

NETWORK RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE LIMITED**NETWORK RAIL (HUDDERSFIELD TO WESTTOWN (DEWSBURY)
IMPROVEMENTS) ORDER****NETWORK RAIL INQUIRY DOCUMENT****THE INTERGATED RAIL PLAN AND THE ORDER APPLICATION****1. THE INTEGRATED RAIL PLAN (IRP)**

- 1.1 The IRP (November 2021) sets out the Government's blueprint for investment in rail travel and the development of rail services and infrastructure across the Midlands and the North and towards Scotland and London, aiming to bring together communities and strengthening the economy. It sets out how the Government will take forward and bring together the development of Phase 2b of High Speed 2 (HS2), Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), and other major Network Rail schemes and programmes for the North and Midlands over the period to 2050.
- 1.2 Paragraphs 2.2-2.4 of the IRP further emphasises the Needs Case for rail improvements, as covered in Mr Vernon's Proof of Evidence (**NR/PoE/DV/1.2**), highlighting the need for the 'levelling up' of the UK economy, and the critical role that the rail network has to play in that economic and social goal, with IRP identifying the rail network as remaining the most effective way of moving large numbers of people into city centres, and transporting volumes of goods over long distances (see paragraph 2.4).
- 1.3 Paragraph 2.7 of the IRP deals with the COVID-19 pandemic and whether infrastructure investment should continue given the impacts of the pandemic on rail passenger numbers. The IRP reaffirms Mr Vernon's proof of evidence (**NR/PoE/DV/1.2**) that investment is still required, and confirms that the impacts of the pandemic mean the requirement for levelling up, and the mechanisms to deliver this, become more urgent, not less.

2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE IRP

- 2.1 The IRP has four strategic objectives (see paragraph 2.27), these are:
- Improving transport for users by enhancing capacity and connectivity to meet long-term rail demand and make journeys faster, easier and more reliable
 - Growing and levelling up the economy by creating opportunities for skills, employment, agglomeration and regeneration.
 - Reducing environmental impact by supporting decarbonisation of the rail network, and accelerating modal shift for passengers and goods.

- Ensuring value for the taxpayer through efficient delivery of rail infrastructure, learning lessons from past projects to ensure that schemes are delivered effectively.
- 2.2 With regard to improving transport capacity and connectivity for rail users, the IRP recognises that most railways in the north are now two track and carry a mix of traffic. Typically, fast and slow passenger traffic share the line with freight. Few opportunities for overtaking limit both journey times and the total number of trains that can be effectively accommodated, and many key routes are not electrified. Delivering hundreds of miles of new and upgraded track, and new trains, will make rail travel much more efficient, reliable, comfortable, and attractive (see paragraph 2.29).
- 2.3 In terms of levelling up, and potential for growing the economy, the IRP recognises that and states in paragraph 2.31 that:
- ‘...The relatively poor capacity, connectivity and reliability of the rail network serving the Midlands and the North contributes to more isolated labour markets, less economic interaction between individuals and businesses, and a reduced ability to compete for individuals and firms deciding where to locate. The Midlands and the North include some of the most deprived communities in the country, and better transport connections can open up a much wider range of jobs. The IRP is an integral part of the Government’s ‘Levelling Up’ agenda, which will further be set out in the forthcoming cross-Government Levelling Up White Paper’*
- 2.4 The IRP recognises the critical role that electrification of the railways plays in the decarbonisation of the UK and the governments aims to be net zero by 2050. The IRP aims to increase capacity, connectivity, and sustainability of rail travel across the North. The IRP also recognises the adaptive approach to major infrastructure projects that is required in order to deliver efficient projects, that deliver value for the taxpayer in the short term, but are developed for long term benefits and gains, with wider economic advantages.
- 3. SCHEMES ADDRESSED IN IRP**
- HS2 Phase2b Western and Eastern Legs
- 3.1 The IRP recognises the need as part of the levelling up agenda, and the wider benefits it would deliver, of providing a high-speed link from Birmingham and the Midlands to the North. The IRP confirms the Government’s commitment to the delivery of the western leg of the HS2 Phase 2 proposals from the West Midlands to Crewe and Crewe to Manchester. The IRP also confirm delivery of a HS2 East Core Network including the delivery of a new high speed line from the West Midlands to the East Midlands and the delivery of major projects and extensive works to the existing rail network between the Midlands,

through Yorkshire, and up to the North East of England (including the Midland Main Line and East Coast Main Line).

Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR)

3.2 The strategic aim of NPR is to radically improve connectivity between the major cities of Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Hull and Newcastle, along with Manchester Airport. As part of the IRP, Government considered three different options (see paragraph 3.52) for achieving this aim, drawn up in conjunction with Transport for the North. The three options were:

- Option 1: A mixture of new-build high speed line, covering roughly half the route from Liverpool to Leeds, and upgrades to the existing lines into Leeds (via Huddersfield) and Liverpool (via Warrington Bank Quay) for the rest of the route.
- Option 2: An entirely new-build high speed line between Leeds and Manchester, including a new station on the outskirts of Bradford; a new line from Warrington to Liverpool (with a parkway station at Warrington); and an underground Piccadilly station with a connection allowing it to be used for Sheffield services.
- Option 3: The same as Option 2, but with a new central station underground at Warrington (still offering less convenient interchange to Bank Quay); and an underground station in the vicinity of the existing Bradford Interchange station.

3.3 The IRP, for a number of factors, including cost, timescales for delivery, timely realisation of benefits, selected Option 1 to progress. Crucially options 2 and 3 were not well integrated to the existing rail network and would have required the delivery of major rail infrastructure over a long and challenging area, with benefits to the North being a considerable number of years into the future. Additionally, as paragraph 3.56 in the IRP states:

'The full new-build schemes (Options 2 and 3) were not well integrated into the rest of the rail network. In particular, they made little reference to – and would have undermined the business case for – existing plans, known as the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU), to improve and partially electrify the current Transpennine Main Line between Leeds and Manchester via Huddersfield. Two projects for rail services between the same two places were effectively being proposed in isolation from each other....'

3.4 The IRP has addressed this possible future disconnect of rail investment and has clarified the main east-west project to be delivered for the North. The business case underpinning option 1 is highlighted at paragraph 3.59 of the IRP where it states that Option 1 had the strongest business case, but as referred to in Mr Vernon's evidence, all northern infrastructure schemes have a relatively poor benefit cost ratio, for the reasons the Government themselves have outlined in the IRP at paragraph 3.59:

'...Rail schemes in the North are at increased risk of being considered poor value for money when applying conventional cost-benefit analysis. This is driven in part by smaller city populations in the North, different travel patterns, as well as the general high cost of building rail infrastructure. However, with recent reform to Green Book guidance, the Government has also considered the strategic intent of the schemes such as levelling up and net zero.'

Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU)

- 3.5 Under the direction of the IRP and DfT, TRU will become Northern Powerhouse Rail Phase 1, including this Scheme subject to this TWA Order application. By including further improvements onto the TRU route, NPR will now achieve (see page 100):
- Significant improvements to the previous Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) plans between Manchester and Leeds, including electrification of the whole route, digital signalling throughout, significantly longer sections of three and four-tracking, and gauge upgrades to allow intermodal container freight services. This will now form the first phase of NPR.
 - 40 miles of newbuild high speed line between Warrington, Manchester and Yorkshire
 - upgraded and electrified conventional line for the rest of the route
 - electrification of Leeds–York with some sections of four-tracking
 - upgrades and electrification of the Leeds–Bradford section of the Calder Valley Line
 - reinstatement of Warrington Bank Quay low level station; upgrading and electrifying existing lines between Warrington and Liverpool; and enhancing Liverpool Lime Street station
- 3.6 In the current TRU Programme, the Scheme is the only section of track to be upgraded to 4 tracks due to the criticality of the location when managing capacity and performance. With the further improvements planned through IRP for the Manchester-Leeds section, and further afield, it is even more important now that the works proposed as part of the Scheme are delivered as quickly as possible.
- 3.7 All Options (1, 2 & 3) put forward by TfN and considered by Government for inclusion in the IRP, assumed that the existing works between Huddersfield to Westtown had been completed when considering the benefits each option would deliver, and the works required to facilitate them.
- 3.8 The Government considers (see paragraph 3.82) that by further enhancing the existing Transpennine corridor, rather than a new line via Bradford, along with

delivery of the current TRU scope including this Scheme and with additions from NPR to come in the future, this approach could:

- Deliver IRP strategic objectives and benefits sooner, including decarbonisation of the key Transpennine corridor
- Improve Bradford–Leeds sooner
- Better improve connectivity between more of the West Yorkshire towns and cities
- Offer better value for money than alternative costlier packages of investment;
- Allow for a more staged approach to construction, which is of value given the greater uncertainty over future levels of rail demand following the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- Also support the introduction of hourly freight paths across the Pennines via Huddersfield. If a third track is delivered between Huddersfield and Marsden in the first phase of NPR, then it would be possible to introduce an hourly off-peak freight path before the rest of the NPR infrastructure and services are in place, once wider gauge clearance works in the programme are delivered

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 The IRP sets the framework for rail infrastructure and services investment in the north for the next 30 years, and illustrates the Government's aims with regards to levelling up the economy and promoting economic growth. The IRP highlights clearly the role that the Transpennine Route Upgrade, and indeed, this Scheme has to play in this objective.
- 4.2 A key aim of the IRP is to realise benefits faster, and ensure delivery of infrastructure is more efficient. This Scheme represents a key building block on the wider works across the North, and is a critical piece of infrastructure in unlocking the significant benefits available.
- 4.3 The existing railway from Manchester to Leeds via Huddersfield is now confirmed as the route to be upgraded, where investment will be focussed for many years to come, with the Scheme as promoted in this TWA Order application, the first key building block, and is directly aligned to the IRP's strategic objectives by itself:
- Enhancing capacity and connectivity;
 - Assisting in growing and levelling up the economy;
 - Reducing the environmental effects through electrification of the line; and
 - Ensures value for money for the taxpayer through efficient delivery of rail infrastructure.

- 4.4 The evidence provided by Network Rail through the TWA Order Inquiry process, including Network Rail's: Statement of Aims (**NR04**), Statement of Case (**NR28**), and Mr Vernon's Proof of Evidence (**NR/PoE/DV/1.2**), remain as valid and current with the publication of the IRP. Indeed, the IRP further strengthens the Network Rail and Government need to deliver this Scheme.