
Meeting:	Scrutiny Committee
Subject:	Transforming the North: Strategic Transport Plan Approval and Adoption
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Meeting Date:	Tuesday 27 February 2024

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 For Scrutiny Committee to note the work that has been undertaken to amend the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) post consultation and following the announcement of Network North, ahead of providing the STP to the Board for approval and adoption.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee:
- a) Notes and support the work that has been undertaken to amend the STP post consultation and following the announcement of Network North
 - b) Notes and support the evidence base and documents to be published alongside the final STP, including the updated Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA)
 - c) Endorses the submission of the STP to the Board for approval and adoption.

3. Main Issues:

- 3.1 TfN has a statutory duty to produce a transport strategy, on behalf of the North of England. Its purpose is to set out, based on robust evidence, the strategic ambitions for transport, specifically pan-regional infrastructure priorities and issues that are common to partners and where there is efficiency in tackling them regionally.
- 3.2 The STP is intended to set out the long-term ambition for the North's transport system. It is a strategy to guide policy making, national and local planning, and investment advice. A more detailed investment pipeline for strategic (pan-regional) schemes and interventions is being developed separately, with partners, as part of the implementation advice on the STP which will follow later this year. Further details can be found under agenda item 6.
- 3.3 We had intended to bring the STP to the Board for adoption in December 2023. However, the Board agreed to defer consideration to March 2024 so that the STP could have due regard to the Government's decision to cancel HS2 to Manchester, and the publication of Network North.
- 3.4 The STP vision, strategic ambitions and outcomes remain unchanged as a result of these policy decisions. Based on the position agreed with the Board in December 2023, references to HS2 in the STP have been updated to reflect that – based on our evidence - both Northern Powerhouse Rail and the capacity and connectivity that would have been provided by HS2 are still required in full.
- 3.5 In addition, following steers from TfN Board in September and December 2023 and feedback from the public consultation, officers have:
- **Strengthened the vision** by including specific references to affordability and the need to support mode shift

- **Amended the headline metrics** so that 'right share' metrics are represented as 51% sustainable vs 49% private car mode (rather than breaking 51% down into sub-modes); our ambition is for the mode share of rail freight by 2050 to be tripled to 25.5% as tonne km, rather than doubled as per the draft STP; and the Vision Zero road safety date was accelerated from 2050 to 2040
- **Better articulated that the environmental benefits we seek are beyond decarbonisation**, including more emphasis on biodiversity net gain, air quality and the enhancements to the built and natural environment
- **Made a stronger case for freight**, embedding throughout the plan more of our existing evidence, including reference to the opportunities that inland waterways present and our aspirations for strategic rail freight interchanges
- **Reviewed our narrative on international connectivity**, to ensure we are presenting a fair and balanced view (in line with our agreed policy position) in light of feedback from both environmental stakeholders and airports that is conflicting in nature
- **Added new text** on the affordability of transport for the user, light rail / mass transit and connected mobility.

3.6 The final version of the STP is contained in Appendix 1.

4. Supporting Evidence Base and Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

4.1 The draft STP was accompanied by an independent Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) and Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA), which have been key requirements in formulating the transport strategy. The ISA and HRA made some recommendations to strengthen the STP including biodiversity net gain, more prudent use of natural resources and protection for the historic environment. These recommendations have been incorporated into the final version of the STP.

4.2 The ISA and HRA have subsequently been updated to reflect the revisions made to the STP, post consultation as set out at paragraph 3.4. This has also included a significant review of the Non-Technical Summary Report to make it more understandable, which reflects comments from the consultation.

4.3 Reassessment of the STP's strategic ambitions found that they continue to provide a strong basis to help ensure the sustainability performance of the plan; whilst changes to policy wording within the STP in most cases improved their performance when assessed against the ISA objectives.

4.4 Overall, the ISA/HRA found no significant adverse effects were likely as a result of the STP, and that the Plan would have a strong, positive influence on the North's transport network across environmental, social, economic and health indicators, providing a firm basis for future transport planning for the North.

4.5 The updated Non-Technical Summary document is set out in Appendix 2 and full copies of the main reports, including the ISA and HRA appendices, as well as the ISA Post Adoption Statement, will be published on the TfN website, alongside the final STP.

4.6 The final STP will also be accompanied by the full evidence base which includes, the monitoring and evaluation strategy, vision and objectives annex and the people and place framework. These have all been updated to reflect comments received as part of the STP consultation, as reported previously to the Board.

5. Communications and Engagement Approach

5.1 Following the consultation, we have conducted meetings with officers in partner organisations to provide feedback on how their consultation responses were taken into account as we finalised the STP.

- 5.2 A 'You Said, We Did' report will also be published alongside the final STP to set out how we have responded to the key themes raised through the public consultation. A copy of this is attached as Appendix 3.
- 5.3 Following approval and adoption by the Board, we will submit the STP to the Secretary of State for Transport as statutory advice to frame future policy and investment decisions.
- 5.4 We intended to publish the STP as soon as practicable after the TfN Board meeting, and ideally on 21 March 2024, on the TfN website. The intention is to issue a short press release, and notify key stakeholders, such as Northern MPs and relevant government ministers. We will undertake further activity following local elections in May 2024.

6. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications related to STP publication were included in the 2023/24 budget.

Resource Implications

- 6.2 The necessary resources to publish the revised STP were identified and agreed as part of TfN's Budget & Business Planning Process for FY2023/24.

Legal Implications

- 6.3 The statutory obligations on TfN under the Local Transport Act 2008 (as amended by Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016) ("the Act") in preparation of the STP will be kept under review to ensure the STP is legally sound and complies with the legal requirements. The Act (section 102I(8)(c)) requires an STB to have regard to "any current national policy relating to transport that has been published by or on behalf of His Majesty's Government". By undertaking the assessment of the new Network North policy via the draft STP, TfN is complying with its legal obligations to take in to account current national policy within the STP.

Risk Management and Key Issues

- 6.4 TfN's Corporate Risk Register includes a risk associated with the approval and adoption of the revised STP. Subject to approval and adoption by the Board in March 2024, the risk will be mitigated and retired. The intention is to develop a new risk on the corporate register to accompany the implementation of the STP as part of the business planning process for 2024/25.

Environmental Implications

- 6.5 An ISA and HRA have been independently prepared to accompany the STP, as reported above.
- 6.6 The ISA documents how and where consultation comments on the ISA and HRA have been addressed and includes updated assessments where policies within the STP have been updated in response to the consultation. The Non-Technical summary of the revised ISA2 report, has been provided as an appendix to this paper. The full ISA and HRA will be published online alongside the STP and can be provided to Committee members on request.

Equality and Diversity

- 6.7 To accompany the draft STP, an Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the wider ISA. The equality implications have been addressed in the final STP, where possible.

- 6.8 The assessment found no significant adverse effects were likely as a result of the STP.
- 6.9 The preparation of the Equality Impact Assessment has assisted TfN to fulfil its obligations under the Equalities Act 2010. TfN has gathered information to assess the impact of the STP with consideration to the needs of beneficiaries. This is in order to ensure that an accessible and inclusive solution is delivered.

Consultations

- 6.10 The revised STP has undertaken a full statutory 12-week consultation period.
- 6.11 TfN has followed the relevant statutory procedural requirements, well established legal requirements and government guidance in relation to the consultation process on the draft STP. TfN has subsequently reviewed all consultation responses received and have updated the STP accordingly.
- 6.12 As detailed above, feedback has been provided to Local Transport Authority partners on how their feedback has been considered in the final STP and we will publish a 'You Said, We Did' summary alongside the final STP.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 TfN Strategic Transport Plan Consultation Outcomes, September 2023 Board paper.
Strategic Transport Plan Update, December 2023 Board paper.
Transforming the North, December 2023 Board paper.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Final STP
Appendix 2 - ISA Non-Technical summary
Appendix 3 - "You Said, We Did"

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.

a) STP	Strategic Transport Plan
b) HS2	High Speed 2
c) ISA	Integrated Sustainability Appraisal
d) HRA	Habitats Regulation Assessment
e) TRSE	Transport Related Social Exclusion