

**TRANSPORT THEMATIC BOARD**

**04 September 2020**

**INTEGRATED RAIL PLAN FOR THE MIDLANDS AND THE NORTH**

**Purpose of Report**

This report updates members on the Mayoral Combined Authority's input into the Government's emerging Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North.

**Freedom of Information**

The paper will be available under the Combined Authority Publication Scheme

**Recommendations**

The Board is recommended to approve the Rail Needs Prospectus attached to this report for submission to the Department for Transport and the National Infrastructure Commission. This provides a further detailed statement of the Mayoral Combined Authority's (MCA) requirements from the Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North to secure a better solution from High Speed Two (HS2) and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), as well as the remaining services.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The background to the Government's Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North (IRPMN) was set out in a report to the April meeting of this Board. The IRPMN was announced by the Government as part of their response to the Oakervee Review of HS2 in February. In that response the Government announced their commitment to building HS2 in full, but also announced a further short review of Phase 2b to consider how to better integrate it with NPR as well as other proposed new services and infrastructure in the Midlands and the North.
- 1.2 The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) was tasked with undertaking an initial Rail Needs Assessment for the Midlands and North and issued a call for evidence in March. The MCA submitted a response to the call for evidence in May and has now prepared a more detailed Rail Needs Prospectus setting out our asks on a number of key areas. These documents are attached as Appendix A and B.
- 1.3 The NIC published an Interim Report in mid-July which confirms the intention to publish the final IRPMN in November. This will then inform the Government's decision on how and when to proceed with the Hybrid Bill for HS2 Phase 2b Eastern Leg. The NIC suggest that the scope of the IRPMN should be limited to:
  - Scoping, phasing and sequencing of HS2 2b, NPR and Midlands Engine Rail
  - Options for the redevelopment of Manchester Piccadilly station
  - Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade
  - Improvements to existing lines including the Midland and East Coast Main Lines.

- 1.4** The NIC will also consider more generic interventions such as electrification, digital signalling and the role of rail freight, and other interventions (>£500m) which might yield earlier benefits. The Interim Report contained a number of further consultation questions concerning the methodology for the IRPMN, to which the MCA responded. A copy of the response is attached as Appendix C.

## **2. Proposal and justification**

- 2.1** The MCA response to the NIC's Rail Needs Assessment addressed each of the eleven questions using the SCR Integrated Rail Plan as an agreed policy position, supplemented by more recent work. Our response recognised that the City Region needs a high speed rail network that is well connected to the conventional network through a series of planned hubs and interchanges, and which serves a wider spread of towns and cities. The proposed IRPMN needs to do exactly the same – helping to grow our economy, meet our carbon reduction targets, reduce dependency on cars and stimulate investment in people, businesses and places.
- 2.2** It was argued that the IRPMN should include both the eastern and western legs of HS2 Phase 2b and the whole NPR network, plus other strategic rail investments that facilitate or complement these projects. This will address decades of underinvestment in rail in the North and support the Government's wider plans for a more balanced low carbon and sustainable economy. The planned investment in new infrastructure will provide greater resilience to the existing rail network, and free up capacity for additional local and regional passenger rail services as well as rail freight, which are fundamental to achieving our transport objectives around economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.
- 2.5** The IRPMN should take account of rail schemes within committed programmes, particularly the long-awaited improvements to the Hope Valley Line, as well as line speed and capacity improvements between Doncaster and Leeds. Other schemes across the North that are being planned, such as addressing capacity constraints in Central Manchester, at Stockport and at Leeds station, should also be progressed as these are vital to deliver service enhancements for the City Region.
- 2.6** We believe that the Plan should not look to pick 'winners and losers', but set out a holistic set of improvements, all of which are required to achieve the desired outcomes, in a phased long term pipeline for major rail investment. The sequencing of the interventions will be important, and this should be informed by earliest possible delivery of economic benefits where they are most needed.
- 2.7** There are five schemes in the City Region that merit early delivery in the Plan:
- Full electrification of the Midland Mainline from Market Harborough to Sheffield, enhancing journey time and reliability on this existing key connection to London and accelerating the reduction in carbon emissions for intercity rail;
  - Upgrading and electrifying the 'Northern Loop' from Sheffield to the East Coast Main Line at Moorthorpe could bring early benefits, particularly to Barnsley, Rotherham and the Dearne Valley with the proposed new NPR stations;
  - Considering which elements of the Sheffield to Manchester NPR proposals could be delivered early, as well as delivery of the committed Hope Valley Line scheme and introducing the third fast hourly train that the scheme would facilitate;
  - Extension of the tram-train service from Rotherham Parkgate to Doncaster will allow some local heavy rail services to be converted to tram-train, thereby freeing up capacity for HS2 and NPR services between Sheffield and Leeds;

- Delivering the GatewayEast Rail proposals will provide a direct rail connection to Doncaster Sheffield Airport and relieve some of the capacity constraints at Doncaster station in advance of HS2 Phase 2b.
- 2.8** The response also recognised that rail freight must form part of the needs assessment, addressing the capacity needed to meet growing demand, especially as part of the move to decarbonise transport. Rail freight supports some of the City Region's key regional industries and permits the import and export of resources through key connections to the Humber ports, power stations and centres of aggregate production. There remains no suitably gauge cleared route across the Pennines for container freight services and there are a number of constraints in the City Region where conflicts between freight and passenger services are expected to increase.
- 2.9** To build on the City Region's response to the NIC Rail Needs Assessment, it is also proposed to submit a Rail Needs Prospectus setting out in more detail our requirements for a better deal on the key Sheffield to Leeds and Manchester corridors as well as from HS2 and the remaining services. A session was held with SCR Local Authority transport leads to develop these requirements. The statements of requirements that will form the Rail Needs Prospectus set out what works well for SCR as well as where improvements need to be made.
- 2.10** The Sheffield to Leeds corridor will be served by a combination of HS2 and NPR services to provide four fast trains per hour. Each of these trains will also stop at one of the two new NPR stations at Rotherham and Barnsley Dearne Valley. The City Region is also calling for the early delivery of the 'Northern Loop' upgrades to the existing line as well as the HS2 link into Leeds and the new stations. Alongside this, a better spread of services around the clockface is required, and a direct HS2 service to York and Newcastle. It is also seeking a satisfactory service offer from HS2 including a direct link to Birmingham. This corridor is one where a more integrated approach to delivery and services between HS2 and NPR is required as at present the responsibility for delivery is split at Sheffield Midland.
- 2.11** On the Sheffield to Manchester corridor, the prospectus is calling for the early delivery of some of the NPR upgrades, as well as the shorter term capacity scheme to deliver a third fast train per hour. It is supporting the NPR option that would enable two of the four trains per hour to go via Marple and into the HS2 station then onwards to Manchester Airport and Liverpool to provide a faster journey time, with the remaining two trains going via Stockport. The requirements around Sheffield Midland station are also addressed to deliver both these corridors and HS2.
- 2.12** The statement on residual 'classic' services addresses the need to maintain, and where possible enhance, existing connectivity, especially in relation to released capacity on the East Coast Mainline once HS2 opens, and also where HS2 and NPR will constrain capacity on existing lines including the Midland Mainline. Converting some heavy rail services to tram-train forms part of the solution.
- 2.13** The statement on the HS2 route reviews the mitigation study that SCR commissioned in 2017 to examine the opportunities to amend the eastern route through South Yorkshire at a number of locations where it would have a detrimental impact on communities. The review concludes that the opportunities to amend the route are limited and costly and could impact on additional properties and add delay and costs to the HS2 project.

### **3. Consideration of alternative approaches**

- 3.1** Not engaging positively with the NIC and the process of developing an IRPNM risks missing the opportunity to secure a better overall outcome for South Yorkshire from HS2 and NPR.

- 3.2** Different approaches and alternatives to the Government's HS2 and NPR proposals have been considered as part of the MCA's response to the NIC.

#### **4. Implications**

**4.1 Financial**

There are no specific financial implications at this stage of the process.

**4.2 Legal**

There are no specific legal implications at this stage of the process.

**4.3 Risk Management**

As part of the detailed assessment of alternatives, a risk analysis will be produced which will highlight both SCR-level programme risks and individual project risks as appropriate.

**4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion**

The SCR Transport Strategy includes an Equalities Impact Assessment as part of the Integrated Assessment. It is expected that equalities and diversity issues will be considered in the delivery of schemes in each package.

#### **5. Communications**

- 5.1** Alongside the submission to the NIC and the development of the SCR's input to the Integrated Rail Plan for the North, SCR will be preparing a communications and influencing plan.

#### **6. Appendices/Annexes**

- 6.1** Appendix A – SCR response to the NIC Rail Needs Assessment for the North and Midlands Call for Evidence.

Appendix B – Draft SCR Rail Needs Prospectus.

Appendix C – Response to NIC Interim Report consultation questions.

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: SCR Integrated Rail Plan (July 2019)