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Transport Committee

The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands

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Transport Committee

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There is still a need for prioritisation and hard choices, however, and the proposals set out in the Integrated Rail Plan have already left some towns and cities very disappointed. The reduction of the HS2 Eastern Leg and the choice of Option 1 for Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) will reduce the prospects of meeting ambitions for the North by limiting the vital capacity needed for growth. We have looked in detail at the implications of these decisions for Leeds and Bradford, but other communities across the North such as Hull and Sheffield are also affected.

The original purpose of NPR was to connect these great cities of the North and enable them to grow; latterly rail is central to the Government's ambition to level up the country. The evidence base for the IRP must be reconsidered in the light of these aims, if this once-in-a-generation investment in rail is not to be a missed opportunity.

Assessing the outcomes

It is crucial that decisions on how to spend this investment are based on the fullest possible evidence for what will bring the greatest overall benefit to rail services, to the economy, to the environment and to communities across the North and Midlands. We are concerned that the evidence base for the IRP is insufficient to fully understand and substantiate the decisions contained in it:

- An updated benefit-cost ratio (BCR) has not been calculated for HS2 without the full Eastern leg; we ask the Government to publish updated BCRs, using methodology that fully reflects impacts on regional inequalities, by March 2023. This is essential to give confidence that changes to the HS2 Eastern leg have been properly assessed.

- A full analysis of the wider economic impacts of the different Northern Powerhouse Rail options is needed, and BCR analyses must be produced for all NPR options. Upgrading lines will bring modest benefits, but not to the transformative extent needed to end regional imbalances. The Government must remain open to the possibility that Options 2 or 3 for Northern Powerhouse Rail would represent the best potential value: this would be consistent with the spirit of commitments previously made by the Prime Minister to investigate all the options, and to allow the lead on what comes next to be taken locally.

- The Government must by September 2022 set out a timetable for its study on how best to take HS2 to Leeds. This work is urgently needed to demonstrate that the commitment made to Leeds for high speed connections will be fulfilled.

Stations and cities

Without adequate station infrastructure and capacity, the IRP's aspirations for increasing capacity across the network would fall at the first hurdle. Several important stations are already over capacity and need development if they are to handle even the smallest of benefits under the IRP.

- We ask the Government to commit to supporting redevelopment of Leeds station by 2035 so that it has sufficient capacity to accommodate planned additional services.
- The Government should reconsider the case for the development of a new station in Bradford.
- There is a need for a renewed, transparent conversation about the risks and benefits of the underground station option at Manchester Piccadilly. The possibility of significant land value being unlocked by the underground option—and therefore of local contributions to the scheme—should factor into these conversations.
- As part of the review of the Midlands Rail Hub, the Government should commit to provision of the eastern chord in Birmingham.

Realising the benefits

The Government claims that the IRP will deliver improved journey times at a lower cost and to a quicker timescale than the plans it supersedes. Much of its success, therefore, depends on being able to deliver upgrades to cost and time, while minimising disruption, but doubts remain about the achievability of these benefits and strategies to mitigate disruption. The Government's case for the IRP is based on a best-case scenario which may not come to pass.

- The Government's presentation of the benefits of the IRP core pipeline in comparison to previous plans should factor in time and cost ranges that reflect the contingency that will, realistically, be needed for such a large and complex package of work.
- We received detailed evidence that cast doubt on the plausibility of the journey time reductions that are achievable under the plans to upgrade existing lines rather than build new ones; we ask the Government to publish its full technical appraisals of the feasibility of these reductions.
- The Government's fixation on journey times as a benefit of the IRP must not overshadow the issue of track capacity. The Department for Transport should commission a full independent assessment of the seat and track capacity offered by the IRP compared to previous plans for HS2 and other options for NPR, taking into account effects on both long-distance and local passenger services, and freight capacity.

- The Department for Transport should publish a rail freight strategy, including a detailed assessment of how the IRP will achieve greater capacity for and use of rail freight.
- We ask for a timetable for implementing a detailed mitigation strategy to minimise disruption caused by implementation of the IRP, including plans for consultation with local communities and stakeholders.

1 Introduction

1. The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands (IRP) was published on 18 November 2021. The IRP's planned investment of £96 billion on new-build and upgrades to existing rail infrastructure was described by the Secretary of State for Transport as "the largest single rail investment ever made by a UK Government".[1] The Prime Minister described it as "redressing decades of underspending in the Midlands and North, and […] levelling up our country".[2]

2. The IRP sets out a "core pipeline" of work comprising:

Three high-speed lines:

- Completion of High Speed 2 (HS2) from Crewe to Manchester (the 'Western leg');
- HS2 from the West Midlands to East Midlands Parkway;
- A new high-speed line between Warrington, Manchester and Yorkshire, adopting the first of three options that had been put forward for 'Northern Powerhouse Rail' (NPR) by Transport for the North;

Electrification and/or upgrading of three existing main lines:

- The Transpennine Main Line between Manchester, Leeds and York;
- The Midland Main Line between London St Pancras, the East Midlands and Sheffield; and
- Upgrading of the East Coast Main Line;

and associated improvements in local services, including starting work on a new West Yorkshire Mass Transit System, introduction of "London-style" contactless ticketing on commuter networks, and work to "protect and improve" services on the existing main lines.[3]

3. In some important respects the IRP revised previous plans for the rail network in the North and Midlands. The Eastern Leg of HS2 is no longer planned as far as Leeds; the Government has instead committed to "look at the most effective way to run HS2 trains to Leeds".[4] The Government's choice of the first Northern Powerhouse Rail option, meanwhile, disappointed those who had advocated for a new station in Bradford—a key element of the other two options.[5]

4. **We welcome the scale of the Government's promised spending on improving rail in the North and the Midlands. £96 billion is a very substantial sum; it has the potential to transform rail travel for future generations and make a significant contribution to levelling up the country.**

1 HC Deb, 18 November 2021, col 734 [Commons Chamber]
2 Department for Transport, Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands, November 2021, p.6 (IRP)
3 IRP, pp.15–16
4 IRP, p.13
5 Rail Plan slammed as a 'betrayal of Bradford', Telegraph & Argus, November 2021

5. **Nonetheless, there is still a need for prioritisation and hard choices, and the proposals set out in the Integrated Rail Plan have already left some towns and cities very disappointed. It is crucial that the Government bases its decisions on how to spend this investment on the fullest possible evidence for what will bring the greatest overall benefit to rail services, to the economy, to the environment and to communities across the North and Midlands.**

Our inquiry

6. We opened our inquiry into the Integrated Rail Plan in December 2021 with the intention of examining the IRP's implications for the economy, and for rail capacity and connectivity. We received more than 100 submissions of written evidence, and heard in person from witnesses including Transport for the North, rail experts, the Mayors of the West Midlands, West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester, Network Rail and the National Infrastructure Commission. As part of our programme of regular updates on HS2, we travelled to Leeds to hear from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and HS2 Ltd CEO Mark Thurston, and to meet local business leaders; we also visited Bradford and Manchester. We are grateful to all those who contributed to our inquiry.

Background: High Speed 2 (HS2) and the IRP

7. HS2 is a new high speed rail line from London through the Midlands and to the north-west of England. The case for HS2 was first set out in 2010.[6] A review of whether and how to proceed, carried out by Douglas Oakervee, former chairman of High Speed Two Ltd (HS2) and Crossrail, was published in February 2020. At that point the Government re-committed to the project, recognising its "fundamental value" in increasing capacity, reducing journey times and connecting to Northern Powerhouse Rail.[7] In the strategic case for HS2, the Government emphasised that HS2 will provide the increased capacity and connectivity needed to drive economic growth.[8]

8. Construction of HS2 is split into three phases:

- Phase One from London Euston to Birmingham Curzon Street, with intermediate stations in west London (at Old Oak Common) and at Birmingham Airport. Connecting services will travel onwards to places including Manchester, Glasgow, Liverpool, Preston and Wigan.[9] The new line between will run on 140 miles of dedicated track. Phase One is under construction and is planned to open between 2029 and 2033.

- Phase 2a, connecting the West Midlands to Crewe with 36 miles of new high-speed line. The High Speed Rail (West Midlands–Crewe) Act received Royal Assent in February 2021, allowing preliminary construction work to begin. HS2 Ltd has set a construction start date of Spring 2024 for this phase.

- Phase 2b, split into a Western leg from Crewe to Manchester with an intermediate station at Manchester Airport and a link to the West Coast Main

6 Department for Transport, High Speed Rail, cm 7827, March 2010

7 Department for Transport, The Oakervee Review, February 2020; HC Deb, 11 February 2020, col 671 [Commons Chamber]

8 Department for Transport, The Strategic case for HS2, October 2013, p.1

9 HS2, Phase One: London to West Midlands, accessed 23 April 2022

> Line, and an Eastern leg from the West Midlands to East Midlands Parkway. The IRP confirmed that the Crewe to Manchester section of the Western leg would proceed as planned; a bill to authorise it was introduced in the 2021–22 Session and carried over to 2022–23. In June 2022, despite being included in the published IRP, the Government announced that the connection to the West Coast Main Line would no longer be achieved through the proposed 'Golborne Link', and that they would look at alternatives that could be delivered within the £96 billion funding for the Integrated Rail Plan.[10]

9. Legislation has not yet been brought forward for the Phase 2b Eastern leg. Under previous plans, this leg was planned to run from the West Midlands to an East Midlands Hub station at Toton; trains would then continue north, serving Chesterfield and Sheffield via a spur to the Midland Main Line (MML), or continue on a new high speed line to a new station at Leeds, with a spur to the East Coast Main Line (ECML) to serve York, Darlington, Durham and Newcastle.[11]

10. Under the Integrated Rail Plan, "HS2 East" will now run from the West Midlands to East Midlands Parkway and there will be no new hub at Toton. HS2 East trains will now run directly through Nottingham and Derby, but there is only a commitment to study options for how best to run HS2 services to Leeds. Alongside this, the Midland Main Line will be further electrified and there will be upgrades to the East Coast Main Line from London to Leeds and the North East.[12]

Background: Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) and the IRP

11. In March 2015, the Department of Transport published a strategy for transport infrastructure improvements in the north of England. These plans were intended to "connect up the great cities of the north to build a northern powerhouse", including a commitment to "reduce journey times while increasing capacity and connectivity, enabling growth". The rail component of these plans, dubbed the "TransNorth network", proposed a number of options for improved rail links between Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Newcastle and Hull with line speeds in some sections up to 140 miles per hour.[13]

12. In July 2019, speaking at the Manchester Science and Industry Museum, the Prime Minister said

> I want to be the prime minister who does with Northern Powerhouse Rail what we did for Crossrail in London. And today, I am going to deliver on my commitment to that vision with a pledge to fund the Leeds to Manchester route. I want to stress it will be up to local people to decide what comes next, as far as I am concerned that's just the beginning of our commitment and our investment. We want to see the whole thing run.[14]

10 HC Deb, 06 June 2022 UIN HCWS77 [Commons written ministerial statement]
11 IRP, p.74
12 IRP, p.14
13 "Revolutionary plans for northern transport set out" Department for Transport press release, 2015/006, 20 March 2015
14 "PM speech at Manchester Science and Industry Museum",27 July 2019

13. The Conservative Party Manifesto, published ahead of the December 2019 general election, stated "We will build Northern Powerhouse Rail between Leeds and Manchester and then focus on Liverpool, Tees Valley, Hull, Sheffield and Newcastle."[15] In February 2020, the Prime Minister told the House of Commons: "I want the plan to identify the most effective design and sequencing of all relevant investments in the North."[16] In November, the Prime Minister said, "I can certainly confirm that we are going ahead with Northern Powerhouse Rail."[17]

14. The recently-created Transport for the North (TfN)—the first statutory sub-national transport body—was tasked with developing these plans and options. In December 2017, TfN announced a proposal for a new project called Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR); this was followed by a draft 30-year Strategic Transport Plan of staged developments for northern rail.[18] In 2019, the Government committed to funding the Leeds to Manchester section of NRP, for which TfN had put forward three options.[19] In March 2021, TfN published their final recommendations for a preferred route for NPR, based on three options:

- Option 1 was 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. The latest versions of the assured cost estimates from Network Rail and HS2 Ltd suggested Option 1 would cost £22 billion.[20]

- Option 2 was for 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 station at Manchester Piccadilly with a connection allowing it to be used for Sheffield services. Option 2 was estimated to cost £31 billion.[21]

- Option 3 was the same as Option 2, but with a new central station underground at Warrington and a new underground station in the vicinity of the existing Bradford Interchange station. The cost of Option 3 was estimated at £36 billion.[22]

15. Option 2 was Transport for the North's preferred option.[23] They told us that, by 2060, they estimated that Option 2 would have generated an additional £14.4 billion per year in GVA, and that either of the new-build options (2 or 3) would have created over 130,000 jobs, including 60,000 outside the North.[24] Although Option 1 was considered to be the least costly, Transport for the North suggested it may not maximise future economic growth.[25]

15 Conservative Party, Conservative manifesto 2019, 24 November 2019
16 HC Deb, 11 February 2020, col 671 [Commons Chamber]
17 HC Deb, 4 November 2020, col 683 [Commons Chamber]
18 Transport for the North, Strategic Transport Plan, (February 2019), p.5
19 IRP, p.13
20 IRP, p.94
21 IRP, p.94
22 IRP, p.94
23 IRP, p.94; Transport for the North, Northern Powerhouse Rail Connect, March 2021
24 Q74
25 Transport for the North, (IRP0103) p.4

16. The Government announced in the Integrated Rail Plan that it had chosen Option 1 for Northern Powerhouse Rail. This would build on the delivery of the existing core pipeline of Transpennine Route Upgrade projects, routing the fast Manchester to Leeds services via Huddersfield. The IRP summarised the benefits of this option:

> NPR trains will use fully electrified, expanded and upgraded conventional lines between Liverpool and Warrington, and from the east of Standedge tunnels to Leeds. Trains will run from Manchester to Leeds in 33 minutes, 22 minutes faster than now. We will also upgrade and electrify the line between Leeds and Bradford giving a non-stop journey time which could be as low as 12 minutes.[26]

It continued to explain the rationale:

> We carefully examined the other options put forward by TfN, for full newbuild lines from Liverpool to Leeds via Manchester and Bradford. They would have made Manchester-Leeds journeys only four minutes faster than the option we have chosen, and cost an extra £18 billion.

As with other elements of the IRP, the Government argued that these benefits would also be delivered much more quickly than under alternative plans.[27]

The Golborne link

17. Whilst it is correct that the independent Union Connectivity Review noted that the Golborne link does not resolve all of the identified network capacity constraints on the West Coast Main Line (WCML) and recommended that the Government consider alternative northerly connections from HS2 lines to the WCML, many in the industry are deeply concerned that the Government has cancelled the link before having considered, or decided upon, an alternative. The Railway Industry Association, the Rail Freight Group, and the High Speed Rail Group have said:

> It is hugely disappointing to discover that […] the Government confirmed that the 'Golborne Link' is to be removed from the HS2 project. Only six months ago, the Golborne Link was included in the Integrated Rail Plan, as well as the HS2 Phase 2b Bill. The Link has been provided for in the budget for HS2 and is needed to allow adequate capacity on the national rail network to fulfil its vital function of handling the nation's longer distance movements of both passengers and freight. Without this connection, a bottleneck will be created north of Crewe on the West Coast Main Line, which in turn will negatively impact outcomes for passengers, decarbonisation and levelling up […] Such an important, strategic question of how HS2 services connect into Scotland cannot be left open or uncertain.[28]

18. ***Whilst we recognise that the Golborne link was not perfect, and faced substantial local opposition, given its importance in terms of unlocking capacity for passengers***

26 IRP, p.13
27 HC Deb, 18 November 2021, col 734 [Commons Chamber]; IRP, p.106
28 Rail industry unites to criticise scrapping of HS2 Golborne Link", Rail Industry Association, 7 June 2022

and freight, and reducing journey times to Scotland, we are concerned that it has been cancelled without an alternative being proposed. The Department for Transport should set out alternative plans which add similar capacity as a minimum by March 2023.

2 Assessing the outcomes

19. The investment heralded by the Integrated Rail Plan is unprecedented, and the necessity of spending this money wisely is clear. In this chapter we look at how robustly the Government has assessed the outcomes it is seeking from the IRP, and, in particular, focusing on two of the locations where economic potential remains to be unlocked through better rail connections: Leeds and Bradford. We will return to station infrastructure in these cities in the following chapter. These are not the only places where local leaders and communities feel they are missing out as a result of the changes to previous plans included in the IRP—Hull and Sheffield also have strong cases to make—but we have treated them as examples of the broader approach.

Benefit-cost ratios

20. A benefit-cost ratio (BCR) is a comparison between how much a project will cost and how much it is estimated to return in economic benefits per £ spent; it is a key tool for evaluating whether an infrastructure project will provide adequate value for money. A BCR greater than 1.0 indicates that a project is expected to deliver a positive net present value. If a project's BCR is less than 1.0, it is not expected to deliver a positive net present value.

21. The Full Business Case for HS2 Phase One published in April 2020 estimated that the benefit-cost ratio for the proposed full network, including 2a and 2b—connecting London, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds—represented "low to medium" value for money at 1.5, whereas the BCR for Phase One alone, from London to Birmingham, was 1.2 ("low" value for money).[29] An estimate of the BCR for the previous full Eastern leg branch published by HS2 Ltd in 2012 was in the range 1.6 to 1.9.[30] While the strongest economic case related to the full, 'Y-shaped' network,[31] the Eastern leg has consistently been assessed as having a stronger case than the Western leg, dating back to 2010 when a BCR of 5.6 was reported by HS2 Ltd for the Leeds branch. This is compared to 2.6 for the Manchester branch.[32]

22. HS2 Ltd Chief Executive Mark Thurston told us that the Department for Transport had not yet (as of February 2022) calculated an updated BCR for HS2 without the Eastern leg:

> The business case for the Eastern leg is a stand-alone piece and it will not be modelled until we understand what the costs are. We have only just had a decision on the IRP. […] until we understand what we think the Eastern leg will cost to build, we cannot feed that into the model that calculated the BCR.[33]

23. Noting that the Treasury has acknowledged some of the potential weaknesses in BCR methodology in its 2020 update to the Green Book—which provides Treasury guidance on appraising policies and projects—we have previously recommended that a "benefit-

29 Department for Transport, Full Business Case High Speed 2 Phase One, April 2020, p.46
30 Department for Transport, The Economic Case for HS2, January 2012, p.6
31 Department for Transport, Full business case High Speed 2 Phase One, January 2020, p.45
32 Department for Transport, High Speed Two Phase 2b Strategic Business Case, July 2017, p.33; Volterra, The case for an integrated new rail network serving the Eastern Leg, June 2020, p.60
33 Oral evidence taken on 24 February 2022, HC (2021–22) 487, Q105

cost plus" system should be adopted. We have argued that this could better capture the impact of infrastructure projects on regional inequalities and environmental and social factors.[34] All these factors must be fully taken into account when assessing the merits of the IRP's proposed changes to HS2, before irrevocable decisions are made.

24. **The failure to calculate an updated benefit-cost ratio (BCR) raises questions over whether the case for changes to the HS2 Eastern leg have been properly assessed. It is concerning that the Government would make a decision on such an important infrastructure project before having done the BCR calculations to fully understand and substantiate that decision. This is particularly so given previous BCR calculations suggested that the economic case for the Eastern leg was stronger than that for the Western leg.**

25. ***To take account of the changes of plan for the HS2 Eastern leg and to inform current and future decision-making, the Department for Transport should publish by March 2023 an updated BCR for (a) the entire HS2 project and (b) the previous full proposals for the Eastern leg of HS2 Phase 2b. The methodology used must fully reflect impacts on regional inequalities.***

Levelling up

26. Some of the evidence we heard cast doubt on whether the options considered by the IRP had been fully assessed for their potential ability to level up communities in the North and the Midlands, one of the Government's main policy aims. The Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, noted that the IRP's Technical Annex, a document intended to provide supporting evidence for the decisions made in the main plan says that the levelling-up impact

> should be assessed through a description 'of potential impact of transport investment on the wider economy'. On page 10 it says, 'Given the early stage of development of the options under consideration […] it has not been possible to fully assess their impacts on the wider economy.' Let me put that into plain English. There has been no levelling-up impact assessment of the IRP plan on the north of England.[35]

27. Transport for the North (TfN) argued that

> the absence of wider economic benefits calls into question the decision making within the IRP, and whether government has considered the full value of the TfN preferred network for NPR and HS2, and has overstated the benefits of more limited upgrade solutions. Following the principles behind the changes to the Green Book in 2020, it is unclear how decisions affecting the future economic geography of the UK can have been taken.[36]

28. The Technical Annex states that it was "judged disproportionate to quantify and monetise all potential impacts at this stage". The analysis therefore has not taken into account factors including:

34 Transport Committee, Second Report of Session 2021–22, Major transport infrastructure projects: appraisal and delivery, HC 938, paras 25–27, 34

35 Q7

36 Transport for the North, (IRP0103), p.10

> consideration of reliability and train performance, environmental impacts, and residual value of investments, as well as the dynamic economy impacts which capture the location decisions of households and businesses in response to the investment.[37]

It goes on to say that its assessment "followed from the work that the [National Infrastructure Commission] has done which also considered impacts on productivity and economic growth".

29. The Department for Transport's Director for HS2 Phase Two, Nick Bisson, confirmed that the Government "have not got to the level 3 piece in quantitative terms," meaning that they have not done a full analysis of the wider economic impacts of the different options. Nevertheless, he stated that "we are happy about the relative assessment of different schemes."[38]

30. **Without having completed a full analysis of the wider economic impacts, it is difficult to see how the Government has fully assessed the levelling-up agenda and the case for different NPR options. Leaving out these key elements of analysis means that the value for money and economic return cannot be compared and validated.**

31. ***The Government's levelling up agenda commits it to ending geographical inequality in the UK. However, by underserving the rail needs of the North of England it is letting down those who require change the most. Upgrading lines will undoubtedly bring modest benefits to rail services in the North and Midlands, but not to the transformative extent necessary to end regional imbalances. The evidence base for the IRP must be reconsidered in the light of these aims, if this once-in-a-generation investment in rail is not to be a missed opportunity.***

32. ***The Government must remain open to the possibility that this thorough reassessment of the evidence base, taking full account of the impact on levelling up communities in the North and Midlands, may show that Options 2 or 3 for Northern Powerhouse Rail represent the best potential value. If so, they must grasp that nettle. Extra costs are not to be incurred lightly, but a significantly better outcome for our economy and communities is a worthwhile investment for generations into the future.***

Bradford under the IRP

33. One of the cities that stands to lose out as a result of the Government's decision to proceed with Option 1 of Northern Powerhouse Rail is Bradford.[39] Bradford Metropolitan District is the fifth-largest city district in England,[40] and its youngest. It is a growing city region with a huge capacity for growth and development, and it will be the UK's City of Culture in 2025. Despite this, it has been rated one of the worst connected cities in the UK.[41] A study of train journeys published in 2021 found that in "the case of journeys from

37 Department for Transport, Integrated Rail Plan: Technical Annex, January 2022, p.18
38 Q223
39 BBC, Bradford: Rail Plan 'reigns city to second-class service.' 18 November 2021
40 City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, (IRP0046), p.1
41 Be The Best Communications, Integrated Rail Plan: Study of thousands of train journeys shows six worst connected cities are in the north and Midlands. November 10, 2021

five British cities—Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, Nottingham, Stoke—someone driving to Bradford could keep pace with 'fast' early-morning train services by travelling at less than 40mph."[42]

34. Under either of the other two NPR options, the city would have gained a new station, whether on the outskirts (Option 2), or a new underground station at St James' Market, close to the existing Bradford Interchange (Option 3).[43] Either would have been served by a completely new high speed line between Leeds and Manchester. The reduction of the HS2 Eastern leg for the time being has also been seen as reducing benefits for Bradford, preventing Bradford from linking with Leeds to have access to fast, high-speed rail links to London and Birmingham. Bradford City Council summarised its reaction to the IRP by saying that the city had been "left behind".[44]

35. The Government's value for money arguments are partly based on current public transport usage patterns. The Department for Transport told us that, according to 2011 census data, only 0.3 per cent of the working population of Bradford works in Manchester, and only 105 people regularly made that journey by train for work.[45] Census data shows only 14 per cent of journeys to work are made by public transport in Bradford, which compares to 30 per cent in Manchester and 21 per cent in Leeds (though only 11 per cent in Kirklees/Huddersfield).[46] Minister Andrew Stephenson concluded that

> Lots of people in Bradford would rather we invested in other forms of mass transit [instead of a fast rail link to Manchester], whether it be the new mass transit system, better buses, better cycling routes or other ways of supporting the city.[47]

36. Although 27,500 people commute from Bradford to Leeds, three times as many travel by car as by train.[48] Bradford Metropolitan District Council attributed this to "the prohibitively slow train speeds" between Leeds and Bradford: we heard that journey times between the cities today are two minutes longer than they were in 1910. A headline benefit of the proposed upgrade and electrification of the existing line between Leeds and Bradford is a non-stop journey time between the two cities "potentially as low as 12 minutes (subject to business case)"; we heard some evidence that this may not be achievable, which we examine in more detail in Chapter Four. Bradford Council expressed a concern, however, that "years of disruption resulting from line upgrades" to achieve these cuts—as opposed to building a new line—would only exacerbate the problem in the meantime as travellers sought to avoid "the inconvenience of changing between coaches and trains".[49]

37. A study by Thomas Forth, Head of Data at ODI Leeds, indicates the potential Bradford may have had to grow its public transport usage under other NPR options. Public

42 Be The Best Communications, Integrated Rail Plan: Study of thousands of train journeys shows six worst connected cities are in the north and Midlands. November 10, 2021

43 TfN's statutory advice to Government has remained in favour of a station in central Bradford although Bradford Metropolitan District Council has since published proposals for a new surface station in Bradford on the site of St James' Market as an alternative. (IRP, p.94)

44 Bradford Metropolitan City District Council, (IRP0046) p.3

45 Q257

46 Nomis, Location of usual residence and place of work by method of travel to work, WU03UK Bradford 2011 Transport Census Data accessed May 29 2022

47 Q257

48 Bradford Council Metropolitan District Council, (IRP0046), p.3

49 Bradford Council Metropolitan District Council, (IRP0046), p.3

transport is currently accessible within one hour to only 1.2 million people in Bradford; under NPR Options 2 or 3, public transport could have been available to more than 2.7 million people.[50]

38. Witnesses told us that the potential to unlock Bradford is huge; a mainline connection from Bradford could create access to a labour pool of 6.7 million people and potentially 1.3 million jobs. Under the preferred NPR options, Bradford could have gained an additional 2.6bn in GVA.[51] Mayor of West Yorkshire Tracy Brabin stated that "not having a through train in Bradford misses out on a £30 billion boost to our economy."[52] We heard Bradford described as "the middle child" that continually misses out on opportunities compared to Leeds and Manchester, and that, to effectively level up the North, all three cities must prosper together.

39. Meanwhile, it is difficult to tell from the information published by the Government how detailed the value for money analyses of the different NPR options have been, and the information given is not always clear. For example, some costs given in the Technical Annex to the IRP are different to those listed in the body of the plan itself, and the definitions of the options are not the same.[53] This makes it hard to get a true picture of what the additional costs would be for Options 2 or 3, especially over the longer timeframe on which those options would be delivered. The additional cost of Option 2 (£9 billion) equates to around £400 million extra spending per year above Option 1 across the 23 years it is estimated that Option 1 will take to deliver. The figure for Option 3 (£14 billion) is £600 million.[54]

40. **The potential of Bradford as an engine room of the Northern Powerhouse may be squandered if it is not given opportunities to thrive through better connectivity. Direct high speed connections would give the city access to a much broader pool of labour, as well as allowing other cities to benefit from the talent and potential of its own residents. Leaving such a large and dynamic city behind would undermine the project of levelling up the country. Better public transport is essential to encouraging modal shift, and the attendant decarbonisation gains would be significant across such a large population. The Government is making a circular argument by pointing to current patterns of public transport use as justification for decisions about future infrastructure. Services must be in place, consistently, for people to use them.**

41. ***A full assessment of the levelling up impact of the various NPR and HS2 Eastern leg options does not appear to have been carried out to date. The Government must ensure that the impact of NPR decisions on Bradford in particular is robustly assessed, including producing BCR analyses for all NPR options. This is consistent with the spirit of commitments previously made by the Prime Minister to investigate all the options for Northern Powerhouse Rail, and to allow the lead on what comes next to be taken locally.***

50 Thomas Forth, Open modelling of the benefits of transport investment, accessed May 25, 2022
51 Bradford Council Metropolitan District Council, (IRP0046), p.2
52 Oral evidence taken on 24 February 2022, HC (2021–22) 487, Q118
53 IRP p.94, IRP Technical Annex, p.28
54 IRP, p.94, IRP, p.137, Department for Transport, (IRP0092), p.9, Transport for the North, Strategic Transport Plan, February 2019, p.11

The case for the HS2 Eastern leg to Leeds

42. Leeds is a key hub in the current rail network in the north of England: it is the terminus of one branch of the East Coast Main Line, it lies on the Cross-Country Route connecting Scotland to south-west England, and it provides services to cities across the North. It supports a city region GVA worth over £69 billion.[55] Leeds has also secured a number of high-profile inward investments, including being the new headquarters of Channel 4 and the UK Infrastructure Bank; it is also the location of the Department for Transport's own northern hub office. Leeds City Council says that the city is "the main driver of a city region with […] a combined population of 3 million and a workforce of 1.37 million".[56]

43. Leeds station will be a central point for the work being brought forward under the IRP. Both the core Northern Powerhouse Rail route (the Transpennine Route Upgrade from Liverpool to York) and the East Coast Main Line will pass through. Under the NPR options preferred by Transport for the North, an entirely new-build high speed line would have been built between Leeds and Manchester instead.[57]

44. Original plans for HS2 Phase 2b East had the line run from Birmingham up to Leeds and stopping just below York. Under the IRP, this leg will—for now—only be built as far as the East Midlands Hub, near Nottingham. The Integrated Rail Plan provides £100 million for three pieces of work: starting work on a new West Yorkshire Mass Transit System, understanding the best solution for Leeds station capacity, and looking at options for "how best to take HS2 services to Leeds" in the future. The Government will continue to safeguard land that would have been needed for HS2 Phase 2b East.[58]

45. The Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin, told us that she found the changes to HS2 plans and the choice of NPR option "frustrating and disappointing", and that they called into question growth plans for the region.[59] The delay in delivering HS2 to Leeds has been estimated as costing the Leeds City Region economy £1.7 billion per year.[60] Martin Tugwell, CEO of Transport for the North, however, stated that while the TfN Board "were disappointed by the loss of the HS2 Eastern leg", they were reassured by the commitment to investigate how best to "get HS2 trains to Leeds."[61]

46. **We welcome the Government's pledge to look at how the Eastern leg of HS2 might be constructed in full to Leeds as originally planned; the city is a key focal point not only of existing rail networks, but of economic value and potential in the North.**

47. ***The Government must conduct its study on how best to take HS2 to Leeds urgently. We ask that a timetable for this work, including a firm date for the final report, be published by September 2022. This is essential for demonstrating that the commitment made to Leeds for high speed connections will be fulfilled.***

55 Leeds City Council (IRP0031) p.2
56 Leeds City Council: Economy Section, Accessed June 19 2022
57 IRP, p.94
58 IRP, p.17
59 Oral evidence taken on 24 February 2022, HC (2021–22) 487, Q116
60 Oral evidence taken on 24 February 2022, HC (2021–22) 487, Q124
61 Q70

3 Stations and cities

48. Decisions taken in the IRP have important implications for city centres and stations as well as the links between cities. Land around stations often has great economic development potential, while the capacity of the stations themselves is key to reliability and performance of rail services. The Government must commit to upgrading stations at the same time as upgrading lines, otherwise the IRP falls at the first hurdle. We have looked at four locations where questions about infrastructure and capacity have not been resolved.

Leeds station

49. Office of Rail and Road statistics for 2020/21 show that Leeds station was the second busiest in the UK outside London.[62] Over the past 20 years, entries and exits at Leeds have risen by 188 per cent compared with an average across the whole country of 117 per cent.[63] Mayor Tracy Brabin told us that over 31 million journeys each year start or end in Leeds, five million journeys pass through, and at the weekends the station is currently at 45 per cent more capacity than pre-pandemic.[64]

50. However, this increase in journeys has meant that capacity in Leeds station is limited and delays are frequent. Leeds is currently at 101 per cent capacity and is the third greatest source of delay for the entire UK network.[65] Delays occurring at Leeds station and its approaches impact the network nationally as far away as Plymouth and Aberdeen.[66] We witnessed these delays first-hand while visiting Leeds station, and when meeting business leaders in West Yorkshire we heard about the effects delays have on the local economy; for example, we heard that rail freight often takes days to move through bottlenecks around the West Yorkshire region.

51. Leeds City Council argued that the station as it currently is would not be able to accommodate the increase in services proposed under the IRP: Transpennine Route services plus NPR Leeds to Sheffield services and the "five towns" services (connecting Pontefract, Castleford, Knottingley, Featherstone and Normanton) and anticipated longer trains on East Coast Main Line services.[67]

52. Leeds has only one city centre station, which is built on a Victorian viaduct over the river and canal at the heart of the city. The site is very constrained, being surrounded by numerous existing or proposed high-density developments, as well as substantial tracts of land—amounting to 700 football pitches[68]—which have been safeguarded since 2017 for delivery of HS2.[69] This makes it difficult to pursue expansion as a solution to the capacity issues at the station; Gareth Dennis, a rail engineer and lecturer, told us that the existing platforms "are already pretty squeezed in."[70]

62 Leeds City Council (IRP0031) p.1
63 Volterra, The case for an integrated new rail network serving the Eastern Leg, June 2020, p.72
64 Oral evidence taken on 24 February 2022, HC (2021–22) 487, Q120
65 Oral evidence taken on 24 February 2022, HC (2021–22) 487, Q119; Q14
66 Leeds City Council (IRP0031) p.2
67 Leeds City Council (IRP0031) p.6
68 Oral evidence taken on 24 February 2022, HC (2021–22) 487, Q125
69 Leeds City Council (IRP0031) p.1
70 Q154

53. In January 2022, a set of track upgrades was completed at Leeds. New electric wires were added alongside over 200 metres of track, and Platform 7 was extended to allow longer trains to serve the platform.[71] Despite these upgrades, we heard that there was still a need for a large-scale redevelopment of the station.

54. Starting in 2018, Foster + Partners worked on designs for a £500 million redevelopment. Central to these designs was the creation of a 'T'-shaped extension, with HS2 platforms on a north-south alignment, adjacent to and sharing a concourse with the existing east-west aligned station. This proposal was aimed at enabling interchange between HS2 trains, the proposed Northern Powerhouse Rail services, and local and regional trains.[72] Gareth Dennis explained that the 'T'-shaped connection is critical to enabling long-distance services to be separated on new platforms, allowing for more local and regional services to have adequate platform space without increasing congestion.[73]

55. Although land is still safeguarded for the 'T'-shaped extension and the rest of the previous plans for the HS2 Eastern Leg, it is unclear what will now happen to Leeds station under the IRP. The Government has committed to "understanding the most optimal solution for Leeds station capacity" using the same £100 million funding earmarked for work on taking HS2 to Leeds and will carry out "enhancements" as part of the NPR.[74]

56. Leeds City Council argued that the 'T'-shaped extension provided "the optimal solution" to capacity problems at the station.[75] The Council emphasised that the Government's proposed study would only further delay these enhancements, and that a failure to upgrade the station would have a knock-on effect on other electrification and upgrade programs.[76]

57. **The redevelopment of Leeds station is key to fully realising the benefits of the Integrated Rail Plan on the economy and connectivity in Leeds and West Yorkshire, and more widely. Already over capacity in its current configuration, Leeds station will not be able to handle the increased services and passengers generated by the IRP, and this will continue to have knock-on effects elsewhere in the network. We are also conscious of the economic potential of the huge amount of land that cannot be used until a decision is made about HS2 services to Leeds.**

58. ***We ask the Government to commit to supporting redevelopment of Leeds station by 2035 so that it has sufficient capacity to accommodate services planned under the IRP, including HS2 trains arriving in Leeds.***

Bradford Interchange and a new station

59. Bradford Council had been planning for a new station in the city under Transport for the North's preferred NPR options. The St James's Market site had been identified as one that would avoid a number of problems inherent in the current Bradford Interchange station. Bradford Interchange is heavily constrained from a rail perspective, with steep gradients and tight curves. It is also a turn-back station, and therefore imposes journey

71 Railway Pro, Leeds station upgrade completed, January 2022
72 Department for Transport, The Yorkshire Hub, November 2015, p.17
73 Q154
74 IRP, p.13, 86
75 Leeds City Council (IRP0031) p.5
76 Leeds City Council (IRP0031) p.5

and operational penalties on services which operate through the station. Additional services, which may follow as a result of electrification of the line to Leeds, would require more platforms: these would be very disruptive to construct and very likely to require land currently utilised by the adjacent bus station.[77]

60. A station at St James's Market would be much less disruptive to construct, be a through station allowing NPR and Calder Valley rail services to share platforms (speeding up the latter), and—with adequate planning—could be well integrated into the current bus and future mass transit network. The proposed location is 200 to 250 metres further away from the city centre, but West Yorkshire Combined Authority argued that it is still very accessible as well as being key to future growth in the surrounding area.[78]

61. The Government argued in the IRP that there is "no demonstrable business case" for a new underground station in Bradford at the St James' Market site. It pointed out that the site would be separated from the city centre by a major road, and said it would be poorly connected to other local rail services and communities such as Keighley and Ilkley.[79] The other potential site for a new station in Bradford under the NPR options would be even further removed from the city centre. The Government has suggested that the IRP retains a conveniently located city centre station in Bradford.[80]

62. We visited Bradford, including the St James's Market site, during our inquiry. We disagree with the Government's assessment: the extra distance from the city centre does not seem to us an insurmountable barrier. Furthermore, the site is ready for construction—albeit requiring a considerable reconfiguration of the road network.

63. ***The Government should reconsider the case for the development of a new station in Bradford. The development of the St James's Market station would not only enhance rail connectivity in the North, allowing further investment in the city, but also provide further opportunities for rail development in Bradford after the 'core pipeline' of IRP upgrades take place.***

Manchester Piccadilly station

64. Two new stations, one at Manchester Piccadilly and another near Manchester Airport, are being built as part of the western leg of Phase 2b. Authorisation for construction of these stations is contained in the High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill, which is currently making its way through Parliament.

65. Manchester's current rail stations do not have sufficient capacity for both improved Northern Powerhouse Rail services and HS2 services with 400m trains. The IRP states that "no improvement is possible without additional track capacity into Manchester, given the need to serve intermediate towns as well".[81] The IRP confirmed the Government's view that an enlarged, six-platform surface station at Manchester Piccadilly would be the

77 West Yorkshire Combined Authority (IRP0110), p.2
78 West Yorkshire Combined Authority (IRP0110), p.2
79 IRP, p.105
80 IRP, p.22
81 IRP, p.62

right solution for HS2, and that it should be designed for future use by NPR services as well.[82] This would be a "turnback" station, requiring drivers to disembark and trains to reverse in order to continue their journeys.[83]

66. Greater Manchester Combined Authority's preferred solution is instead a "through" station located underground.[84] Key to these plans would be the creation of an 's-shaped' tunnel that would allow services to go between Manchester Airport and West Yorkshire via Manchester Piccadilly without having to reverse.[85] The IRP notes that turnback stations are common in cities on high-speed networks across Europe.[86] Professor Jon Shaw of Plymouth University commented, however, that the German government had changed its thinking with respect to a station in Stuttgart and was now building a new, underground through station for intercity trains. He concluded that "we are doing things which other countries are leaving behind. "[87]

67. The Government believes that an enlarged, six-platform surface station can meet requirements "at substantially lower cost and construction impact than underground alternatives".[88] Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, meanwhile, told us that the enlarged surface station proposed by the Government "would effectively be at full capacity from day one. There is very limited room for growth in the design that has been put forward".[89] He further argued that this option would require "highly intrusive surface infrastructure", and that it would take up half a million square metres of land to the north of the current Piccadilly Station that could otherwise accommodate "around 14,000 jobs".[90]

68. **Local stakeholders and the Government have very different views on the likely merit and cost of the underground station option at Manchester Piccadilly. There are considerable cost and practical challenges to delivering this solution, though we recognise the benefits of a through station and saving land for development. We have heard concerns that there has been a lack of direct engagement and a paucity of detail shared about the basis for the Government's decision not to opt for an underground station.**

69. ***If the underground station option were to be deemed deliverable, it could unlock significant land value in the city; it would then be reasonable to expect contributions to the cost from local government and local businesses. We recommend that this expectation should form part of a renewed, transparent conversation about the risks and benefits of the underground station option between Transport for Greater Manchester, Manchester City Council and the Department for Transport.***

82 IRP, pg 65
83 IRP, p.65
84 New Civil Engineer, Underground station tabled to connect HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail in Manchester, June 2020
85 Building Design, Weston Williamson draws up rival plan for HS2's Manchester Piccadilly redevelopment, June 2020
86 IRP, p.65
87 Q156
88 IRP, p.61
89 Q16
90 Q23, Q3

Birmingham stations and the Midlands Rail Hub

70. A long-standing issue with rail services in the Midlands is the lack of capacity at Birmingham New Street, the largest and busiest of the city centre's rail stations. Passenger arrivals in Birmingham during the morning peak increased by 41 per cent between 2010 and 2019; it is the only city outside London where rail is the dominant form of commuting.[91] In order for the city to be able to handle extra HS2 services, a new Birmingham station will be built at Curzon Street under HS2 Phase One. The site is a 10-minute walk away from New Street and is adjacent to Moor Street station.

71. West Midlands Mayor Andy Street emphasised that, because of how important New Street is to rail networks, and because it already runs at full capacity, anything that goes wrong there "has consequences across almost the whole country".[92] He suggested that "if we do not solve [capacity issues at New Street], the rest of what we might do is almost irrelevant."[93] The Mayor told us that the key to solving capacity issues and improving regional services would be full completion of the "Midlands Rail Hub", which would move some services from New Street to the currently under-used Moor Street station.[94] The MRH is a package of improvements being developed by Midlands Connect to transform east-west connections in the region, including to Coventry, Leicester, Nottingham, Hereford and Worcester, and to Wales and the South West.

72. The IRP states that its plans offer very fast journey time between Birmingham and Nottingham, and potentially more frequent services between Birmingham and Derby. It also says that the Government has asked Network Rail to work with Midlands Connect to "review" the MRH proposals, and that it will continue to work with Midlands Connect on some of the wider proposals. Karen Heppenstall of Midlands Connect told us that, while the Integrated Rail Plan "provides the majority of what we need", connectivity to Leicester in particular would suffer if the MRH plans were not delivered in full.[95] Mayor Andy Street told us that "it would have been helpful if [the IRP] had been that bit clearer" on the case for the eastern as well as western "chords" (viaducts creating new paths to Moor Street) that would facilitate Derby and Leicester connections.

73. ***Birmingham stands to benefit from the new HS2 station at Curzon Street, and the easing of capacity constraints at New Street by services moving to Moor Street station. One last piece of the puzzle appears to be facilitating connections from Moor Street towards Leicester by providing the eastern chord. We urge the Government to commit to this element as part of the review of the Midlands Rail Hub.***

91 IRP, p.38
92 Q104
93 Q127
94 Q126; see also Q155
95 Q169

4 Realising the benefits

74. The Government claims that the Integrated Rail Plan will deliver improved journey times at a lower cost and to a quicker timescale than the plans it supersedes. The case for the IRP is therefore heavily dependent on these benefits being realised—and on this not being at the expense of other crucial benefits such as track capacity and minimising disruption.

Delivery to time and budget

75. Quicker delivery of benefits is one of the Government's most-cited reasons for what it proposes in the IRP. The plan argues that its upgrades to the East Coast Main Line "could deliver similar journey times to London and capacity improvements for York and the North East as the original proposals—but many years sooner",[96] and sets out some of these timescales:

> Under the previous plans, HS2 dedicated track would likely not have reached Leeds until at least 2041; under the full newbuild option, NPR would not have started running between Manchester and Leeds until 2043. Under the IRP, some NPR services will start running this decade; significant improvements will be delivered for the Midlands and South Yorkshire by 2030, and for Leeds and the North East in the 2030s.[97]

Opting for upgrades over new lines is a major factor in these estimates. Minister Andrew Stephenson reiterated that "the principal reason [for changing the Eastern leg plans] is that we can deliver benefits sooner by investing in the existing network".[98]

76. The lower overall cost of the IRP package compared to previous, separate plans is also considered a major benefit. The IRP states that the core pipeline "offers better value for money [on the Eastern leg] than the full speed line as it delivers significant benefit at lower cost",[99] although the Government has not calculated how much money will be saved through the change of plans for the Eastern leg.[100] Similarly, the document says that the core NPR network will deliver outputs in the Manchester-Leeds and Manchester-Liverpool corridor to Transport for the North's preferred option, "but at lower cost".[101]

77. As we pointed out in our report on major transport infrastructure projects, however, governments repeatedly deliver major transport infrastructure projects that exceed the specified cost and/or delivery date. HS2 itself is an example of how inaccurate initial estimates can be: the first estimate for the full network, published in 2011, was £37.5 billion (at 2011 prices). By 2020, the target costs for Phase One alone had been set at £36 billion (at 2020 prices). Phase One was originally due to open in 2026 but is now expected between 2031 and 2033.[102]

96 IRP, p.83, 84
97 IRP, p.20
98 Q140
99 IRP, p.21
100 Oral evidence taken on 24 February 2022, HC (2021–22) 487, Q79
101 IRP, p.21
102 Transport Committee, Second Report of Session 2021–22, Major transport infrastructure projects: appraisal and delivery, HC 938, para 23

78. Rail engineer and lecturer Gareth Dennis posited that, given the potential for costs to increase over time as has happened on previous upgrade projects, "there is a potential that we will be spending as much to deliver the upgrades on the existing network as we will to just build the initial project."[103] The quoted costs for IRP upgrades to the East Coast Main Line, HS2 Eastern Leg and the Midland Main Line are provisionally £12.8 billion.[104] Mr Dennis argued that a fourfold increase in expenditure—which is what transpired on the West Coast modernisation project, also an upgrade project—would bring the cost not far off the cost of the original Eastern leg. Although the cost of building the new HS1 line had also increased over time, that was only by about 20 per cent.[105] Sir Peter Hendy pointed out that upgrading existing track is not all plain sailing:

> Victorian engineering is magnificent, though some of it was badly designed and badly built. It will take quite a big job to adapt it, in particular to get electric wires through the tunnels and make them suitable for modern container trains, but it is not an inconsiderable job to build a new railway between Manchester and Leeds either.[106]

79. Long-term projects such as those included in the IRP face a multitude of potential risks to on-time and on-cost delivery. In May 2021 we heard from the Chief Executive of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, Nick Smallwood, that although there is "sufficient capacity [to deliver major transport infrastructure projects] in the near term", as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic and a resulting reduction in private sector projects, a shortfall in key craft, engineering, leadership and project management skills is expected in the "middle of the decade."[107] The Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission, Sir John Armitt, commented that "Labour, materials and plant are all major issues. […] There will inevitably be pressure on salaries and labour costs, as we have seen for the last 30 years in the railway industry."[108]

80. Supply chain disruptions could also have an effect. Sir John noted that "if you are buying bricks, you are looking at six to 12 months' delivery. With lifts, you are certainly looking at 12 months' delivery.[109] He also referenced steel as a commodity whose supply is subject to "global pressures". However, Mark Thurston of HS2 Ltd told us that HS2 requires "something like two per cent of the UK steel capacity," and that supplying steel was not an immediate concern for building HS2.[110]

81. **Completed according to the planned timetable, the IRP should provide enhanced rail services for passengers in the Midlands and the North significantly earlier than previous options. This does, however, depend on the projects being completed to time, which is difficult to guarantee.**

82. ***The Government's presentation of the benefits of the IRP core pipeline in comparison to previous plans should factor in time and cost ranges that reflect the contingency that will, realistically, be needed for such a large and complex package of work.***

103 Q147
104 IRP, p.31
105 Q147
106 Q193
107 Oral evidence: Major transport infrastructure projects: appraisal and delivery, HC 24, Q4
108 Q202
109 Q201
110 Q113

Journey time improvements

83. The IRP's summary of benefits begins with a detailed list comparing journey times in place now, and those that were expected under previous proposals, to the IRP core pipeline proposals; the Government's summary is that "to most destinations, journey times under the IRP to London and across the NPR core network will be similar to or faster than the original HS2 and NPR plans, with significant improvements also for Birmingham".[111]

84. There is some concern, however, about how realistic some of these journey time improvements are. The IRP repeatedly refers to the journey time benefits of increasing speeds on the East Coast Main Line to 140mph.[112] However, Gareth Dennis told us that

> The suggestion that the increase in speed to 140 mph will provide the journey time benefits is not accurate. […] There are very few miles where you can actually increase the speeds from 125 to 140. […] those do not offer very good journey time benefits. It is all about the very expensive unpicking of those junctions.[113]

85. Leeds Council described claims that an East Coast Main Line upgrade could reduce current London to Leeds journey times as "not supported by evidence and […] optimistic."[114] William Barter, a rail consultant, is one of several contributors to our inquiry who consider that this reduced journey time is not credible, except at the expense of stops at intermediate stations.[115] He explained:

> 140 mph running in particular offers very limited benefits, in theory saving just one minute per 20 miles run compared with 125 mph. That implies an absolute maximum theoretical benefit assuming flat-out running from start to finish of: London–Leeds (186 miles) In practice, it is very unlikely that 140 mph operation would allow even half of the theoretical saving. […] Although 'digital signalling' is frequently referred to, and cab-signalling systems such as ETCS Level 2 are a condition for 140 mph running, they are not on their own sufficient for 140 mph running, as some station stops will be made, and many locations and route sections on the ECML are already limited to less than 125 mph. Limitations on speed result from factors such as horizontal curvature, vertical curvature, aerodynamic issues in tunnels, and the maximum permitted speed of 125 mph past station platforms."[116]

86. A headline benefit of the proposed upgrade and electrification of the existing line between Leeds and Bradford is a non-stop journey time between the two cities "potentially as low as 12 minutes (subject to business case)".[117] Current journey times between Leeds and Bradford are approximately 20 minutes. We heard some evidence that cast doubt on the achievability of the 12-minute journeys in practice, however. Gareth Dennis explained that even a two-minute reduction in journey times could be costly and difficult to realise:

111 IRP, p.6
112 IRP, p.84
113 Q152
114 Leeds City Council (IRP0031) p.1
115 West Yorkshire Combined Authority (IRP0054) p.5; Leeds City Council (IRP0031) p.11; Bradford Metropolitan District Council (IRP0046)
116 Mr William Barter, (IRP0011) p.5
117 IRP, p.106

> […] what that means is quite a substantial need to increase average speeds on that line. It is a line that is limited to about 60 mph by physical constraints. It is not just by signalling but literally by the curvature of the railway, and by the fact that there are two railway stations sat between Leeds and Bradford. You have Bramley and New Pudsey stations. At the moment, the best journey time without stopping is about 17 minutes.

He explained how further savings would need to be achieved:

> savings do not necessarily come from increasing the top speed. They do not come from going from 60 to 75 [mph]. They are going to come from incredibly expensive work to increase the speeds at the low-speed approaches into Bradford or into Leeds. […] There is no easy way to fix that [at Leeds] because it is an incredibly complicated series of junctions overlaid on top of each other […] In the case of Bradford, it will be very difficult to reach those journey time savings without substantial remodelling. Leeds-Bradford is a bit more straightforward; the interchange approaches are at least reasonably straightforward. But Leeds is an incredibly complicated railway area and tens of millions have already been spent unpicking that.[118]

Bradford Metropolitan District Council said that the 12-minute journey time "is considered impossible to deliver without sacrificing existing services on this line".[119]

87. ***Journey time reductions—albeit not to the same degree as promised by previous plans—are a headline benefit of the IRP. We received detailed evidence that cast doubt on the plausibility of the times achievable under the new plans. We ask the Government to publish its full technical appraisals of the feasibility of these reductions, so that communities and stakeholders can have confidence that they are achievable in practice.***

Seat capacity

88. Although given somewhat less prominence in the Government's presentation of the IRP, increases in capacity on key routes is another proposed benefit. The Government has said that the IRP will increase the number of seats available for passengers on routes across the Midlands and North by allowing more, and faster, trains to run on upgraded lines: capacity between Leeds and Manchester will be more than doubled, and between Birmingham and Nottingham, Birmingham and Manchester, and Liverpool and Leeds will be more than trebled.[120]

89. Detailed charts are given comparing the seat capacity that had been planned under HS2 to the IRP Core Pipeline: for example, showing that the latter will increase seat capacity from London to Leeds to 1500 seats, with potential upgrades raising this capacity to 2500 seats.[121] This is compared to 4500 seats per hour under HS2 as previously planned. By addressing capacity constraints across the rail network in the North and Midlands, the Government proposes that the IRP will make rail travel more efficient, reliable, comfortable, and attractive.[122]

118 Q152
119 Bradford Metropolitan District Council (IRP046) p.14
120 IRP, p. 65
121 IRP, p.91
122 IRP p.20

90. Transport for Greater Manchester,[123] the Rail Delivery Group[124] and Transport for the North[125] all argued that changes to the HS2 Eastern leg will produce sub-optimal capacity, however. The trebling of capacity on certain routes described by the Government refers mostly to an increase in fast intercity services on the East Coast Main Line and the Midland Main Line.[126] Witnesses told us the promised capacity increases compare unfavourably to what was planned under the original HS2 plans, and what was proposed under Options 2 or 3 for Northern Powerhouse Rail. Action for Yorkshire Transport stated that the previous HS2 Phase 2b plans would have provided 4,500 seats between Leeds and London, compared to 2,500 under the IRP.[127] Transport for Greater Manchester argued that, whereas NPR Options 2 or 3 would have provided up to 12 fast trains per hour between Manchester and Leeds, the new plans estimate up to eight trains per hour, and IRP plans for routes between Manchester and Leeds "would represent a significant reduction in capacity."[128]

Track capacity and reliability

91. Number of seats, moreover, is only one measure of capacity on the network. Track capacity is also crucial. One of the major benefits of building new high-speed lines is that taking high-speed services onto a separate track frees up the existing track for local and freight services and reduces congestion. This 'released capacity' is not available when additional services run on existing infrastructure, even when upgraded.[129] Furthermore, when different types of service share the same lines it can present operational challenges that affect reliability.[130] Leeds Civic Trust stated that HS2 and NPR were not principally about reducing journey times but rather the potential they gave for greater capacity for additional and more reliable rail services to serve the regional and local markets.[131]

92. In relation to the change of plans for the HS2 Eastern leg, Gareth Dennis told us that "there will be less capacity on those lines for local stations than there is now as a result of what the IRP proposes."[132] He explained that the high-speed segregation provided by the original HS2 Eastern leg would have allowed towns like Belper in Derbyshire or Outwood in West Yorkshire—currently very poorly served compared to smaller destinations on lines into London—to benefit from released capacity on their local lines for more services to Derby and Leeds respectively.[133] In order to make sure that faster non-stop trains can run on the same lines, we may end up with fewer local trains; Mr Dennis argued that "it obliterates the chance to enhance regional and local services"[134] and that "it is likely that many intermediate stations will only see a skeleton service to enable the faster journey times claimed by the IRP."[135]

123 Transport for Greater Manchester (IRP0069) p.5
124 Rail Delivery Group (IRP0105) p.2
125 Transport for the North (IRP103) p.2
126 IRP, p.20
127 Action for Yorkshire Transport, (IRP0026) p.5
128 Transport for Greater Manchester (IRP0069) p.5
129 Q163
130 Rail Delivery Group (IRP0105) p.5
131 Leeds Civic Trust, (IRP0047) p.3
132 Q147
133 Q147
134 Q147
135 Gareth Dennis (IRP0067) p.1

93. We heard evidence that track improvements and increasing the speed of the fastest trains on any one route may be insufficient to maximise—and may even be detrimental to—potential capacity gains from the IRP.[136] The more trains that run at different speeds on the same track, the less likely it is that maximum capacity can be achieved.[137] On existing lines, freight, local and high speed trains often share space and, where the lines are two-track, opportunities for fast trains to overtake slower ones are limited. Increasing services on these lines may increase congestion further, lead to a reduction in service frequency for local services, or limit future increases in such services.[138] Leeds Civic Trust pointed out that this issue affects lines between Leeds and Manchester, Doncaster or York to a greater extent than most routes out of London, where four tracking is the norm.[139]

Capacity for rail freight

94. Modal shift of goods from road to rail, along with track electrification, is a key part of the Government's decarbonisation strategy, but concerns about whether the IRP will realise potential capacity gains relate to rail freight as well as passenger services. This is particularly the case where track is due to be upgraded rather than new lines built, and where there will be an increase in speeds and frequency of passenger services on those lines. Gareth Dennis told us that under the IRP freight capacity "will be reduced on key corridors such as through Doncaster and up towards Leeds", where freight will be funnelled through the same, already-electrified, line as fast and local trains.[140] Throughout south and west Yorkshire, he argued, the complexity of the rail network makes untangling freight and passenger services especially difficult, "hence [what would be] the value of sending a new piece of infrastructure through that to almost cut through it and support releasing capacity".[141]

95. The Association of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen expressed concern that "any plans which increase speed but not capacity will […] also have a negative impact on the amount of freight that can be moved by rail through these areas of the track".[142] Similarly, the Rail Freight Group commented that the service increases brought by NPR and HS2 "could create new bottlenecks and capacity constraints such as on the East Coast Main Line".[143] Indeed the IRP itself acknowledges that "rail capacity is used inefficiently when a wide mix of different services […] with different speeds, accelerations and stopping patterns use the same lines over long distances."[144]

96. The IRP promises "improved capacity and capability" for rail freight travelling across the Midlands and the North.[145] Ministers have expressed regret that the IRP focuses on freight for only one of its 160 pages.[146] Andrew Stephenson told us that

> There is a lot more that we could have said, particularly with […] the Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade. Three-tracking and four-tracking, particularly on

136 Q162, 163; Mr William Barter, (IRP0011) p.4
137 Action for Yorkshire Transport (IRP0026) p.5
138 Q147
139 Leeds Civic Trust, (IRP0047) p.4
140 Q170
141 Q170
142 ASLEF (IRP0050) p.3
143 Rail Freight Group (IRP0020) p.5
144 IRP, p.38
145 IRP p.121
146 HL Deb, 16 December 2021 , cols 419 [Lords Chamber]; Q274

> sections of the route where there are inclines, in addition to gauge clearance of course, will completely transform our ability to move freight across the route, which, at the current time, is very congested and freight trains often get bumped.[147]

97. These improvements were welcomed by the Rail Freight Group.[148] Transport for the North, however, commented that, even with the investment set out in the IRP, the rail network across the North of England will remain

> inherently a two-track piece of Victorian infrastructure […] IRP's focus on upgrading existing rail corridors, is unlikely to realise the step change in connectivity identified by NPIER [the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review, 2016, commissioned by TfN].[149]

98. The electrification of the Midlands Main Line and Transpennine Route may also help freight to hit higher speeds. The IRP namechecks the Crewe to Manchester leg, the Chat Moss route to and from the Port of Liverpool and the Diggle route between Manchester and Leeds as benefitting from alleviation of capacity constraints. However, the document also notes that further work will be needed "to confirm that the forecast growth can be accommodated on the wider network beyond these corridors reviewed in the IRP".[150]

99. On 15 June 2022, the Government published its first cross-modal and cross-government plan for the UK freight transport sector, 'Future of Freight'. The Future of Freight sets out plans to identify a National Freight Network across aviation, rail, road and shipping. We note the strategy sets out various obstacles to the modal shift to rail, including the fluctuating costs of electricity, difficulties in the electrification of track and the practicalities of transferring from electric to diesel on certain parts of the rail network.

100. **The Government's fixation on journey times as a benefit of the IRP must not overshadow the issue of capacity. It seems highly unlikely that an upgraded Victorian line can replicate the capacity increases achievable by building new track.**

101. ***The Department for Transport should commission a full independent assessment of the seat and track capacity offered by the IRP, compared to the previous plans for HS2 and other options for NPR. This assessment must take into account the future effects on both long-distance and local passenger services, and freight capacity.***

102. **We welcome the Government's Future of Freight Plan and the promised work to identify a National Freight Network. We look forward to seeing more detail about how modal shift of freight to rail will be achieved through the IRP core pipeline in particular.**

103. ***The Department for Transport should publish a rail freight strategy for the country setting out key plans, targets and milestones over a 30-year period. This should include a detailed assessment of how the IRP will achieve greater capacity for and use of rail freight.***

147 Q274
148 Q274
149 Transport for the North (IRP0103) p.13
150 IRP, p.121

Disruption

104. Major transport improvement projects almost inevitably create some disruption and disturbance both for those who use existing services and for surrounding communities. While upgrading existing lines may be quicker than building new ones, upgrading is a complex endeavour that inevitably means disruption for passengers who use that line. Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, told us that upgrading is "more disruptive in the building of it than if you were to build an entirely new line between Manchester and Leeds, because you are not then interfering with existing infrastructure." As an example, Mr Burnham offered that the result of "taking the new line into the old line at Marsden is that there will be 15 years of disruption on that line."[151]

105. Professor Ian Docherty argued that "trying to upgrade a fully operational mainline railway is always riskier than essentially building something new on a clean site. That risk needs to be taken fully into account."[152] He illustrated with an example of electrification of the line between Edinburgh to Glasgow:

> we had to close the main tunnel approach to Glasgow for 20 weeks as part of that project. That really did hit rail patronage and use of the network much harder than most of us envisaged at the time. I would not underestimate the behaviour change and the difficulty of attracting people back to rail if you have had to close the existing service for some time. That is something that I do not think is fully factored into the upgrade plans in the IRP as it should be.[153]

106. We heard concerns that the Government had not planned for disruption under the IRP and had not liaised adequately with stakeholders in Leeds and Manchester. West Yorkshire Mayor Tracy Brabin stated that "the mitigations for the impact of the work have not been done."[154] Andy Burnham reiterated that the disruption will be long term and that he felt this had not been adequately taken into account by the Government.[155] West Yorkshire Combined Authority stated that disruption could have a significant impact on commuters. Through the merging of the NPR and TRU programmes together (through upgrades), disruption on the TRU line will now extend westwards from Huddersfield to Marsden.

107. West Yorkshire Combined Authority expressed concern that this strategic rail line between Manchester and York could be subject to disruption for a 20-year period between 2025 and 2045, as it is upgraded for TRU and then NPR.[156] These disruption periods have not been mentioned or calculated in the IRP. WYCA pointed out that previous large scale rail improvements such as the West Coast Main Line upgrade caused significant disruption, particularly for weekend travellers for over a decade. There is a concern that TRU construction disruption could negatively affect fragile businesses and economies.[157]

108. Transport for the North similarly raised concerns that the TRU upgrade would cause major disruption. They stated that the original proposals for upgrading the Transpennine

151 Q55
152 Q151
153 Q162
154 Oral evidence taken on 24 February 2022, HC (2021–22) 487, Q137
155 Q55
156 West Yorkshire Combined Authority (IRP0054) p.12
157 West Yorkshire Combined Authority (IRP0054) p.12

Route require extensive and prolonged track "blockades" for several years. TfN welcomed the expansion of scope for the upgrade, but argued that "the scale and duration of the disruption to this key corridor will be extended considerably" in the absence of an entirely new route between Manchester and Leeds.[158]

109. Furthermore, during construction, much of the machinery, materials, spoil and workforce has to be transported on roads.[159] Changes of plan can also result in unforeseen disruption to local communities. We note that HS2 Ltd had previously committed to removing waste from their construction sites by rail,[160] but that revised designs for Euston station have led to spoil being moved by lorry rather than rail. It is reported that this could result in over 25,000 extra HGV journeys to and from the site in the course of the station's construction.[161]

110. The Government has said that it plans to sequence work across the Pennines such that services on the three main routes, the Calder Valley, Diggle and Hope Valley, are not disrupted simultaneously and sufficient rail alternatives for passengers continue. We asked the Minister about plans to mitigate disruption on the Transpennine Route Upgrade in particular. He told us

> The most important thing is to ensure that passengers are informed when disruption is likely so that they can plan accordingly and that you have alternative routes available, if they are available, not just for passengers but for freight. Freight can be redirected if freight operators can plan long enough in advance.[162]

The Minister also referred the importance of lessons learned through other major projects.

111. **Rail upgrades disrupt commuters, rail freight and timetabling. Disruption to existing services caused by upgrades to key rail lines may drive a modal shift from rail to car, which would work against the Government's decarbonisation goals.**

112. ***The Department for Transport and Network Rail should set out a timetable for implementing a detailed mitigation strategy to minimise disruption caused by the implementation of the IRP. This should set out a strategy for each individual project and must include plans for consultation with local communities and stakeholders, in partnership with local authorities.***

113. **The Government has put together a strong case for the Integrated Rail Plan, but it is based on a best-case scenario which may not come to pass. Cost and time overruns for major infrastructure projects are commonplace, and disruption can be extensive and unforeseen. The promised journey time improvements may not be achievable in practice, and the decision to replace some plans for new high-speed lines with upgrades will limit capacity gains. We urge the Government to produce more cautious estimates for the benefits that are realistically achievable under the IRP, so that the public and**

158 Transport for the North (IRP0103) p.8
159 IRP, p.130
160 Skanska, Trains transporting HS2 waste to cut carbon emissions, July 2021
161 Construction news, DfT: revised plans for HS2's Euston terminus behind spoil U-turn, May 2022
162 Q241

stakeholders across the country—especially in the North and Midlands—can assess the situation, plan ahead for the future, and be sure that the benefits will outweigh the drawbacks.

Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

1. We welcome the scale of the Government's promised spending on improving rail in the North and the Midlands. £96 billion is a very substantial sum; it has the potential to transform rail travel for future generations and make a significant contribution to levelling up the country. (Paragraph 4)

2. Nonetheless, there is still a need for prioritisation and hard choices, and the proposals set out in the Integrated Rail Plan have already left some towns and cities very disappointed. It is crucial that the Government bases its decisions on how to spend this investment on the fullest possible evidence for what will bring the greatest overall benefit to rail services, to the economy, to the environment and to communities across the North and Midlands. (Paragraph 5)

3. *Whilst we recognise that the Golborne link was not perfect, and faced substantial local opposition, given its importance in terms of unlocking capacity for passengers and freight, and reducing journey times to Scotland, we are concerned that it has been cancelled without an alternative being proposed. The Department for Transport should set out alternative plans which add similar capacity as a minimum by March 2023.* (Paragraph 18)

Assessing the outcomes

4. The failure to calculate an updated benefit-cost ratio (BCR) raises questions over whether the case for changes to the HS2 Eastern leg have been properly assessed. It is concerning that the Government would make a decision on such an important infrastructure project before having done the BCR calculations to fully understand and substantiate that decision. This is particularly so given previous BCR calculations suggested that the economic case for the Eastern leg was stronger than that for the Western leg. (Paragraph 24)

5. *To take account of the changes of plan for the HS2 Eastern leg and to inform current and future decision-making, the Department for Transport should publish by March 2023 an updated BCR for (a) the entire HS2 project and (b) the previous full proposals for the Eastern leg of HS2 Phase 2b. The methodology used must fully reflect impacts on regional inequalities.* (Paragraph 25)

6. Without having completed a full analysis of the wider economic impacts, it is difficult to see how the Government has fully assessed the levelling-up agenda and the case for different NPR options. Leaving out these key elements of analysis means that the value for money and economic return cannot be compared and validated. (Paragraph 30)

7. *The Government's levelling up agenda commits it to ending geographical inequality in the UK. However, by underserving the rail needs of the North of England it is letting down those who require change the most. Upgrading lines will undoubtedly bring modest benefits to rail services in the North and Midlands, but not to the*

transformative extent necessary to end regional imbalances. The evidence base for the IRP must be reconsidered in the light of these aims, if this once-in-a-generation investment in rail is not to be a missed opportunity. (Paragraph 31)

8. *The Government must remain open to the possibility that this thorough reassessment of the evidence base, taking full account of the impact on levelling up communities in the North and Midlands, may show that Options 2 or 3 for Northern Powerhouse Rail represent the best potential value. If so, they must grasp that nettle. Extra costs are not to be incurred lightly, but a significantly better outcome for our economy and communities is a worthwhile investment for generations into the future.* (Paragraph 32)

9. The potential of Bradford as an engine room of the Northern Powerhouse may be squandered if it is not given opportunities to thrive through better connectivity. Direct high speed connections would give the city access to a much broader pool of labour, as well as allowing other cities to benefit from the talent and potential of its own residents. Leaving such a large and dynamic city behind would undermine the project of levelling up the country. Better public transport is essential to encouraging modal shift, and the attendant decarbonisation gains would be significant across such a large population. The Government is making a circular argument by pointing to current patterns of public transport use as justification for decisions about future infrastructure. Services must be in place, consistently, for people to use them. (Paragraph 40)

10. *A full assessment of the levelling up impact of the various NPR and HS2 Eastern leg options does not appear to have been carried out to date. The Government must ensure that the impact of NPR decisions on Bradford in particular is robustly assessed, including producing BCR analyses for all NPR options. This is consistent with the spirit of commitments previously made by the Prime Minister to investigate all the options for Northern Powerhouse Rail, and to allow the lead on what comes next to be taken locally.* (Paragraph 41)

11. We welcome the Government's pledge to look at how the Eastern leg of HS2 might be constructed in full to Leeds as originally planned; the city is a key focal point not only of existing rail networks, but of economic value and potential in the North. (Paragraph 46)

12. *The Government must conduct its study on how best to take HS2 to Leeds urgently. We ask that a timetable for this work, including a firm date for the final report, be published by September 2022. This is essential for demonstrating that the commitment made to Leeds for high speed connections will be fulfilled.* (Paragraph 47)

Stations and cities

13. The redevelopment of Leeds station is key to fully realising the benefits of the Integrated Rail Plan on the economy and connectivity in Leeds and West Yorkshire, and more widely. Already over capacity in its current configuration, Leeds station will not be able to handle the increased services and passengers generated by the IRP, and this will continue to have knock-on effects elsewhere in the network. We are also conscious of the economic potential of the huge amount of land that cannot be used until a decision is made about HS2 services to Leeds. (Paragraph 57)

14. *We ask the Government to commit to supporting redevelopment of Leeds station by 2035 so that it has sufficient capacity to accommodate services planned under the IRP, including HS2 trains arriving in Leeds.* (Paragraph 58)

15. *The Government should reconsider the case for the development of a new station in Bradford. The development of the St James's Market station would not only enhance rail connectivity in the North, allowing further investment in the city, but also provide further opportunities for rail development in Bradford after the 'core pipeline' of IRP upgrades take place.* (Paragraph 63)

16. Local stakeholders and the Government have very different views on the likely merit and cost of the underground station option at Manchester Piccadilly. There are considerable cost and practical challenges to delivering this solution, though we recognise the benefits of a through station and saving land for development. We have heard concerns that there has been a lack of direct engagement and a paucity of detail shared about the basis for the Government's decision not to opt for an underground station. (Paragraph 68)

17. *If the underground station option were to be deemed deliverable, it could unlock significant land value in the city; it would then be reasonable to expect contributions to the cost from local government and local businesses. We recommend that this expectation should form part of a renewed, transparent conversation about the risks and benefits of the underground station option between Transport for Greater Manchester, Manchester City Council and the Department for Transport.* (Paragraph 69)

18. *Birmingham stands to benefit from the new HS2 station at Curzon Street, and the easing of capacity constraints at New Street by services moving to Moor Street station. One last piece of the puzzle appears to be facilitating connections from Moor Street towards Leicester by providing the eastern chord. We urge the Government to commit to this element as part of the review of the Midlands Rail Hub.* (Paragraph 73)

Realising the benefits

19. Completed according to the planned timetable, the IRP should provide enhanced rail services for passengers in the Midlands and the North significantly earlier than previous options. This does, however, depend on the projects being completed to time, which is difficult to guarantee. (Paragraph 81)

20. *The Government's presentation of the benefits of the IRP core pipeline in comparison to previous plans should factor in time and cost ranges that reflect the contingency that will, realistically, be needed for such a large and complex package of work.* (Paragraph 82)

21. *Journey time reductions—albeit not to the same degree as promised by previous plans—are a headline benefit of the IRP. We received detailed evidence that cast doubt on the plausibility of the times achievable under the new plans. We ask the Government to publish its full technical appraisals of the feasibility of these reductions, so that communities and stakeholders can have confidence that they are achievable in practice.* (Paragraph 87)

22. The Government's fixation on journey times as a benefit of the IRP must not overshadow the issue of capacity. It seems highly unlikely that an upgraded Victorian line can replicate the capacity increases achievable by building new track. (Paragraph 100)

23. *The Department for Transport should commission a full independent assessment of the seat and track capacity offered by the IRP, compared to the previous plans for HS2 and other options for NPR. This assessment must take into account the future effects on both long-distance and local passenger services, and freight capacity.* (Paragraph 101)

24. We welcome the Government's Future of Freight Plan and the promised work to identify a National Freight Network. We look forward to seeing more detail about how modal shift of freight to rail will be achieved through the IRP core pipeline in particular. (Paragraph 102)

25. *The Department for Transport should publish a rail freight strategy for the country setting out key plans, targets and milestones over a 30-year period. This should include a detailed assessment of how the IRP will achieve greater capacity for and use of rail freight.* (Paragraph 103)

26. Rail upgrades disrupt commuters, rail freight and timetabling. Disruption to existing services caused by upgrades to key rail lines may drive a modal shift from rail to car, which would work against the Government's decarbonisation goals. (Paragraph 111)

27. *The Department for Transport and Network Rail should set out a timetable for implementing a detailed mitigation strategy to minimise disruption caused by the implementation of the IRP. This should set out a strategy for each individual project and must include plans for consultation with local communities and stakeholders, in partnership with local authorities.* (Paragraph 112)

28. The Government has put together a strong case for the Integrated Rail Plan, but it is based on a best-case scenario which may not come to pass. Cost and time overruns for major infrastructure projects are commonplace, and disruption can be extensive and unforeseen. The promised journey time improvements may not be achievable in practice, and the decision to replace some plans for new high-speed lines with upgrades will limit capacity gains. We urge the Government to produce more cautious estimates for the benefits that are realistically achievable under the IRP, so that the public and stakeholders across the country—especially in the North and Midlands—can assess the situation, plan ahead for the future, and be sure that the benefits will outweigh the drawbacks. (Paragraph 113)

Formal minutes

Tuesday 19 July 2022

Members present:

Huw Merriman, in the Chair

Mr Ben Bradshaw

Ruth Cadbury

Simon Jupp

Robert Largan

Gavin Newlands

Christian Wakeford

The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands

Draft Report (*The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 113 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Second Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Adjournment

Adjourned till tomorrow at 9.30 am

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the inquiry publications page of the Committee's website.

Wednesday 2 February 2022

Andy Burnham, Mayor, Greater Manchester — Q1–57

Rt Hon the Lord McLoughlin CH, Chairman, Transport for the North; **Martin Tugwell**, Chief Executive, Transport for the North — Q58–94

Wednesday 9 March 2022

Andy Street CBE, Mayor, West Midlands — Q95–140

Gareth Dennis, Lecturer in Railways Studies, University of Birmingham; **Professor Jon Shaw**, Deputy Chair, European Platform for Transport Sciences; **Professor Iain Docherty**, Dean, Institute for Advanced Studies; **Karen Heppenstall**, Head of Rail, Midlands Connect — Q141–181

Wednesday 23 March 2022

Sir John Armitt CBE, Chair, National Infrastructure Commission; **Sir Peter Hendy CBE**, Chair, Network Rail — Q182–217

Andrew Stephenson MP, Minister of State, Department for Transport; **Nick Bisson**, Director for HS2, Integrated Rail Plan and Northern Powerhouse Rail, Department for Transport — Q218–279

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the inquiry publications page of the Committee's website.

IRP numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

1 20 Miles More (IRP0074)

2 ASLEF (IRP0050)

3 Action for Yorkshire Transport (IRP0026)

4 Aitken, Mr J Robin (IRP0035)

5 Angel Trains Ltd (IRP0079)

6 Barter, William Mr (IRP0011)

7 Barter, Mr William (IRP0072)

8 Bodman, Mr Andrew (IRP0022)

9 Bodman, Mr Andrew (IRP0023)

10 Bosi, Mr Andrew, Transport Lead Member, London Forum of Amenity and Civic Services (IRP0006)

11 Butterworth, Ms Sue (IRP0083)

12 Byng, Mr Michael (IRP0099)

13 Centre for Cities (IRP0073)

14 Chase, Miss Marianne (IRP0039)

15 City Of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (IRP0046)

16 Consortium of East Coast Mainline Authorities (ECMA) (IRP0064)

17 Crowhurst, Mr M G (IRP0108)

18 Dellow, Mr Graham (IRP0077)

19 Dennis, Gareth (IRP0067)

20 Dennis, Gareth (IRP0090)

21 Department for Transport (IRP0092)

22 Downing, Ms Patricia (IRP0015)

23 East Midlands Councils (IRP0087)

24 Faircloth, Mr David (IRP0070)

25 First Rail (IRP0052)

26 Fox, Mr Chris (IRP0001)

27 Francis, Alan (IRP0057)

28 Francis, Alan (IRP0058)

29 Green, Mr Brandon James (IRP0038)

30 Green, Ms Sarah (IRP0034)

31 Greengauge 21 (IRP0082)

32 Griffiths, Mr Malcolm (IRP0068)

33 Griffiths, Mr Malcolm (IRP0051)

34 Halifax and District Rail Action Group (IRP0086)
35 Mackenzie, Mr Michael (IRP0008)
36 Harworth Group PLC (IRP0032)
37 Haville, Mike (IRP0010)
38 High Legh Parish Council (IRP0030)
39 High Speed Rail Group (IRP0055)
40 Inland Waterways Association (IRP0045)
41 Institution of Civil Engineers (IRP0044)
42 Joint Rural Parishes Combined Campaign Group (IRP0075)
43 Jones, Mr Martin (IRP0005)
44 Kendler, Simon (IRP0098)
45 Lakes Line Rail User Group (IRP0066)
46 Leeds City Council (IRP0031)
47 Leeds City Council (IRP0043)
48 Leeds Civic Trust (IRP0047)
49 Liverpool City Region (IRP0104)
50 Lofting, Mr Alan (IRP0012)
51 Logistics UK (IRP0009)
52 London First (IRP0095)
53 Philip Davies MP (IRP0109)
54 Madeley and Whitmore Independent Residents (IRP0016)
55 Manchester Airports Group (MAG) (IRP0089)
56 Manchester City Council (IRP0024)
57 Marsh, Mr Adrian (IRP0004)
58 Marshall, Mr Christopher (IRP0065)
59 Midlands Connect (IRP0049)
60 Mitchell (IRP0018)
61 Mitchell, Mr Rupert (IRP0025)
62 Morgan, David (IRP0078)
63 Mortimer, Mr Phil (TruckTrain Developments Ltd) (IRP0002)
64 Mr Richard Nicholl (IRP0007)
65 North West Leicestershire District Council Labour Group (IRP0101)
66 Northern Powerhouse Partnership (IRP0093)
67 Northern Powerhouse Partnership (IRP0094)
68 RMT (IRP0106)
69 Rail Delivery Group (IRP0105)
70 Rail Freight Group (IRP0020)
71 Railfuture Ltd (IRP0080)

72 Railway Industry Association (RIA) (IRP0063)

73 Roaf, Dr Dermot (IRP0019)

74 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (IRP0085)

75 Sankey Canal Restoration Society (IRP0036)

76 Sawyer, Peter (IRP0017)

77 Sheffield City Council (IRP0048)

78 Shirres, David (Editor, Rail Engineer, Rail Media) (IRP0041)

79 Silver, Noah (IRP0013)

80 SilverRail Technologies (IRP0033)

81 Smith, Mr Leo (IRP0059)

82 South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (IRP0088)

83 South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and North East Derbyshire Joint Campaign Group (IRP0027)

84 Stalybridge to Huddersfield Rail User Group (SHRUG) (IRP0076)

85 Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (IRP0091)

86 Stop HS2 (IRP0096)

87 Swift, Kevin (IRP0100)

88 Transport North East (IRP0029)

89 Transport for Greater Manchester (IRP0069)

90 Transport for the North (IRP0103)

91 TravelWatch NorthWest (IRP0081)

92 Upton, Dr (IRP0014)

93 Urban Growth Company (IRP0107)

94 WSP Rail (IRP0056)

95 Walton, Bill (IRP0040)

96 West Midlands Combined Authority (IRP0111)

97 West Midlands Rail Executive (IRP0053)

98 West Northamptonshire Council (IRP0028)

99 West Yorkshire Combined Authority (IRP0110)

100 West Yorkshire Combined Authority (IRP0054)

101 West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce Transport Group (IRP0061)

102 Wigan Council (IRP0062)

103 Yorkshire Rail Campaign (IRP0102)

104 Rest, Dr D J van (IRP0003)

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the publications page of the Committee's website.

Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Road freight supply chain	HC 162
1st Special	UK aviation: reform for take-off: Government response to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 542

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Zero emission vehicles	HC 27
2nd	Major transport infrastructure projects	HC 24
3rd	Rollout and safety of smart motorways	HC 26
4th	Road pricing	HC 789
5th	UK aviation: reform for take-off	HC 683
1st Special	The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the aviation sector: Interim report: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 28
2nd Special	Road safety: young and novice drivers: Government Response to Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 29
3rd Special	Trains Fit for the Future? Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 249
4th Special	Safe return of international travel? Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2019–21	HC 489
5th Special	Zero emission vehicles: Government Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 759
6th Special	Rollout and safety of smart motorways: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report	HC 1020
7th Special	Major transport infrastructure projects: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 938

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Appointment of the Chair of the Civil Aviation Authority	HC 354

Number	Title	Reference
2nd	The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the aviation sector	HC 268
3rd	E-scooters: pavement nuisance or transport innovation?	HC 255
4th	Road safety: young and novice drivers	HC 169
5th	The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the aviation sector: Interim report	HC 1257
6th	Trains fit for the future?	HC 876
7th	Safe return of international travel?	HC 1341