
Meeting: Transport for the North Board Chief Executive Consultation Call
Subject: Strategic Transport Plan Development
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Meeting Date: Wednesday 14 December 2022

1. Purpose of the Report:

1.1 To agree the overarching narrative and key messages for the second Strategic Transport Plan (STP2).

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Board:

- a) Endorse the proposed overarching narrative for STP2 set out in Section 4
- b) Agree the proposed key priorities and messages set out in Section 5
- c) Note the next steps set out in Section 6

3. Context

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. In September 2021, the TfN Board agreed that TfN should commence work on a new programme of work to revise and update the Strategic Transport Plan (STP2) and seek adoption of the new plan no later than Spring 2024. Subsequent papers to the Board in March 2022 and June 2022 have agreed the overall structure and approach to STP2.

3.2 The executive continues to work closely with partner authorities to ensure that the next STP matches the vision and ambition of the original plan, but also incorporates the very significant work undertaken by TfN since 2019. In addition, the review presents the opportunity to recognise the new context and challenges facing the transport network since the pandemic. A series of positions on key issues have been developed over the last two years and agreed with the Board, including:

- a) The TfN Decarbonisation, Freight and Socially Inclusive Transport Strategies.
- b) Policy positions covering topics including international connectivity, rural mobility and spatial planning
- c) TfN Board positions on critical infrastructure requirements such as Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2.

3.3 The final elements of the evidence base, including the Independent Economic Review, are being finalised and the intention is to publish all of the agreed evidence base alongside the draft plan in the Spring of 2023. We will also work with partners and stakeholders to enhance the evidence base with supporting information and relevant case studies to bring the STP to life.

3.4 The draft Strategic Transport Plan will be presented for sign-off at the TfN Board in March 2023. A statutory consultation will then follow in the summer of 2023, with a post-consultation version of the STP presented to Board for adoption in December 2023. An independent sustainability assessment (ISA) is also being prepared and will be published alongside the consultation version of the STP.

3.5 The purpose of this paper is to agree the overarching narrative, key priorities and messages so as to enable officers to complete the draft STP and engage with partners, Scrutiny Committee and the TfN Partnership Board in advance of the March Board meeting.

4. Overarching Narrative

4.1 Building on TfN's extensive evidence base and technical work an overarching narrative for STP2 starts to emerge based on:

- Restating that unlocking the economic potential of the North should continue to be a priority for the UK
- Investment to improve connectivity is fundamental to realising the North's economic potential, reducing social exclusion, and improving quality of life
- Transformation of the strategic connectivity between the North's cities and towns through the full Northern Powerhouse Rail proposal must be complemented by investment in integrated local transport solutions

This will require the North and its partners to:

- Move at pace to deliver the investment in infrastructure and services that improves connectivity, particularly so as to meet the requirement to achieve net-zero carbon
- Harness the opportunities available in a post-pandemic world to change the way we plan for, develop, and deliver transport infrastructure and services
- Work to align investment in transport with other strategic infrastructure investment to achieve the North's ambition

4.2 The cost effective and timely implementation of the framework set out in STP2 will require:

- The simplification of funding streams, thereby removing cost and inertia from the delivery of investment
- Greater flexibility in the application of the funding available, to ensure that it is targeted towards the delivery of outcomes that are place-based and user-centred
- An increase in the total investment made in the North's infrastructure and services

And this will be facilitated by:

- Providing a five-year indicative funding envelope within which statutory advice on infrastructure and service priorities is prepared
- Adopting a programme approach to the delivery of agreed strategic priorities within that funding envelope
- Working with the private sector to maximise the leverage achievable through public sector investment

4.3 This overarching narrative will continue to evolve as the detail of the STP2 is prepared. However, it will be helpful to TfN and its partners in the short term in making the case for the North following the recent Autumn Statement.

5. STP Structure and Key Messages

5.1 The Board has previously agreed a revised structure for STP2, built around four key elements:

- a) **The Case** - Setting out the Case for Change in terms of the economic, environmental and social challenges/opportunities for the North.
- b) **The Vision** - Setting a clear and ambitious 30-year vision, supported by strategic objectives and metrics

- c) **Policy and Place** – Including a “Policy for Places Framework” that enables the strategic vision and objectives to be applied to the North’s communities
- d) **The Impact** - Measuring the impact of the STP2 and setting out how TfN will work with government, local transport authorities and the industry to deliver the North’s vision.

5.2 The **case for change** will build on the original STP, retaining the original vision and scope of the previous version, but incorporating the significant change in context since 2019, the new evidence on inclusive growth and decarbonisation from TfN and the challenges and opportunities emerging from the refresh of the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER). The key messages in this section will cover:

- a) The opportunity and challenges to transform the North of England’s economy and society, building on the output from the NPIER and demonstrating the economic, social and environmental benefits to the North, the wider benefits of reducing regional inequality and why an economically stronger North benefits the UK.
- b) Set out why, given the North’s economic and social geography, improved connectivity is essential for realising that vision. Whilst transport investment can be a catalyst for change, it is not sufficient alone and alignment with investment in other areas of public policy is needed including skills, housing and place making.
- c) The case for change will be clear about the scale of challenge we face to improve connectivity across five key areas of transport (with strongest focus for TfN on improving connectivity between places and key economic assets), and why the current system is holding back investment.
- d) The importance of the North’s road network (reflecting the continued importance of the network to communities across the North but with an emphasis on the need to choose how the space available is used in order to meet needs to decarbonise, maintain access for freight and encourage active travel)
- e) The critical role of the rail network in transforming the overall transport system (recognising the need to move beyond the current crisis and take clear steps to create capacity for passenger and freight growth over a sustained period of investment)
- f) The need to invest in improving local connectivity (majoring on how this helps address the extent to which our current transport system too often acts as a barrier, how this represents an opportunity to decarbonise transport but highlighting the challenges facing LTAs in terms of funding)
- g) The importance of investing in access to international connectivity (with our ports and airports as key economic assets)
- h) The need to align investment across our transport system to achieve an integrated, affordable and connected offering (building on TfN’s work on integrated ticketing programme and smart mobility).

The case for change will use TfN’s Future Travel Scenarios (which informed the regional Decarbonisation Strategy) as the basis for planning and preparing for growth in public transport (particularly rail growth).

5.3 The TfN Board has previously agreed that STP2 will have a single vision for the North’s transport network, supported by three strategic ambitions. The Partnership Board reviewed the **draft vision and objectives** in September, following which we have finalised the draft vision as:

In 2050 the North of England will have become a thriving, socially inclusive region. Our communities, businesses and places will all benefit from

sustainable economic growth, improved wellbeing, and access to opportunities for all. This will be achieved through a transformed zero emission, integrated, safe and sustainable transport system, that will enhance connectivity, resilience, and journey times for all users.

And the three strategic ambitions are proposed as:

- a) Rapid decarbonisation of the transport network by 2045 (as agreed in the TfN Decarbonisation Strategy adopted by the Board in November 2021);
- b) Significantly reducing transport related social exclusion (defined in the Inclusive Transport Strategy agreed by the TfN Board in September); and
- c) Transforming economic performance (as defined by the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review set out in the item in the paper).

5.4 The vision and strategic ambitions for the North will be underpinned by a clear set of outcome measures and supporting metrics that will, collectively, guide TfN and partner activities in its implementation. As previously agreed with the Board, the inclusion of clearly defined metrics underpinned by a robust monitoring and evaluation strategy and clear “golden thread” between activities and outcomes represents a major step forward from the previous STP, including:

- a) Including a “right share” metric that will support efforts to reduce car dependency and create the capacity required to accommodate growth on our public transport networks;
- b) Explicitly recognise the scale of change required in accessibility required to unlock opportunity and reduce social exclusion;
- c) Put in place a long-term ambition to double the share of freight carried by rail.
- d) Adopting the “vision zero” approach to eliminating deaths on our major road network by 2050.

Interim milestones for key metrics will identify what progress is required over the next 10 years to deliver on the longer-term outcomes. And because TfN is able to consider the transport system, economy and environment as a single system, we will demonstrate the synergies, trade-offs and challenges across a single system.

5.5 A full set of proposed metrics is attached at Appendix 2. There will be limited opportunity to refine the definitions further after the December Board without causing a delay in the overall STP. Calibration of target levels is currently being finalised with partners’ officers and we intend to discuss with the TfN Partnership Board in early 2023.

5.6 The **Policy and Place framework** has been developed to provide a more robust and transparent demonstration of what needs to be true to achieve the outcomes in STP2 across the different geographies of the North. It builds on TfN’s existing work on economic and social geography to present nine place typologies, developed through a series of workshops with partner officers. This innovative approach is how we will ensure the high-level vision and objectives of the plan translates into meaningful outcomes and policies for all parts of the North’s economy and society. In addition, this section of the STP will also set out:

- a) What connectivity is required between places in the North and between the North and the rest of the UK to deliver the outcomes and objectives of the plan, including the key road, rail and freight connections within TfN’s Strategic Development Corridors
- b) Recognise the critical challenges facing the transport network and set out a realistic pathway forward through the next 10 years so we are on track for the long term.
- c) Why building NPR and HS2 in full remains central to achieving the required transformation in strategic connectivity for the North.

- d) The critical need to invest in improved local connectivity and to accelerate devolution in order to enable proper integration of local public transport networks.
- e) The importance of adopting a “whole journey” approach to affordability of travel and mobility.

5.7 As previously agreed with the Board, the STP will not revisit the TfN investment programme published in 2019. There will be a need to review the investment programme against the revised objectives of the STP as part of business planning for 2023/24. At the same time it will be important to identify the immediate strategic road and rail priorities for the next two 5-year funding periods for Network Rail and National Highways.

5.8 Finally the **Impact** section will set out how TfN will work with Government, the wider transport industry, infrastructure owners and delivery bodies, and partner authorities to implement STP2. The impact section is proposed to cover five key areas where TfN can have most impact, including:

- a) TfN’s role in supporting and enabling delivery both as a statutory body and through its formal role with the Rail North Partnership and as co-sponsor of NPR.
- b) How TfN can act as a centre of excellence in strategic transport planning for LTAs, building on the industry leading analytical capability held within TfN and wider expertise in transport planning and business case development.
- c) An updated assessment of the overall level of the funding required (across multiple Parliaments) and the benefits of a long-term multi-modal investment pipeline.
- d) Embedding the principles of the Northern Transport Charter, including the need for further devolution of funding and decision making and outlining the need to embed passenger experience within our work including the citizens’ panel currently being established.
- e) Monitoring and evaluation of progress. How we will monitor and report progress (for example on decarbonisation) against the STP vision and objectives through an annual report and action plan, which is also the opportunity to formalise and strengthen the Board’s statutory advice to Government and maintaining a focus delivery.

6. Next steps

6.1 The Board’s endorsement of the key principles, and messages at this stage now will enable officers to finalise the first draft of STP2 in early 2023.

6.2 Alongside the draft of the STP, officers are also working with Arup on the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal that will accompany the STP when published for the consultation. The conclusions of the ISA will be available for the Board meeting in March.

6.3 Subsequent to this Board’s discussion there will be an extensive period of engagement with partner officers, LEPs and with the TfN Partnership Board before the Board considers the final draft at its meeting in March 2023. This process will inform both the finalising of the draft itself and gather the contextual case studies and other illustrative information to help bring the STP to life.

6.4 Early planning is underway for a statutory consultation process to be undertaken in the summer of 2023, which will follow the local elections planned in early May. Alongside the draft STP and conclusions from the ISA, we will be seeking agreement to both the communications strategy and plans for the consultation.

7.0 Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

7.1 No direct financial implications of these recommendations.

Resource Implications

7.2 The necessary resources to prepare the STP2 to the timeline set-out in this report have been identified and agreed, aligned to TfN's Budget & Business Planning Process for FY2022/23.

Legal Implications

7.3 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

7.4 This paper does not require a risk assessment. TfN's Corporate Risk Register includes risks associated with STP2.

Environmental Implications

7.5 A full Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) is being prepared to accompany the preparation of the STP2, supported by external expertise. The ISA2 Report will be consulted upon alongside the draft STP2 during 2023.

Equality and Diversity

7.6 To accompany the revised STP we will also be undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the wider Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA).

TfN's Transport Related Social Exclusion workstream 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 revised STP.

Consultations

7.7 A consultation is not required at this time; the statutory consultation planned for the revised STP in Summer 2023 will be undertaken in due course.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – STP vision, strategic ambitions and SMART objectives

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.

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| a) ISA | Independent Sustainability Appraisal |
| b) NPIER | Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review |
| c) STP2 | Second Strategic Transport Plan |