

Transport and the Environment Board

16 December 2021

Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North

Is the paper exempt from the press and public? No

Purpose of this report: Discussion

Is this a Key Decision? No

Has it been included on the Forward Plan? No

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

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Executive Summary

This report sets out the key outcomes of the Government's Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and North that impact on South Yorkshire and how the MCA proposes to respond to the plan, to maximise the benefits for the region.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

The Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North determined the Government's planned investment in major rail projects over the next 20-25 years. This investment, and where it is focussed, will have a significant impact on connectivity and rail patronage and its associated benefits for the UK economy and society.

Recommendations

Note the report and agree the proposed next steps.

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

None

1. Background

- 1.1 Following the publication of the Oakervee Review of HS2 in February 2020, the Government made a commitment to build HS2 in full. However, it also commissioned a further review from the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) into the rail needs of the Midlands and North. This review was tasked with looking particularly at how best to deliver the eastern leg of HS2 Phase 2b more effectively with Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), Midlands Engine Rail and other major rail projects.
- 1.2 The NIC's Rail Needs Assessment report was published in December 2020, and the Government was expected to publish their response to it in the form of an Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) for the Midlands and the North in January 2021. For a variety of reasons, the IRP publication was delayed several times, and it was finally published on 18th November 2021.
- 1.3 This report summarises the key outcomes of the IRP for South Yorkshire and sets out how the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) proposes to respond. The table in Appendix A summarises these outcomes in bullet point format and compares what was expected with the actual outcome, and impact on residents and businesses.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The IRP resulted in a number of outcomes for South Yorkshire and the wider North, with major projects such as HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) scaled back but other investment proposed that will bring some benefits sooner. Overall, the outcome was worse than expected for South Yorkshire, as well as neighbouring West Yorkshire, while Greater Manchester and parts of the East Midlands did relatively well out of the plan.
- 2.2 Whilst media headlines reported the 'cancellation' of the eastern leg of HS2 Phase 2b - the leg between the West Midlands and Leeds - on closer analysis, it has not actually been cancelled. The section of the eastern leg from the West Midlands to East Midlands Parkway (on the Midland Mainline south of Derby and Nottingham) will be built. The section from East Midlands Parkway to Leeds will not be built but is also not officially cancelled as the line of route will remain safeguarded, until further work to investigate how best to serve Leeds by HS2 is completed.
- 2.3 Sheffield will still be served by HS2, with two trains per hour (tph) from London as planned but using more of the Midland Mainline. Furthermore, the IRP states that the journey time for these trains will still be 87 minutes between London and Sheffield, the same as with the full eastern leg. Whilst this seems a satisfactory outcome, the journey time of 87 minutes seems rather ambitious given the trains will use more of the Midland Mainline and have an additional stop at Derby. The IRP also committed to complete the Midland Mainline electrification to Sheffield, something that the Mayor has called for many times and will benefit air quality and reduce CO₂ emissions.
- 2.4 The IRP commits to a further study to examine how best to serve Leeds by HS2. £100m has been allocated to this work, although no scope or timescale is set out. SYMCA would expect to be closely involved in this work as it could have implications for our rail network and some of our NPR outcomes. It should also

result in a final decision on whether to cancel or build the remainder of the eastern leg of HS2 from the East Midlands to Leeds. This is crucial for the residents and businesses along the route who continue to live with the blight and uncertainty, an issue MCA officers have already raised with DfT officials, who recognise this.

- 2.5 One of the disappointing and somewhat unexpected outcomes of the IRP was the lack of a commitment to build the section of the HS2 eastern leg between Clayton Junction (just north of Thurnscoe) and Leeds. This was widely expected to be included and would have enabled HS2 and NPR trains to travel between Sheffield and Leeds in 24 minutes, providing the NPR output of 4tph in 30 minutes or less. Without that new line and the new HS2 station in Leeds, this output will be difficult to achieve as trains will have to use the existing East Coast Mainline into Leeds.
- 2.6 The IRP was particularly disappointing for South Yorkshire, and the wider North, on NPR. It failed to commit funding to the whole of the NPR 'preferred network', which included Sheffield's routes to Leeds, Manchester and Hull, as well as onward to Manchester Airport, Liverpool and Newcastle. Therefore, Sheffield is effectively excluded from the NPR network and there is no commitment to any further development work on those corridors including the two new stations at Rotherham Mainline and Barnsley Dearne Valley, or the tram-train extension to Doncaster. Instead, the IRP focuses investment on the Liverpool-Manchester-Leeds corridor, but even there it only committed to a partial new line and a partial upgrade of existing lines and did not include the proposal to serve Bradford via a new line and station.
- 2.7 The IRP commits funding to a significant upgrade of the East Coast Mainline to enable faster journeys between London and Leeds and Newcastle. This investment will also benefit Doncaster, though it is not yet clear if any of the investment will go towards reducing the congestion and performance issues around Doncaster station. There is also a commitment to complete the current Hope Valley Line upgrade but no firm commitment to the third fast train that it should enable.

3. MCA Response to the IRP

- 3.1 Following publication of the IRP, MCA officers have been assessing the implications for the region and discussing a proposed response. A table has been produced showing the expected and actual IRP outcome, which is attached as Appendix A. Work is now focussing on next steps.
- 3.2 The Mayor did a round of media interviews on the day of the IRP release, in conjunction with other Northern Mayors and Leaders, and the MCA issued a press statement, followed by a number of tweets. The Mayor also wrote a detailed response letter to the Prime Minister, which was published on Twitter. The Mayor and Director also had a brief meeting with the HS2 Minister Andrew Stephenson to discuss the IRP. This was followed up with an officer-level meeting with DfT officials covering HS2 and NPR. The IRP has also been discussed with MCA Chief Executives and business groups.
- 3.3 The IRP was the main item on the agenda of the Transport for the North (TfN) Board on 24 November that the Mayor attended, along with the TEB Co-Chair and LEP Member Peter Kennan, and spoke strongly about the adverse impact the IRP will have on the region. The Mayor also put forward an amendment to the motion to

Government proposed by Mayor Burnham, to ensure that Sheffield remains fully on the NPR network. TfN have issued a robust response in the form of statutory advice to Government, on which MCA officers provided comment.

- 3.4 The next stage of the MCA response will be to develop a response to Government. This will focus on schemes that are already funded or in the pipeline and deliverable and are 'no regrets' i.e. they will provide shorter term benefits while not ruling out major longer term investment. The response will be discussed with MCA Local Authority Leaders, business groups and other key partners.
- 3.5 The MCA will also continue to work closely with neighbouring regions (including the HS2 East group of eastern leg authorities), TfN, Network Rail, HS2 Ltd, DfT and Train Operating Companies, to secure the best possible outcome for South Yorkshire, both in the short and longer term, from rail investment.

4. Consultation on Proposal

4.1 N/A

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 N/A

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

6.1 N/A

7. Legal Implications and Advice

7.1 N/A

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

8.1 N/A

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

9.1 N/A

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

10.1 Rail investment, particularly in electrification of the network, will assist in reducing rail's contribution to climate change and CO₂ emissions, and encourage a modal shift from cars to public transport.

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

11.1 N/A

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

12.1 The Mayor and MCA undertook an extensive communications campaign around the publication of the IRP, and will continue to engage with the media, partners and stakeholders around the response to it as appropriate.

List of Appendices Included

A Table of IRP outcomes for South Yorkshire

Background Papers

None