
Meeting: Transport for the North Scrutiny Committee
Subject: Strategic Transport Plan Development
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Meeting Date: Thursday 2 March 2023

1. Purpose of the Report:

1.1 Development of TfN's second Strategic Transport Plan.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Note the proposed overarching narrative for STP2 agreed by TfN Board and set out in Section 4
- b) Review the proposed key priorities and messages set out in Section 5
- c) Note the remaining process to complete and consult on the draft STP 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. The TfN Board has agreed the overall structure and approach to STP2.

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 Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) is also being prepared and will be published alongside the consultation version of the STP.

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. 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.

4. Overarching STP Narrative

4.1 Building on TfN's extensive evidence base and technical work, the Board has agreed an overarching narrative for STP2:

- 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 Delivering the outcomes in the draft STP will require longer term system reform, including:

- 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.

5. STP Structure and Key Messages

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

- The Vision** - Setting a clear and ambitious 30-year vision, supported by strategic objectives and metrics
- The Case** - Setting out the Case for Change in terms of the economic, environmental and social challenges/opportunities for the North.
- Policy and Place** – Including a "Policy for Places Framework" that enables the strategic vision and objectives to be applied to the North's communities
- 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 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:

- Rapid decarbonisation of the transport network by 2045 (as agreed in the TfN Decarbonisation Strategy adopted by the Board in November 2021);
- 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 currently being refreshed).

5.3 The vision and strategic ambitions for the North are 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 then identify what progress is required over the next 10 years to deliver on the longer-term outcomes.

5.4 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).

- 5.5 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. 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.
- 5.6 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 revised assessment of the overall level of the funding required (across multiple Parliaments) and the benefits of a long-term multi-modal investment pipeline.
 - d) 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 on delivery.
- 5.7 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 and an update will be provided to the Committee on the 2 March.

6. Next steps

- 6.1 An initial draft of the STP has been shared with officers for input and comment. The Partnership Board has also provided feedback. Further work will be undertaken on the draft Plan and the executive would welcome further input from the Committee prior to submitting the final version to Board for approval.
- 6.2 Subject to the Board's approval, planning is underway for a statutory consultation process to be undertaken in the summer of 2023, which will follow the local elections expected in early May. Alongside the draft STP, we will also publish the draft Independent Sustainability Appraisal and the remainder of the supporting evidence base for the STP, including the outcome of the refresh of the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review.
- 6.3 Following the consultation process, the STP will then be revised and resubmitted to Board for adoption in December 2023.

7.0 Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

- 7.1 The financial implications related to the publication of the STP will be captured in the 2023/24 budget that will be approved by the board in March.

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.
- 7.6 The draft STP2's draft Objectives and Policy and Place Framework were subject to iterative rounds of appraisal during December 2022 and January 2023. Overall, the results of the compatibility assessment indicate that the STP2 Objectives provide a firm underpinning to help ensure that the sustainability performance of the plan can be maximised.
- 7.7 TfN plan writers made changes to the draft plan directly due to these early ISA2 assessment outcomes flowing from the iterative assessments in December 2022 and as a result both policies and plan objectives scored stronger across the ISA2 framework within the 2023 assessment.
- 7.8 A further re-assessment of the Draft Plan, as well as a Stage 2 Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA), is expected to be undertaken during March and early April. The outputs of this later stage of appraisal, as well as the HRA, will inform the main ISA2 report, which will be shared later this year as part of the STP2's consultation in Summer 2023

Equality and Diversity

7.9 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

7.10 A consultation has been undertaken with officers in constituent authorities; the statutory consultation planned for the revised STP in Summer 2023 will be undertaken in due course.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 None.

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 |