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<b>Meeting:</b>	Transport for the North Board
<b>Subject:</b>	Transforming the North: Strategic Transport Plan Approval and Adoption
<b>Author:</b>	Danielle Bassan, Principal Policy and Strategy Officer
<b>Sponsor:</b>	Katie Day, Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communication
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	Wednesday 20 March 2024

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## **1. Purpose of the Report:**

- 1.1 For the Transport for the North Board to note the work that has been undertaken to amend the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) post consultation and following the announcement of Network North, and to approve and adopt the STP as statutory advice to the Secretary of State for Transport.

## **2. Recommendations:**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Transport for the North Board:
- a) Notes and supports the work that has been undertaken to amend the STP post consultation and following the announcement of Network North.
  - b) Notes and supports the evidence base and documents to be published alongside the final STP, including the updated Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA).
  - c) Approves and adopts the final STP as statutory advice to the Secretary of State for Transport.
  - d) Notes the proposed approach to monitoring and evaluation for the STP and provides any feedback/observations on the planned approach.

## **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. We expect to provide an update to the Transport for the North Board in June 2024.
- 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 As we have been finalising the STP with local partners, we have identified a further addition we judge necessary to make, given Network North/HS2 policy announcements, and that is in relation to plans for Manchester Piccadilly station. The Board's discussions on the "Transforming the North" paper in December 2023 noted that proposals for the station needed to be reviewed in light of HS2 infrastructure cancellation, given the station's key role in Northern Powerhouse Rail. We have therefore updated the STP to reference this review, and specifically the consideration now needed for alternative options, including an underground station.

3.6 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
- **Provided further evidence to strengthen the 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.

3.7 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 3.6. 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 25 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. Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 6.1 As part of the evidence base for the STP, we will publish our Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy in March 2024. The draft strategy was published during the consultation on the STP and has been subject to some minor adjustments, in line with the consultation feedback.
- 6.2 The strategy consists of a series of headline, core, and supplementary metrics developed in collaboration with partners that can be used to monitor progress against the STP. The headline metrics underpin the STP vision and its three strategic ambitions (economic growth, decarbonisation and reducing transport related social exclusion (TRSE)).
- 6.3 Core and supplementary metrics provide additional intelligence on progress and challenges across the North's transport network. When taken in totality, we will have a picture of progress against the STP – illustrating where more/different action may be needed year on year – and this can be used to inform TfN's advice to government and national delivery bodies, as well as support local transport planning.
- 6.4 Reporting on these metrics will be undertaken on an annual basis. This will include a summary of data linked to the headline objectives, and a breakdown of which core metrics are moving in a positive or negative direction compared to the base year. We will include a summary of performance against the headline and core metrics in our annual report.
- 6.5 There are already structures in place, via the TfN business plan and annual report, that enable us to report and set priorities for our work. We therefore judge that the purpose of an "annual action plan" for the STP (as originally envisaged) can be effectively met via these existing publications with some adjustments/augmentation.

- 6.6 The metrics will be published online in an STP performance dashboard, which will be publicly available on the TfN website. It will show the current baseline position (as per the metrics in the STP) and the most current available data to support the metrics at the end of February 2024. The annual review of the key metrics will be used to identify where further action/policies may be necessary to support our STP delivery. These outcomes will inform TfN's annual business plan.
- 6.7 The dashboard will be available to TfN partners to support their own local planning, and opportunities are being explored to enhance the dashboard, including with more locally available data. A demonstration of the dashboard has been provided to a number of TfN Officer groups and it is our intention to share it with TfN Board members at a separate meeting.

## **7. Corporate Considerations**

### ***Financial Implications***

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

### ***Resource Implications***

- 7.2 The necessary resources to publish the revised STP were identified and agreed as part of TfN's Budget & Business Planning Process for FY 2023/24.

### ***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) ("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***

- 7.4 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***

- 7.5 An ISA and HRA have been independently prepared to accompany the STP, as reported above.
- 7.6 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***

- 7.7 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.
- 7.8 The assessment found no significant adverse effects were likely as a result of the STP.

7.9 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**

7.10 The revised STP has undertaken a full statutory 12-week consultation period.

7.11 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.

7.12 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.

7.13 Scrutiny Committee endorsed the submission of the STP to the Board for approval and adoption, without amendment, on 27 February 2024.

## **8. Background Papers**

8.1 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.

## **9. Appendices**

9.1 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