Appendix 1: Summary of the *Strategic Rail Report*

1.1 Transport for the North's *Strategic Rail Report* is a key element of our forthcoming *Strategic Transport Plan* (STP), of which a consultation draft will be circulated in the Spring of 2023, before a final version is published early in 2024. This will be TfN's second STP, building on the award-winning plan which originally appeared in February 2019. TfN now has a wider vision: that by 2050, the North will enjoy "a transformed zero emission, integrated, safe and sustainable transport system, that will enhance connectivity, resilience and journey times for all users". In order to achieve this, TfN's objectives now include the promotion of social inclusion as well as economic and environmental goals.

1.2 The *Strategic Rail Report* outlines the North's requirements for rail investment in the short, medium and long term. It explains how TfN's own initiatives and programmes complement the investment that has already been pledged by central government, and are in fact necessary in order to begin the transformation of rail travel in the North that will be completed by major programmes such as Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU), High Speed 2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR).

1.3 TfN's long-term vision is to secure the transport investment necessary to achieve transformational and sustainable economic growth across the North. At present, productivity and incomes in the North lag significantly behind the rest of England, with gross value added (GVA) per capita in the North East, North West and Yorkshire & the Humber being only respectively 70%, 87% and 79% of the UK average.[1] To achieve "levelling up" between England's regions would therefore in itself be economically transformative. Meanwhile, a virtuous circle would exist linking social inclusion and economic prosperity; removing the transport-related barriers which prevent people from accessing educational and employment opportunities will boost skills, health, disposable income and labour market participation, thereby generating economic growth and further opportunities.[2] Similarly, reducing car dependency will both enhance social inclusion and contribute to decarbonisation.

1.4 "Levelling up" is however not just a question of reducing differences in the economic outcomes between different regions in terms of incomes or unemployment. This is the long-term objective, but reducing the clear differences in the quality of transport provision between the North of England and elsewhere in Great Britain is a crucial step on the

[1] Office for National Statistics, *Regional Gross Value Added (Balanced) per Head and Income Components,* 30th May 2022, Table 2
[2] TfN, *Transport-Related Social Exclusion in the North of England,* Sept. 2022, p. 3

path to achieving this. At present, the rail network in the North of England falls below the prevailing standards elsewhere in a number of ways:

- The North's Train Operating Companies provide almost uniformly poorer performance than those running elsewhere in Britain, with 9 of the 10 Train Operating Companies (TOCs) based in the South achieving a higher proportion of trains on time than any of the 12 TOCs which contribute to connectivity in the North;[3]
- Stations facilities are perceived as poorer, with the provision of full accessibility being particularly unacceptable, as only 48% of stations in the North have step-free access to all areas;[4]
- A lower proportion of the North's railway network is electrified and a higher proportion of our rolling stock fleet is still diesel-powered, and this has long been identified by local stakeholders as an impediment to modernising the region's railways;[5]
- There is less regional control of transport policy than in more devolved areas such as London and Scotland, leading to poorer responsiveness to local social and economic needs;
- Journey times between the main urban centres are poor by comparison to equivalent regions;[6] and
- As a result of all these factors, the proportion of passenger trips made by rail is lower than elsewhere. In the last three months of 2020, as rail demand began a temporary recovery from the pandemic, the proportion of people travelling to work by train in the North East, North West and Yorkshire & the Humber were respectively 1.2%, 3.4% and 2.6%, compared to an average for England of 6.6%.[7]

1.5 "Levelling up" can also be seen as a public health issue, due to the connection between rates of active travel and long-term sickness leading to economic inactivity. It has been noted that rates of economic inactivity due to ill health vary by region, with figures from Spring 2022 indicating that circa 7% of the working age population were inactive for health reasons in the North (with the North East having the highest rates in England), compared to under 5% in the South East, London and the East of England.[8] The promotion of active travel schemes is one of the potential mitigation measures (alongside limiting the density of fast food outlets) whose effectiveness is

[3] Office of Rail & Road, *Passenger Rail Performance: 1 April to 30 June 2022,* 15th Sept. 2022, p. 12
[4] Mott MacDonald (for TfN), *Northern England Station Enhancements Programme: Strategic Outline Business Case,* May 2022, pp. 42-50
[5] North of England Electrification Task Force, *Northern Sparks: Report of the North of England Electrification Task Force,* March 2015, pp. 15-25
[6] Leeds City Council, Liverpool City Council, Manchester City Council, Newcastle City Council & Sheffield City Council, *One North: A Proposition for an Interconnected North,* July 2014, pp. 16-17
[7] DfT, *Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2021,* 16th Dec. 2021, Table TSGB0108
[8] Chris Thomas (for Institute for Public Policy Research Commission on Health and Prosperity), *Getting Better? Health and the Labour Market,* Dec. 2022, p. 25

supported by good evidence.[9] Encouraging modal shift to rail could assist in this area, as passengers often walk or cycle to the station.

1.6 These problems are set against a background where economic, technological and cultural changes could see a requirement to accommodate a very large increase in rail demand over the next 30 years. Transport for the North have produced a number of *Future Travel Scenarios* which examine how different combinations of background factors (such as economic growth, car ownership, working culture, population distribution and the use of information technology) contribute to overall changes in transport demand between today and 2050.[10] Of the four scenarios outlined, the lowest growth in total rail demand in the North over this period would be 78%. However, in the scenario named "Urban Zero Carbon", in which population growth would be concentrated in urban areas (with a corresponding fall in car ownership), rail demand would almost triple, experiencing 193% growth.[11] Although such a large increase in rail demand might appear to be unrealistic at first glance, it must be remembered that this only represents a small drop in the proportion of journeys made by private car, and thus a modest modal shift overall.

1.7 Accommodating this level of growth in passengers will require the full implementation of the major programmes supported by TfN, namely TRU, HS2 and NPR. Our view on the importance and complementarity of these programmes is given in Chapter 6. However, these infrastructure programmes are still many years from completion, with the final phase of TRU (Leeds to York electrification) likely to complete circa 2031, and the final phases of NPR and HS2 (respectively Leeds to Manchester and the East Midlands spur) due to complete in about 2043.[12] TfN's view is that these programmes should aim to deliver the full HS2 and NPR networks, including significantly improved links from the East Midlands and Sheffield to Leeds. Furthermore, in some areas of the NPR scope (e.g. Leeds to Hull) it should be possible to make significant improvements in a much shorter timeframe. In order to support such long-term planning, TfN have produced three scenarios for the level of train services which should be provided across the North in 2050, in the form of our Combined Train Service Specifications; these are detailed in Chapter 8.

[9] Chris Thomas (for Institute for Public Policy Research Commission on Health and Prosperity), *Getting Better? Health and the Labour Market,* Dec. 2022, p. 31
[10] Transport for the North (2020), *Future Travel Scenarios: Adaptive Planning to Deliver Our Strategic Vision in an Uncertain Future,* Dec. 2020, esp. pp. 104-105
[11] Transport for the North (2020), *Future Travel Scenarios: Adaptive Planning to Deliver Our Strategic Vision in an Uncertain Future,* Dec. 2020, pp. 59-77
[12] Department for Transport, *Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands,* CP 490, Nov. 2021, pp. 134-135

1.8 However, TfN do not believe that it is acceptable or even plausible to expect that radical changes in travel patterns will only occur when these major programmes have been implemented. A modal shift towards rail travel needs to begin during the 2020s, and this *Strategic Rail Report* contains a number of TfN initiatives designed to achieve that. These include:

- A programme of improvements to stations facilities with options to bring all stations in the North up to a choice of three levels of common standards. This includes an Economic Case which demonstrates that good value for money can be produced by the two investment options in the £¾ billion to £1 billion range;
- A *Reliability & Resilience Delivery Plan* which identifies over 120 small-to-medium interventions which could improve train performance across the North, including 13 which have been noted as priorities;
- A programme of 22 routes which have been identified as having high potential for linespeed increases, of which five have already progressed to more detailed studies, and two (York to Scarborough and Darlington to Bishop Auckland) have entered Network Rail's implementation process; and
- The principles which TfN will adopt in our collaboration with DfT and Great British Railways Transition Team in order to secure our vision of "double devolution" in the future governance of the railway industry. This is intended to bring more local knowledge in to the service planning process, thereby enabling a rail network more immediately responsive to local needs.

1.9 It should be stressed that these TfN initiatives complement the major programmes backed by the Department for Transport, including the Manchester Task Force, Transpennine Route Upgrade and East Coast Main Line Upgrades; through infrastructure remodelling, electrification and power supply upgrades, these programmes are also intended to improve performance and further decarbonisation. However, the TfN initiatives described above could be enacted sooner than most of the DfT programme work, and begin to encourage the modal shift to rail and performance improvements needed to lay the groundwork for the major investments of the 2030s and beyond. Our rail reform agenda would also promote additional local influence over the rail industry, thereby allowing local knowledge of our communities' social and economic needs to be reflected in decision-making.

1.10 As well as complementing the major programmes, the measures described in the *Strategic Rail Report* are aligned with TfN's overall transport objectives for 2050, in particular:

- The reduction of inter-urban journey times generated by the implementation of TfN's preferred NPR network would contribute to increasing the proportion of the North's population who can

access 500,000 jobs by rail within 60 minutes from 27% to 37%;

- The implementation of TfN's preferred NPR network and local linespeed improvements would contribute to increasing the proportion of the North's population who can access an employment centre (with at least 5,000 jobs) by public transport within 30 minutes from 63.4% to 75%;
- Modal shift to rail, accompanied by traction decarbonisation in the rail network, would contribute to reducing the North's surface transport emissions from 25 million tonnes of CO_2 equivalent to near zero by 2045;
- All of the measures described in this policy to improve the attractiveness of rail (e.g. reduced journey times, increased frequency, improved reliability, enhanced station facilities) will contribute to increasing the share of trips made by public transport from 8% to 15%; and
- The measures described to improve performance will help to achieve a Public Performance Measure (PPM) of at least 91.2% for both TransPennine Express and Northern by 2028.

1.11 TfN would particularly like to emphasise the centrality of good performance to our vision of the rail industry. Not only have performance issues dominated perception of the industry throughout 2022, but any continuing inability to return to good levels of punctuality and reliability will hamper the industry's ability to gain new customers in the long term. It would also restrict our strategic decision-making, as when passengers cannot rely on connections their preference for direct trains and aversion to interchange rises significantly, which will influence the types of solutions that we adopt. Furthermore, performance is a social inclusion issue, as evidence has emerged to suggest that some workers have lost their jobs due to persistently late train services. The improvement of punctuality and reliability is thus both a short-term and long-term imperative.

1.12 The relationship of these programmes, initiatives and goals is shown in the diagram below.

Figure 1: Inter-relationship of programmes, initiatives, outcomes and impacts