

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 17 December 2021

Subject: Integrated Rail Plan for the North and the Midlands

Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Portfolio Lead for Transport and Eamonn Boylan, Chief Executive Officer, GMCA & TfGM.

Purpose of Report

This is a report for information to update Members on the content of the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and the Midlands ('the IRP').

Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Note and comment on the content of the IRP in respect of its implications for Greater Manchester.

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

There are no direct implications of this report, which is for information.

Risk Management

N/A

Legal Considerations

N/A

Financial Consequences – Revenue

N/A

Financial Consequences – Capital

N/A

Number of attachments to the report: 0

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

[Report to the GMCA 10 September 2021 'HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail'](#)

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution?

No.

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

No.

GM Transport Committee

Friday 10th December 2021

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On Thursday 18 November the Government published the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands (IRP), setting out a blueprint for the development of the strategic rail network in the North and the Midlands over the next 30 years.
- 1.2 The full plan can be found here: [Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/104444/integrated-rail-plan-for-the-north-and-midlands.pdf)
- 1.3 This report sets out the IRP's headlines for Greater Manchester. At Appendix A, a map extracted from the IRP illustrates the post-IRP network consisting of new lines and upgrades to existing lines. At Appendix B, a table summarises the key content of the IRP for Greater Manchester against Greater Manchester's preferred position.

2. Headlines

- 2.1 The IRP confirms the delivery of HS2 Phase 2b, from Crewe to Manchester (the 'Western Leg'), with new high speed rail stations at Piccadilly and – subject to "local" or "third party" funding - at the Airport. The High Speed Rail (Crewe to Manchester) Bill was announced in the Queens Speech in May 2021, and is now expected to be deposited in early 2022. GM Partners continue to develop the Growth Strategies at Piccadilly, Manchester Airport, Wigan and Stockport to maximise benefits of HS2 in Greater Manchester.
- 2.2 Regarding the approach to the new high speed station at Piccadilly, the IRP explains that the Government "continues to consider that an enlarged (6-platform) surface station can meet [the requirements for services provided by HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail] at substantially lower cost and construction impact than underground alternatives.
- 2.3 Greater Manchester continues to regard an underground station as the right solution on the basis of capacity for future high speed services, future economic growth, customer experience, resilience and reliability, and fit with local strategic regeneration and other policy priorities. While capital costs would be higher, GM's position is that these would be mitigated by a greater return on investment over the whole life of the infrastructure, including through local economic benefits accrued by way of greater opportunities to leverage regeneration and inward investment with an underground option.
- 2.4 In addition, the IRP contains significant new uncertainty over timescales and indicates that the Western Leg to Manchester may not be delivered until the early-to-mid 2040s, significantly behind the previously-expected timeframe: the HS2 Phase 2 Business Case set a 2033 completion date; the National Infrastructure Commission's 'Rail Needs Assessment' described a completion date of 2038. Further information is being requested from the Department for Transport regarding these timescales.

- 2.5 The IRP includes the Golborne Link, the infrastructure which would enable HS2 services to carry on to Wigan via the West Coast Mainline. However, the IRP notes that the [Union Connectivity Review](#) will consider whether any alternative approaches to the link to the West Coast Main Line could achieve faster and higher capacity connections for passengers from HS2 to Scotland.
- 2.6 The Union Connectivity Review was published on Friday 26th November and recommends that further work is carried out to explore an alternative connection to the WCML, for example at some point south of Preston, saving 2-3 minutes more than the Golborne link. Such a proposal could bypass Wigan.
- 2.7 The IRP also provides for a new line between Warrington and Manchester, which would connect with the HS2 line via the Airport and into Manchester and provide connectivity through ‘Northern Powerhouse Rail’ between Liverpool and Yorkshire. According to the IRP this new line could be delivered by the early-to-mid 2040s.
- 2.8 Between Manchester and Leeds a new line will be delivered connecting the high speed station at Piccadilly to the existing Transpennine Route near to Marsden. According to the IRP this new line could be delivered in the early-to mid-2040s. An upgrade of that Transpennine Route was already in planning pre-IRP (the ‘Transpennine Route Upgrade’) and the IRP further-enhances the scope of the TRU. However, Transport for the North’s preferred network for Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), with a new high speed line between Manchester and Leeds via a new city centre station in Bradford, is omitted.
- 2.9 Therefore, while the IRP sets out a long-term prospectus for investment into Greater Manchester’s railway, the pre-IRP plan for HS2 and NPR envisaged a new, segregated, high speed rail network across the North and the Midlands in which connectivity between Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Bradford, Sheffield and beyond would be dramatically improved; a level of connectivity which would generate significant additional economic and other benefits across the whole network, including for Greater Manchester. The downgrading of this plan in the IRP therefore represents a missed opportunity for the whole of the North. This is exacerbated in the Union Connectivity Review, which highlights 6 ‘Fast growth cities’ – Swindon, Oxford, Milton Keynes, Cambridge, Peterborough and Norwich – all of them in the south east of the Union.
- 2.10 Finally, IRP also signals a change in the role of Transport for the North (TfN) in the future development of NPR, with TfN being reclassified as a “co-sponsor” for the programme. TfN has previously had co-client status; however, the Secretary of State for Transport will be the sole client going forwards, supported by a central delivery mechanism comprising Network Rail, HS2 Ltd and other parties as determined.
- 2.11 The IRP was the subject of significant discussion at the meeting of the TfN Board on Wednesday 24 November. At that meeting, TfN officials advised that no evidence had been published or shared with TfN on the analysis behind

the IRP. Following the meeting, TfN northern partners agreed to work collaboratively to restate the case for NPR and to promote partnership working with Government to explore innovative funding models to support the investment. TfGM will now engage with TfN and northern transport authorities to progress this work.

3. Summary by Route

HS2 Phase 2b Western Leg

- 3.1 The Western Leg of HS2 between Crewe and Manchester will be delivered in full, with new high speed stations at Manchester Piccadilly and, subject to final agreement of a local funding contribution, at Manchester Airport.
- 3.2 Government is 'minded to consider' that a surface station at Manchester Piccadilly, integrating HS2 and NPR, should be retained in the Phase 2b Western Leg hybrid Bill design.
- 3.3 The Golborne link, which would enable HS2 services to serve Wigan via the West Coast Mainline, remains in scope. However, the Union Connectivity Review concluded that emerging evidence suggests that an alternative connection to the WCML, for example at some point south of Preston, could offer more benefits and an opportunity to reduce journey times by two to three minutes more than the 'Golborne Link'. The Union Connectivity Review recommends that more work is required to better understand the case for and against such options.

Northern Powerhouse Rail: Liverpool to Manchester

- 3.4 A new line will be delivered between Warrington and HS2 near to Manchester Airport, and an upgraded electrified line is proposed to run past Fiddlers Ferry to Liverpool.

Northern Powerhouse Rail: Manchester to Leeds

- 3.5 Between Manchester and Leeds a new line will be delivered connecting the new high speed station at Piccadilly to the existing Transpennine Route near to Marsden.
- 3.6 The IRP describes this as 'delivering NPR between Manchester and Leeds', but this falls far short of Transport for the North's preferred route of a new high speed line all the way to Leeds with a new station serving the centre of Bradford.

Northern Powerhouse Rail: Manchester to Sheffield

- 3.7 Work to improve the Hope Valley line is already underway, including line speed and capacity improvements. These works could help to facilitate a possible future third fast Sheffield to Manchester service each hour, which is a significant reduction in the 4 services an hour proposed in the TfN work.

Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU)

- 3.8 TRU is already in advanced stages of planning and the IRP further enhances the scope of the upgrade to include full 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. The IRP states that the TRU now becomes the first phase of Northern Powerhouse Rail (see paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6).

HS2 Phase 2b Eastern Leg

- 3.9 The Eastern Leg of HS2 between East Midlands and Leeds as previously planned (a fully segregated new high speed rail line between Birmingham and Leeds via East Midlands Hub at Toton) has been removed from the HS2 network, and is not included in the IRP.
- 3.10 Instead, the IRP includes a new high speed line from the West Midlands to East Midlands Parkway, along with electrification of the Midland Main Line to Leicester, Nottingham and Sheffield via Derby, and investment on the East Coast Main Line from London to Leeds and the North East.
- 3.11 The IRP also makes reference to £100m of funding to start work on a 'West Yorkshire Mass Transit System' and look at options on how to take HS2 trains to Leeds.

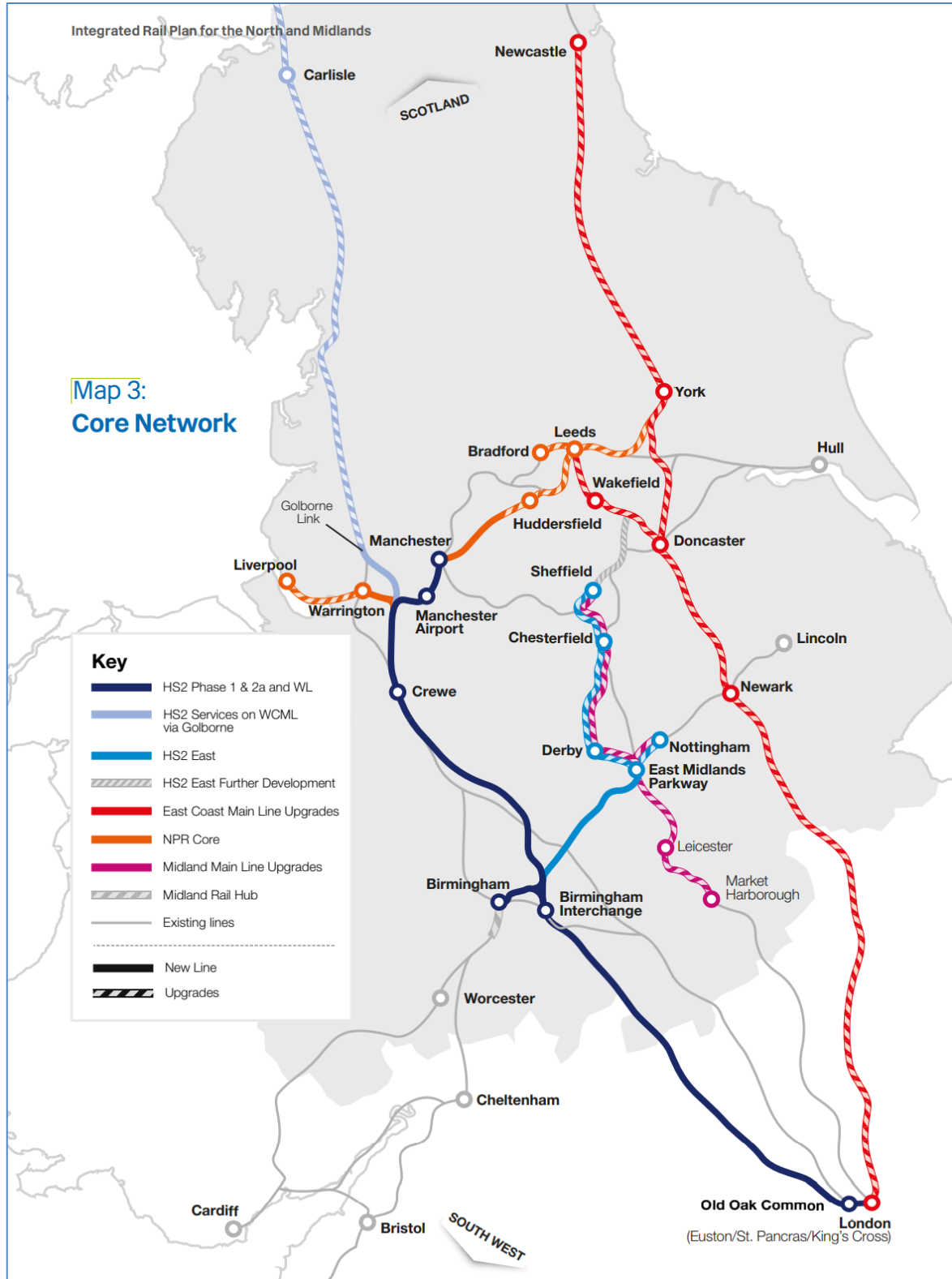
Programme

- 3.12 The IRP has raised significant new concerns about timing, disruption and ability to deliver the proposed programme of work.
- 3.13 With new lines, namely the Crewe to Manchester leg of HS2 and the Liverpool to Manchester Northern Powerhouse Rail connection, potentially not being delivered until the early-to-mid 2040s, there is a concern that the benefits of the new, segregated elements of the post-IRP network – vital for creating capacity and resilience across the railway – will not be realised for 20+ years. Given delay and uncertainty created by the creation of the IRP and the time taken for it to be published, it is particularly important that clarity is provided on the fastest-possible timeline to deliver the benefits of the plan to the North.

- 3.14 It is also unclear what assessment has been made of the disruption caused to services running on the 'classic' rail network by the extensive upgrades to existing lines proposed in the IRP. It is inevitable that disruption to passengers will be greater under the IRP than under previous plans given the shift in balance away from building new segregated lines and towards upgrading existing ones.
- 3.15 Finally, while the IRP represents a scaled-down network on that which was originally envisaged, it nevertheless represents a major programme of work taking place over a 30-year period. The 2020 Oakervee Review of HS2 set out concerns that Government needed to demonstrate a clearer approach to programme management for that particular project and recommended that "the DfT should set out its plan for improving how it functions as a sponsor, client, funder and shareholder including how it will improve its internal expertise in a number of key areas". Clarity is required on how Government is preparing to build the necessary capacity, systems and processes to ensure that the work described in the IRP is delivered without any further delay.

APPENDIX A

IRP CORE NETWORK MAP



APPENDIX B

SUMMARY TABLE OF KEY ISSUES FOR GM

Route/Leg	GM Position	Integrated Rail Plan
HS2	Western Leg to Manchester	Western Leg from Crewe to Manchester delivered in full.
	Piccadilly High Speed Station	Western Leg between Crewe and Manchester delivered in full.
	Airport High Speed Station	Government 'minded to consider' that a surface station, integrating HS2 and NPR, should be retained in the Phase 2b Western Leg hybrid Bill design, on grounds of cost, construction safety and programme implications to the delivery-into-service date of HS2 to Manchester.
	Golborne Link	Delivered, subject to third party funding. The commercial case for a contribution from is significantly undermined without an NPR connection to Bradford.
	Eastern Leg	A new high speed station at Manchester airport HS2 link to the West Coast Mainline near to Wigan delivered in HS2 Phase 2b. The Golborne link remains in scope, but the Union Connectivity Review recommends that further work is required to better understand the case for and against alternatives. Also see below: Golborne Station
NPR	Liverpool to Manchester	Delivery of the Eastern Leg in full
	Manchester to Leeds	All new line (via Warrington)
	Manchester to Sheffield	All new line (via Bradford)
Transpennine Route Upgrade		Not delivered in full. IPR will deliver new line between Warrington and HS2 near to Manchester Airport. Electrification and upgrade the Fiddlers Ferry route to Liverpool.
		Not delivered in full and no new station for Bradford. IPR will deliver new line between Manchester Piccadilly and Marsden where it will connect to the Transpennine Route.
Existing Network & Future GM Plans	Manchester to Sheffield	TfN Preference Major upgrades via Stockport and Marple
		GM Preference Major upgrades via Stockport only (to protect strategic importance of Stockport and support tram train to Marple)
		Upgrade of the Hope Valley route, including capacity and line speed improvements, and route electrification. Marple connector not ruled out, but high cost and conflict with GM ambitions for tram train highlighted.
		Capacity issue in south Manchester recognised but no solution put forward.
		Delivered in full. IPR will deliver new line between Manchester Piccadilly and Marsden where it will connect to the Transpennine Route.
Existing Network & Future GM Plans	Castlefield Corridor	Electrification of the route in full. Mossley and Greenfield stations must be upgraded, including step free access.
	Victoria	Delivered in full. 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.
	South Manchester	Delivery of the Northern Hub 'Package C' including improvements at Oxford Road and new Platforms 15 and 16 at Manchester Piccadilly.
	Golborne Station	Capacity improvements to accommodate additional services and alleviate pressure on the Castlefield Corridor.
	Tram Train	Significant capacity improvements required on the line to Stockport
	A new station on the WCML at Golborne	Reference made to the options being developed to improve capacity in central Manchester by the Manchester Recovery Task Force, but no further commitments.
	Pathfinder pilots along a number of existing rail lines across GM	Capacity issue in south Manchester recognised but no solution put forward.
		Golborne link retained, subject to exploration of alternatives. Cancellation of the link would require additional intercity services to use the WCML, making it difficult for local services to stop at a new station at Golborne.
		IRP proposals unlikely to have any impact on our Tram-Train proposals. IRP proposal for Manchester to Sheffield NPR supports proposals for future tram-train to Marple.