

**Report to:** West Yorkshire Combined Authority

**Date:** 24 November 2021

**Subject:** **Integrated Rail Plan**

**Director:** Liz Hunter, Interim Director of Policy and Strategy

**Author:** Rebecca Cheung, Rail Development Manager

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Is this a key decision?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1: |   |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity?                                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update and advise the Combined Authority on the contents of the published Integrated Rail Plan (IRP), its implications for our region and the recommended next steps.

## 2. Information

- 2.1 Following the Oakervee review of HS2 in February 2020, the government announced its intention to draw up an Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) for the North and the Midlands which will identify the most effective scoping, phasing and sequencing of relevant investments and how to integrate HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail, Midlands Rail Hub and other proposed rail investments.
- 2.2 The IRP was finally published on 18 November 2021 after a 10-month delay. The plan sets out a core pipeline of commitments to a further £54bn of spending on rail and local transport in the Midlands and North over three decades. The IRP omits proposals for new lines and focuses more upgrades to the existing railway. The diagram in Appendix 1 outlines the proposed core pipeline of investments and their programme. Appendix 2 gives a summary breakdown of the IRP pipeline investments.

### 2.3 Here is a summary of the key IRP contents that are relevant to our region:

- A budget for major rail investment is set at £96bn of which £54bn is for the Midlands and North.
- HS2 East: Government only commits to HS2 2b East to the East Midlands only, with electrification of Midland Mainline to Sheffield (facilitating HS2 services reaching Sheffield). There is no commitment to the HS2 station at Leeds. Instead, the Government is committed to a study to look at how to link HS2 services to Leeds with a budget of £100m. The safeguarding of the previously proposed high-speed route will remain in place pending conclusion of this work.
- Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR): The project as proposed by TfN essentially no longer exists in the IRP – with Bradford omitted from the NPR network and no new line connecting it to Manchester and Leeds. Instead, Government has decided upon an upgrade between Liverpool and Warrington, to join a new line between Warrington-Manchester - Marsden, and thence a connection to the existing trans-Pennine line to Leeds. There is no commitment to the requisite capacity investment at Leeds to facilitate this, nor is there a commitment to NPR services to Hull or beyond York, or Leeds to Sheffield. There is no new connection to Bradford. Sheffield to Manchester appears to be omitted.
- TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU): TRU is now phase 1 of NPR. The route will be subject to further upgrade including electrification, though the exact scope is to be confirmed. There is very little detail about the potential disruption mitigation plans. There is uncertainty around the impacts on local services at intermediate stations, which is of wider West Yorkshire concern given the services using this line touch all five West Yorkshire Local Authorities. There is also no clear commitment on infrastructure improvement on the east of Leeds or timescale on the wider freight gauge clearance work.
- Electrification: The only named electrification scheme in this region (beyond TRU) is between Leeds- Bradford. There is no commitment on the electrification on the Calder Valley line.
- Leeds station capacity: Although it is widely recognised that the lack of resilience at Leeds station has significant implications for the wider regional and national rail network, there is no firm commitment to tackle the capacity issue at Leeds. Instead, there is commitment to fund quick-win upgrades and to undertake a study to understand the most optimal solution for Leeds station capacity – in light of post COVID-19 demand and the first phase of the West Yorkshire Mass Transit System.

- Mass Transit in West Yorkshire: There is commitment for mass transit for Leeds and West Yorkshire with £200m immediate funding, however DfT officials have confirmed that £100m of this is already part of the previously announced 'City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement', and £100m is that set out above for the study linking HS2 services to Leeds.
- East Coast Main Line (ECML) Upgrade: `IRP considers the ECML to be a more direct route to link Leeds and North East to London. However, there is no firm commitment and future improvements are subject to business case. The detailed scope for the upgrade will be confirmed following a further study to be led by Network Rail.

### Implications for this region

- 2.4 Following the IRP's publication, the Mayor of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and other leaders in West Yorkshire have expressed their anger and frustration at the promises on HS2 to Leeds, and a new line between Manchester, central Bradford and Leeds, that have been seemingly broken.
- 2.5 The IRP as it stands appears to fall short of Northern and regional ambition. There is a risk that the plan will limit the growth and the potential of West Yorkshire for many decades in terms of regional and national connectivity.
- 2.6 The plan raises a lot of uncertainties and unanswered questions which need to be clarified with the government.
- 2.7 A copy of the Mayor's letter raising issues with the IRP is included in Appendix 3. TfN has also issued a letter to the Secretary of State to offer its statutory advice. A copy of the letter is included in Appendix 4.

### Next steps

- 2.8 Based on the strength of feeling from members, it is proposed that the Combined Authority **challenge the outcome of the IRP**. This may require further West Yorkshire work to understand the comparable costings between the TfN and local proposals and the IRP, especially in relation to NPR, and Leeds-Bradford options. Work is also needed to consider the wider implications and economic and social impacts of the Integrated Rail Plan.
- 2.9 The Mayor has written to the prime minister (Appendix 1) seeking an urgent meeting with ministers. Clarification of key areas and a more collaborative working relationship with the Government involving local partners with a clear road map, timescales and a set of shared objectives, are requested.
- 2.10 At its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021, the TfN Board passed a motion noting that the IRP proposals breach commitments by Government on NPR, and to ask the Secretary of State for Transport to enter into dialogue about potential funding options for the North's preferred network.

## 2.11 There is a need to do the following:

- **Leeds to Sheffield** – as set out in the IRP, we will be seeking a joint piece of work to relook at the desired rail connectivity between Leeds-Sheffield including the opportunity to improve connectivity and journey times for our communities between the cities of Leeds and Sheffield such as Wakefield. As part of this there is an urgent need to address capacity at Leeds station.
- **Bradford and the Calder valley** – the drivers behind the need for a step-change in rail connectivity for Bradford have not changed. Work is needed to understand how this is now best done post IRP. As part of this there is a need to agree timing and plans for the Leeds to Bradford electrification and the 12-minute journey time proposal including to press for commitment to the onward electrification from Bradford to Halifax and Manchester, and ensuring no negative impacts on local services.
- **Transpennine Route Upgrade:** Whilst commitment on TRU is welcome, we need to quickly understand the scale of the significant disruption to our communities over an extended period of time. We also need to understand in more detail the assumed stopping patterns at intermediate stations such as Mirfield, Dewsbury and Morley, to ensure that the IRP meets local as well as inter-city rail needs.
- **Mass Transit in West Yorkshire:** Once Government commitment and the scope of their objectives are clarified, we need to take forward this project and agree a joint forward plan and a long-term timetable for the delivery of the complete project with the Government.
- **ECML and Leeds capacity:** We need to understand the plan for investment, ensuring wider needs are considered including platform lengthening at Bradford, capacity at Leeds, impacts on local services and resilience of the route.
- **Future Accountability and Funding for NPR:** We need to establish the future role of the Mayor and local Leaders in the decision-making of all major rail investment impacting on West Yorkshire.

## 3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 The railway plays a key role in tackling climate change. A modern, integrated, electrified railway with sufficient capacity provides cleaner, more environmentally friendly transportation encouraging modal shift to public transport and therefore tackle climate change.

## 4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 An integrated and modern railway as part of a wider transport system for the whole of West Yorkshire, is a vital pre-requisite for our places, people and

businesses to flourish. A truly Integrated Rail Plan would demonstrate how this is going to be developed over time.

## **5. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 5.1 We will ensure that the principles of inclusivity, diversity and equality are included in the design, development and consultation of any major investment programmes.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 Most of the major rail investments are funded by central Government funding. There may be an opportunity for the Combined Authority to use our local funding to accelerate and maximise the economic benefits of the major rail investments. Separate reports will be submitted to the Combined Authority when these opportunities arise.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

## **8. Staffing Implications**

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report. The next steps are dealt with by the existing resource of the Policy directorate.

## **9. External Consultees**

- 9.1 The contents and implications of the IRP have been shared with West Yorkshire chief executives and leaders. We are working closely with other authorities and the combined authorities in the north and Transport for North.

## **10. Recommendations**

- 10.1 That the Combined Authority notes the content of this report.
- 10.2 That the Combined Authority endorse paragraph 2.10 as the proposed next steps in response to the published IRP.

## **11. Background Documents**

[Integrated Rail Plan: biggest ever public investment in Britain's rail network will deliver faster, more frequent and more reliable journeys across North and Midlands - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/integrated-rail-plan-biggest-ever-public-investment-in-britains-rail-network-will-deliver-faster-more-frequent-and-more-reliable-journeys-across-north-and-midlands)

## **12. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – A summary of the core pipeline of investments

Appendix 2 – A summary of the IRP pipeline

Appendix 3 – Mayor's letter to Secretary of State

Appendix 4 – TfN's statutory advice to Secretary of State