TfN evidence submission and at the hearing held by the Committee. In particular, the recognition of the need for a wider economic assessment of the IRP proposals is welcome, as is the consideration of the impacts of decisions made on HS2, where curtailment of the eastern leg could be counter to the need to grow the North's economy. Both are points that TfN has highlighted following publication of the IRP.
- 4.2 Both the IRP and the bulk of the Select Committee's Inquiry predate the change of Prime Minister. That change may impact on both the timing and the content of the Government's response to the Select Committee's report.
- 4.3 TfN Members will have noted the commitment made by the new Prime Minister during her leadership campaign to deliver NPR in full. Such a commitment is to be welcomed and TfN is well placed to work with the new administration to use its technical work and knowledge to support such a commitment being realised. However it is essential that rapid progress is made in delivering those elements of the IRP to which the previous administration committed funding. TfN remains committed to working with the Department (as co-sponsor) as it looks to deliver on that previous commitment, whilst at the same time working with the new administration on the longer-term NPR ambition.
- 4.4 The Chairman has written to the new Prime Minister on behalf of the Board, welcoming her strong commitment to seeing Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) constructed in full, restating the Board's agreed vision for the network and seeking early confirmation that the government will reverse decisions taken in the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP), including on the Eastern Leg of HS2. Similarly full delivery of HS2 including connectivity to Leeds and the ability to connect Lancashire, Cumbria and Scotland to HS2 is important. NPR and HS2 complement each other to provide the North's strategic connectivity, supported by local and regional networks to fully connect the North. The Chairman has also written to the Secretary of State on the development of HS2 as directed by this Board in June. Copies of both letters are annexed to this paper.
- 4.5 TfN's evidence base, including the Future Travel Scenarios, has shown the critical importance of improving the rail offer and planning for significant additional capacity in the rail network if the North is to realise its economic potential and achieve the modal shift required to decarbonise our transport system.

5. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Resource Implications

- 5.2 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

5.3 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Management and Key Issues

5.4 There are no risk implications arising from this report. TfN's Corporate Risk Register contains risks in relation to Co-sponsorship.

Environmental Implications

5.5 There are no environmental implications arising from this report. This report does not constitute or influence 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.

5.6 Expansion of the rail network (both passenger and freight) is an essential part of delivering TfN's Decarbonisation Strategy.

Equality and Diversity

5.7 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

Consultations

5.8 No consultations have been carried out.

6. Background Papers

6.1 There are no background papers.

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 – Letter to the Prime Minister
Appendix 2 – Letter to the Secretary of State

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used (*if applicable*)

a) HS2	<i>High Speed 2</i>
b) IRP	<i>Integrated Rail Plan</i>
c) NPR	<i>Northern Powerhouse Rail</i>
d) WCML	<i>West Coast Main Line</i>