

Railfuture response to House of Commons Transport Committee's Call for Evidence for its Inquiry on the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands.

Railfuture is Britain's leading, longest-established, national independent voluntary organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passenger and freight users, to support economic (housing and productivity) growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities. We seek to influence decision makers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in transport and development planning.

We make this submission as a continuation of our engagement with the Integrated Rail Plan and its development, starting in 2015 with the National Infrastructure Commission's consultation on 'Connecting Northern Cities', followed by its Call for Evidence and then Interim Report in 2020 on its 'Rail Needs Assessment for the Midlands and the North'. While it builds on our responses to those three, and a number of published articles most recently '*Make IRP work*' dated 4 December [A], this submission is the voice of our regional branches in the North and Midlands.

Summary

~ The contribution that the IRP will make to rail capacity and connectivity for (a) passengers and (b) freight in (i) the Midlands and the North and (ii) the UK

From a Yorkshire perspective, full implementation of the Trans Pennine Route Upgrade from Manchester to York is a welcome commitment, as are the proposed improvements to the East Coast Main Line to speed up journey times. For the West Midlands, IRP will improve most significantly connections between Birmingham (and the eastern part of the West Midlands) to Manchester, Liverpool and the North West, as long as frequent direct trains are provided between Birmingham Curzon Street and Manchester et al, and between Birmingham Interchange and Manchester etc. IRP will improve some connectivity between West and East Midlands with the HS line from Birmingham to East Midlands Airport and on to Nottingham. The North East and Yorkshire are however conspicuous IRP losers, in particular from curtailment of the eastern leg of HS2.

IRP has little consideration of freight; there is no real consideration as to how a large increase in rail freight across the Pennines can be achieved. The present proposals make no contribution to improving freight flows into or through the West Midlands. In fact, some of the passenger-orientated developments may reduce the number of paths for freight services.

~ Whether and how the IRP will "level up" communities in the Midlands and the North

The lack of Bradford journey times in the plan shows that Bradford misses out badly, effectively being bypassed. This is probably the most glaring example of lack of substance to the phrase; Bradford has been short-changed.

~ How the IRP will affect rail infrastructure and services outside the Midlands and the North

The developments proposed by IRP for the West Midlands, notably the chord at Bordesley and greater use of Moor Street station, will enable a few more services per hour to be provided from Birmingham to the South West. HS2 services from Birmingham to the North West may release some capacity on the congested route between Birmingham and Wolverhampton. HS2 services to and through the East Midlands will create serious congestion challenges north of East Midlands Airport Parkway, especially at Trent Junctions.

~ The challenges to central Government, Great British Railways, regional and local authorities, transport bodies and other stakeholders in delivering the IRP

Establishing viable business cases for all the schemes proposed and obtaining the appropriate funding within the timescales envisaged.

Prioritising the various developments.

Maintaining existing services whilst major upgrades and developments undertaken.

~ How the rail schemes in the IRP will integrate and interact with HS2

Railfuture has long advocated the smart alternative of connecting HS2E to East Midlands Parkway rather than bypassing Nottingham and Sheffield, and of integrating HS2 with local transport networks. The Manchester HS2 station is identified as a 'turnback' rather than just a terminus, indicating the capability to run through London-Manchester-Leeds services, as proposed by Railfuture, with even quicker journey times than the upgraded ECML route.

~ How the rail improvement schemes in the IRP were selected, and whether those selections represent equity between and within regions

We are unable to offer evidence for the second part as we have been unable to ascertain a basis for the first part of that question.

~ Whether the IRP represents value for money for UK taxpayers

The positive components of the IRP will represent excellent value for money for taxpayers. However, the best value which they could secure is for the North and Midlands to have a railway system which enables a major mode shift of both passengers and freight from road and air to rail. This must apply to local journeys within the region and longer distance inter-city trips beyond. Modal transfer to rail will promote wider quality of life, as value for money should not be considered just in monetary terms but must also be about responsible custodianship of the environment and improving wider health and social outcomes.

Note:

[A] See <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1887-Make-IRP-work>

Substantive responses from the North and Midlands to the seven questions posed

~ The contribution that the IRP will make to rail capacity and connectivity for (a) passengers and (b) freight in (i) the Midlands and the North and (ii) the UK

A perspective from the Midlands is that for passengers IRP will improve most significantly connections between Birmingham (and the eastern part of the West Midlands) to Manchester, Liverpool and the North West, on condition that frequent direct trains are provided between Birmingham Curzon Street and Manchester et al, and between Birmingham Interchange and Manchester etc. Little improvement if any would be realised from the northern or western parts of the West Midlands.

IRP will improve some connectivity between West and East Midlands with the HS line from Birmingham to East Midlands Parkway and on to Nottingham. It makes no contribution, however, to the passenger flow between Birmingham and Leicester which, though having two trains per hour, is slower than by road, and only 13% of all passenger journeys are made by rail, nor to the flow between Coventry and Leicester where no direct service exists at present and only 1-3% of passengers travel by train (data source: Midlands Connect).

Furthermore, we view the Birmingham to Nottingham solution, whilst welcome, as being of limited value, since the trains would not be able to travel south of Birmingham, nor north of Nottingham (say, to Lincoln). The intermediate stations towards Nottingham are not presently capable of handling HS2 trains. The existing services or some variation of them will need to be retained, thus not yielding any savings, whilst the new HS2 services may well impose extra pressure on the existing infrastructure.

The present proposals make no contribution to improving freight flows into or through the West Midlands. In fact, some of the passenger-orientated developments may reduce the number of paths for freight services, particularly on the Leicester-Birmingham corridor which is part of the F2N strategic freight route.

A perspective from the North is that the Integrated Rail Plan is not seen as truly integrated. Concerning Yorkshire's specific needs, the go-ahead for Midland Main Line and Trans-Pennine and Leeds-Bradford electrification is strongly welcomed, but these are partial schemes in need of linking to further plans. The contribution to rail capacity and connectivity is while welcome disappointingly incomplete, for example:

On decarbonisation, IRP contains no plan for a rolling programme of electrification as advocated by the Northern Sparks task force report of 2015 and Network Rail's recent Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy [1] both of which advocate electrification over most routes across the North. Overhead electrification is significantly more efficient (less wasteful) in energy terms than alternatives such as batteries or hydrogen.

Electrification schemes which IRP does propose are incomplete – Midland Main Line only to Sheffield and to Nottingham, but not Nottingham-Sheffield or Sheffield-Leeds / Doncaster; Trans-Pennine only to York, not Hull; Calder Valley illogically only Leeds-Bradford not the full line [2]. Incomplete electrification will necessitate the use of hybrid traction trains, reducing efficiency; much is missing.

There is no clarity on how existing lines will be upgraded to in order to integrate with new high-speed routes.

Leeds is offered a poor high-speed rail deal (113 minutes from London for 188 miles) in comparison with Manchester (71 minutes for 188 miles) and Sheffield (87 minutes for 158 miles) [3]. Sheffield also gets a poorer deal than Manchester in terms of average speed.

Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) proposals are incomplete. The IRP version of NPR, comprising a new railway from Warrington to Marsden, and then the existing Trans-Pennine route with extra tracks is only as far as Dewsbury. There is no clear plan to increase capacity on the two-track section Dewsbury-Leeds which will be shared by increased fast services and local Huddersfield and Calder Valley (Brighouse line) services.

Manchester-Leeds journey time will be cut to 33 minutes, but not until the Warrington-Marsden new line is built during the 2040s [4]. With the lack any detailed plan to improve Dewsbury-Leeds, this journey time must be questionable.

Sheffield is offered no high-speed route to Manchester [5] and, apart from trains partly via HS2 to London, is offered few other benefits. Promises for upgrade of the Hope Valley route, whilst about to start in a limited way, are vague though possible reduction of journey time to 30-35 minutes will be welcome. Use of the former Woodhead route should be considered.

There is a failure to address the need for improvements on existing routes in the short to medium term, including timetable improvements as well as electrification.

Rail has massive potential to offer zero-carbon freight, which is given insufficient emphasis.

The £100m to start West Yorkshire mass transit is welcome; the new system should be targeted for fully operational by 2040.

Value for money will be promoted by encouraging modal transfer to lower carbon, ultimately zero-carbon, rail transport from higher carbon modes; electric traction is long-established as having lower operating costs.

It has emerged recently that a letter from the Transport Secretary to Transport for the North opens the possibility of local funding of new lines additional to those in the IRP. This could for example be used to transform the Warrington-Marsden high-speed route into a full NPR line via Bradford. Some of it might also be used to extend electrification beyond Bradford to the Calder valley as part of a rolling programme across the North.

A1 We welcome commitment to full implementation of the Trans Pennine Route Upgrade (TRU) between Manchester and York. This project was first announced in 2011 and should now be complete; that it will not now be complete until the early-2030 is disappointing.

A2 We welcome the commitment to electrify the Midland Main Line to Sheffield. Again this would now be nearly complete but for a previous decision, thankfully now reversed, to cancel it. A continuing disappointment is lack of commitment to electrify from Nottingham to Sheffield and onwards from Sheffield to the electrified East Coast Main Line at Doncaster and at South Kirkby for Wakefield and Leeds. Such electrification is essential to facilitate links between the East Midlands, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

A3 Leeds-Bradford electrification is also welcome, but we are disappointed that this is not described as a first phase of the full Calder Valley Line electrification that was given top ranking by the 2015 Northern Sparks task force report. We enlarge on this further below (para. A6 – Bradford, the Calder Valley and NPR). We expected IRP to endorse the recommendations of the Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy (TDNS), and the Northern Sparks (Northern Electrification Task Force 2015), for the electrification of almost all northern railway routes. [6]

A4 We welcome improvements to the East Coast Main Line to speed up journey times, but regret that failure to include the re-opening of the Leamside route (Ferryhill-Washington-Newcastle) will continue to constrain capacity on the route through Durham, for both passenger and future freight.

A5 IRP has little consideration of freight. There is no real consideration as to how a large increase in rail freight across the Pennines can be achieved. This requires direct routes with adequate capacity and the ability to take W12 containers, removing much lorry traffic from the M62 and the A57. We advocate:

- # New E-W route north of Sheffield, partially using the former Woodhead alignment, that can be used for both fast passenger services and large volumes of freight

- # Reopening Skipton-Colne, to facilitate rail freight between Merseyside and south/east Lancashire with West and North Yorkshire, Hull, and the NE, as well as providing passenger services from the deprived communities of Pendle, and north and central Burnley, to Bradford and Leeds.

- # Route upgrade Skipton-Carnforth for freight traffic, benefitting in particular the Cumbria coast and the east coast ports, as well as West Yorkshire.

- # All these routes should be electrified as in TDNS, together with connecting routes.

- # IRP misses an opportunity by not announcing an intention to reform planning law, so that future large warehouse/distribution/logistics facilities must be rail connected. Existing such facilities near railway lines should be rail connected.

A6 Bradford, the Calder Valley and NPR

A6.1 Electrification Bradford Interchange (BDI) to Leeds (LDS) needs to be considered as part of wider Calder Valley Line (CVL) electrification. The CVL is a secondary main line, top-ranked for electrification by Northern Sparks, and covers Leeds via both Bradford and via Brighouse to Rochdale and Manchester and to Preston. It is a natural follow-on to TRU. Five trains an hour operate east-west (pre-Covid timetable), none of which starts / finishes in Bradford, and there is an additional Bradford-Huddersfield shuttle service. CVL services connect Manchester, Chester, Huddersfield, Halifax and Bradford with Leeds (five per hour), York, and Hull and three terminate in Leeds. These are busy commuter and leisure services. Most passengers arriving in Bradford remaining on the train for other destinations. This creates an obvious question about electrification only from Bradford to Leeds.

A6.2 Current journey time Leeds-Bradford is around 20 minutes (two stops). Non-stop it would be about 15 minutes. So:

- # We assume the proposed 12 minutes is non-stop which means there would have to be additional stopping services. This would be constrained by the 2-track route, and tortuous approaches to both BDI and LDS stations. BDI is a terminus where all trains must reverse.

- # To reduce frequency at New Pudsey, Bramley and possible additional stations would be unacceptable, so there would have to be a more frequent service (some of which might be tram-train).

- # It would be totally unacceptable for all trains from the west to terminate at Bradford, so bi-mode trains would be required for the foreseeable future.

- # To conclude, BDI-LDS electrification must be part of electrifying all the Calder Valley routes - and this needs to happen this decade.

A6.3 We regret that the IRP has not endorsed Northern Powerhouse Rail via Bradford. NPR was essential to Bradford's regeneration – levelling up – and would free up capacity on the Huddersfield line enabling more semi-fast and stopping services to operate, thus providing much enhanced connectivity for the many towns, large villages and their hinterlands along the Huddersfield and Calder Valley lines.

A6.4 NPR was to provide a Leeds-Bradford journey time of 8 minutes. It is unfortunate that the proposed station in Bradford at St James's market site was outside the centre, but this was a detail that could have been improved. A new central station, possibly underground, could be built serving a proper NPR linking to Leeds in 8 minutes, Manchester in 20 minutes, and also linking with the Airedale and Wharfedale lines to the north and the Calder Valley Line giving a long awaited cross-Bradford link.

A6.5 Bradford has definitely been short-changed by IRP.

A6.6 The proposed Warrington-Marsden NPR high speed line will feed in to a 3-track railway into Huddersfield, 4-track Hud-Dewsbury and 2 tracks Dew-Leeds as now. IRP fails to detail any plan to upgrade Dewsbury-Leeds which has an hourly service from the Calder Valley line (which it would be desirable to increase) as well as six TransPennine Express services per hour. It is difficult to see how more than one or two additional services generated by NPR could be accommodated.

A6.7 The Warrington-Marsden line could be extended by a tunnelled route to Bradford. This would cross the Calder Valley line near Elland where there might be a station forming a local transport hub.

A7 Sheffield corridors

A7.1 Having welcomed London-Sheffield electrification, we would like to see regional investment to eliminate congestion. Travel times are currently slow.

A7.2 Sheffield to Manchester. The approaches to both Manchester and Sheffield are slow, congested, and unreliable. If two additional tracks Dore to Sheffield, and grade separations are built at Edgeley and Slade Lane, along with work on the Castlefield Corridor, then Manchester to Sheffield services would be significantly improved. Additionally, passing loops will be needed in the Hope area, additional to current plans.

A7.3 Two extra tracks over the short distance from Sheffield station to Nunnery Junction would separate Worksop trains from Leeds trains, and would create a considerable amount of extra capacity.

A7.4 Sheffield-London expresses will be speeded by using HS2 from East Midlands Parkway. They could be further speeded up if they used the Erewash line from Trent junction to Chesterfield via Toton, if that route is upgraded and electrified. Semi-fast services to London St. Pancras using the existing route would need to be retained for intermediate connectivity. It would be natural to electrification Trent Junction and Nottingham via the Erewash route to Chesterfield.

A7.5 Cancellation of HS2 from West Yorkshire to East Midlands and Birmingham is much regretted. Many people will continue to drive between these destinations. Birmingham is also important for connections with the wider West Midlands, southern England and south and west Wales.

A7.7 Aside from the welcome Midland Main Line electrification, and some upgrades to the Hope Valley route, we regret that the IRP does not recommend other desirable improvements to Sheffield's railway connectivity. As well as a new high-speed link to Leeds, Sheffield needs a new fast route to Manchester, to enable the 30-minute journey time referred to in the Centre for Cities report. A possibility is to partially reuse the former Woodhead trackbed. IRP claims 30-35 minutes could be possible via the Hope Valley.

A8 HS2(E) alternatives.

A8.1 With HS2(E) to Leeds cancelled, York-London journey times can come down to 98 minutes assuming East Coast Main Line improvements (it would have been 84 min with HS2) and Leeds-London timings will at best be 113 minutes (could have been 81). But Manchester-London with the high-speed line throughout will be 71 minutes. This will result in a serious business and economic disadvantage to Leeds and York in favour of Manchester.

A8.2 Thus, if HSE is not to be built through to Leeds, we need an alternative solution. One answer may be to run some Leeds-London services to Euston via East Midlands Parkway (EMD) and HS2. This is explored in the panel (right).

Leeds-Euston via EM Parkway (EMD)?

Leeds to EMD is 80 miles. Average 90 mph gives 53 minutes; average 120mph gives 40min. The latter seems unlikely to be achieved without a substantial length of new line. Either option requires significant upgrading of the line from Leeds to EMD via Rotherham, Beighton, Chesterfield and the Erewash Valley line. At Chesterfield work would be required to keep the new fast line separate from the Derby-Sheffield. At Rotherham a grade separated junction would be required. At Moorthorpe grade-separated junctions would probably be required. Trent Junction would require a review; the existing freight avoiding line would probably just require upgrading.

A few extra minutes for the approach to Leeds plus 53 minutes Leeds-EMD + 50 min EMD-Euston gives a total journey time of about 105 minutes which could be reduced by greater lengths of high speed. This could be optimistic, but still seems somewhat faster than the ECML. It would take up some capacity on the Midland, but the upgrades should compensate for that.

Other services would remain on the ECML. A future service pattern between Leeds and London could be as follows:

~ 2 tph Leeds-Wakefield-Sheffield via Erewash and EMD-HS2 to London. If approach to Sheffield from the north is slow, it may pay to operate the Leeds London service via Barrow Hill, and start Sheffield to London trains at Sheffield.

~ 1 x St Pancras to Sheffield via Leicester semi fast service extended to Leeds each hour. One per hour via Derby and one via Erewash to Sheffield from London, The Erewash service extended to Leeds.

~ 1 tph Leeds-Wakefield-(Doncaster)-Peterborough-King's Cross

~ 1 tph Leeds-Wakefield-Doncaster-Retford-Newark-Grantham-Peterborough-Stevenage-King's Cross.

Upgrading the Erewash Valley route would also benefit London-Sheffield journey times.

A9 Leeds station

A9.1 Leeds station is full, but there is a need for additional services. Work is required to provide additional capacity, probably by providing an additional platform on the south side, as well as by running more through trains.

A9.2 The station also needs to be able to accommodate paths for more through freight trains. Other routes round Leeds might also be considered.

A10 Hull

A10.1 We find it surprising that IRP has largely ignored Hull. Hull (together with some of its hinterland) is a city in need of regeneration aka levelling-up, and electrification of its key railways routes to Leeds and Doncaster should have been seen as a priority.

A10.2 Likewise, the reinstatement of the line from Beverley to York (a winner in round 3 of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund bidding) would facilitate commuting and other travel to York and Hull from towns such as Market Weighton and Stamford Bridge, reducing road congestion and pollution. Climate chaos poses real risks to the Hull-Selby line through flooding; the re-opened line would provide an alternative. It has good potential for tourists accessing the minster cities of York and Beverley, and enhancing tourism to the Yorkshire Wolds, an area whose tourism potential is currently being developed. The Beverley-York line needs to be capable of carrying freight, giving an alternative route to Hull from the NE and Scotland, which will both increase available capacity and release paths on the Selby-Hull line. This will enable more freight to enter and leave the port of Hull by rail, with attendant climate and other environmental benefits.

A11 Manchester

A11.1 Manchester is significant for the railways in Yorkshire, both as a destination, and as an originator or passage point. As well as our deep regret that NPR via Bradford is not to be built, we are concerned that neither is an enhanced Manchester Piccadilly station with through underground platform to enable a frequent cross-city service to and from Manchester Victoria, thus finally ending the congestion problems across the Castlefield corridor and through Oxford Road to Piccadilly. Amongst other benefits, this would enable services from the Calder Valley to run through to Manchester Airport, the North's major international airport.

A11.2 On the Castlefield Corridor, one reason for the congestion is the hourly freight train path to Trafford Park. Of course, that is an essential service, but the only reason it travels via this congested route is lack of an alternative route. Railfuture has developed a highly feasible plan for a new avoiding route across South Manchester, mostly making use of an existing freight route, and also incorporating a proposed location for a new, much larger capacity freight terminal in Carrington, west Salford.

A11.3 The routing of NPR trains east from Piccadilly is not clear but possible routes would either be by joining a reinstated 4-track route as far as Guide Bridge, or elevating NPR above the existing line then tunnelling under Dukinfield and Stalybridge and on to Marsden. This would still have the disbenefit of poor connections from north Manchester and also potentially impose growth capacity constraints on south-east Manchester routes, as well as constraining the ability to bring more faster trains from Sheffield, so could well be in a conflict in its own proposals.

A11.4 One government Minister recently said that passenger connections would be improved by the "same level" connections from other trains at Manchester Piccadilly with this above-ground station, omitting the fact that the majority of passengers at Manchester Piccadilly use platforms 13/14 so their walk to access HS2 or NPR would be at least double what it is presently and could very likely have previously been a same platform connection.

A11.5 Overall, it appears that that tunnelling under Central Manchester is needed along with the underground station at Piccadilly. It is important that a clear plan for the congested network in central and south Manchester is developed and receives commitment from government. Otherwise, there will be ongoing uncertainty and without enhancements it will not be feasible to provide adequate local and regional services to serve central Manchester and to connect into HS2 and NPR.

A12 Liverpool

This city is set to lose out in long-term capacity increases and connectivity under these plans. The routing of the majority of the 'new' NPR route into Liverpool along a disused freight route (Fiddlers Ferry) and then the existing main line into Liverpool adds nothing to the capacity, although it's a good idea to join the NPR / HS2 route via Manchester Airport to provide a direct route avoiding central Manchester. This could be made to have better regional connectivity by making it possible for trains from Chester to join the new line at Warrington, offering a direct connection to Manchester Airport from North Wales and also through routes to Leeds and elsewhere; again, poor integration. We think plans for platform expansion and new, separate HS lines into Liverpool need to be addressed within this plan, offering capacity increases without constraining local service or freight expansion.

A13 West Yorkshire mass transit

A13.1 There is confusion over the £100million allocated towards the proposed West Yorkshire Mass transit system. We are surprised that this is in the IRP as it is not part of GBR, but we welcome this funding.

A13.2 Whilst the £100m is very welcome, and given that the Leeds City Region is the largest in western Europe without a metro system, we consider that the Government should ensure that work starts promptly on this project by agreeing with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority how this project will be fully funded to enable a comprehensive system to be fully in place across the county by 2040. Funding is also required for the modernisation and expansion of the Sheffield Supertram network.

~ Whether and how the IRP will "level up" communities in the Midlands and the North

Since no clear definition or description has been given as to what comprises "levelling up", or how one will be able to identify when or if "levelling up" has been achieved, we are using our own. Levelling up for the Midlands will only be achieved if expenditure per capita on transport equates to that for London and the South East and if the frequency of local train services approaches those of the capital. Persuading companies and / or government offices to be relocated to the Midlands would also be a useful step forward.

On this basis we do not believe IRP offers much towards this agenda for the Midlands. Midlands Connect have commented on the need to "level up" the East Midlands to the West Midlands, and then "level up" both to London and the South East. Certainly, there is the opportunity to enhance rail services within the multi-centre "Dynamic Triangle" of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, plus the medium-sized towns between and around them in the sub-region. The IRP offers two main enhancements for this area: HS2 to East Midlands Parkway, which is widely welcomed, plus Midland Main Line electrification, which is long overdue and is an "oven-ready" scheme already making good progress at the Market Harborough end. The latter needs to be increased in scope to include the Erewash Valley line north from Trent Junction, which offers the potential for a fast route to Yorkshire (including as an onward projection of HS2 East to Yorkshire via East Midlands Parkway) as well as regional services for a developing corridor (e.g. Leicester – Mansfield via Toton etc). Midland Main Line electrification needs also to extend beyond Sheffield both to Doncaster and South Kirkby Junction in Yorkshire, thus linking to the existing East Coast Main Line electrification and thereby creating an electrified network right through to Scotland for long-distance passenger and freight trains.

~ How the IRP will affect rail infrastructure and services outside the Midlands and the North

The developments proposed by IRP for the West Midlands, notably the chord at Bordesley and greater use of Birmingham Moor Street Station, will enable a few more services per hour to be provided from Birmingham to the South West. This will not however reduce congestion as almost all existing services, including CrossCountry services, will need to be maintained to provide local and regional connectivity. Furthermore, the addition of extra local and regional services will add significantly to congestion on the Birmingham to Cheltenham line, particularly at Kings Norton and south of Bromsgrove. This will inhibit the ability to increase freight traffic on this route. To ameliorate this congestion would require substantial additional investment on infrastructure improvements.

HS2 services from Birmingham to the North West may release some capacity on the congested route between Birmingham and Wolverhampton. This however will be limited as all of the present services provide connectivity to and between several intermediate towns and cities and this will have to be maintained even where an HS2 service displaces an existing long-distance service.

HS2 services to and through the East Midlands will create serious congestion challenges north of East Midlands Parkway, particularly at Trent Junctions.

Earlier comments about accommodating freight in the East and West Midlands apply here, in terms of the knock-on effects on East Anglia, the Thames Estuary, and the South Coast (intermodal trains to and from Felixstowe, Thamesport, and Southampton).

~ The challenges to central Government, Great British Railways, regional and local authorities, transport bodies and other stakeholders in delivering the IRP

- # Establishing viable business cases for all the schemes proposed and obtaining the appropriate funding within the timescales envisaged.
- # Prioritising the various developments.
- # Maintaining existing services whilst major upgrades and developments undertaken.

~ How the rail schemes in the IRP will integrate and interact with HS2

The West Midlands is most disappointed that the IRP proposals specifically exclude the north-west chord at Bordesley (Moor Street to Water Orton), and make no reference to direct communication between the major Midlands cities of Leicester and Coventry.

Though welcoming the commitment to build HS2 East across to East Midlands Parkway, this will not be realised for about 20 years. There is a more urgent need for enhancements in journey between quality and speeds between Nottingham and Birmingham. The presently freight-only route between Sheet Stores Junction (Trent) and Stenson Junction near Burton offers the potential to deliver a short-term acceleration in these services, plus in due course a station at the expanding community at Castle Donington (which also offers interchange for East Midlands Airport). It is disappointing that the IRP makes no mention of interim enhancements on this corridor in advance of HS2 East.

We await further information on service patterns on the existing West Coast and Midland Main Lines post-HS2. We support the proposed Bedford – Leeds service put forward by Midlands Connect, using Midland Main Line to Trent and linking into HS2 at Toton for fast services to Leeds. We await the implications for that proposal of the curtailment of HS2 East at East Midlands Parkway.

The present design of the HS2 infrastructure approaching Birmingham has missed the opportunity to connect into the existing network to allow through running of HS2 trains from London to Wolverhampton (and Shrewsbury once electrified) and from the North towards the South West and South Coast (again, once electrified). Note that all the lines mentioned in the preceding sentence are seen by the rail industry and stakeholders as appropriate for electrification in the longer term.

There is a real danger that the introduction of HS2 services between Birmingham and the North West and North Midlands will reduce the cross-country and cross-regional connectivity, with most services starting/terminating in Birmingham. Whilst we recognise that the vast majority of travellers originate in Birmingham or use a local service to access one of the city centre stations for onward travel (and vice versa), there are significant passenger flows from south and east of Birmingham to destinations to the north.

~ How the rail improvement schemes in the IRP were selected, and whether those selections represent equity between and within regions

There is no information available as to how the Midlands-based schemes were selected. We are endeavouring to obtain information from the DfT about the methods used to select each of the improvement schemes.

We are surprised and disappointed that the IRP does not provide for direct enhancements for journeys between the East Midlands and the North West. This is a significant potential corridor, especially with the growing commercial and cultural importance of Manchester, but the current rail offering is neither fast nor of an 'intercity' standard.

~ Whether the IRP represents value for money for UK taxpayers

The good things in the IRP will represent excellent value for money for the taxpayer. However, the best value the taxpayer can get is for the North and Midlands, and the whole UK, to have a railway system which enables a major mode shift of both passengers and freight from road and air to rail. This must apply to local journeys within the region and longer distance inter-city trips. Carbon reduction through modal transfer to rail will promote wider quality of life. Value for money cannot be considered just in financial terms. It must be about cleaning up the environment, and reducing wider costs of health and social consequences.

Our railways are already low-carbon. For now, modal transfer to rail will start to decarbonise transport more widely. We must not assume however that other modes will not catch up, as they must do if we are to meet decarbonisation targets. Overhead electrification, planned as a programme for completion of more than 80% of present non-electric routes before 2050, will make our railways zero-carbon. It will also reduce costs and increased revenue through:

- + Lower capital costs of electric trains compared with diesel, hydrogen, battery and multi-mode;
- + Reduced operating and maintenance costs compared with complex hydrogen-powered and multi-mode trains;
- + Increased "sparks effect" revenue because electric trains are quieter, faster and can serve more stations through better acceleration – and are therefore more attractive to passengers.
- + As road freight works to decarbonise, electrified railways offer a ready-made solution that will contribute significantly to transport decarbonisation in the short to medium term.

The Railway Industry Association has predicted that a rolling programme of electrification could reduce capital costs by 30% to 50%, keeping engineering teams occupied and avoid the previous stop-go approach. [7] Investment in electrification over the next two decades will reduce operating subsidy, and pay-back for the taxpayer in the long term.

The truncation of the HS2 (East) part of the project significantly reduces the value for money and the consequent business case for HS2 generally. Anticipated train times to Sheffield and Leeds from London will not come close to those achievable by the original proposed scheme, whilst those from Birmingham to Derby and Sheffield will have no improvement of current best timings. That to Leeds does appear to offer useful savings but nothing like what would have been possible with a complete HS2(E).

With some 60% of the expected expenditure of the IRP being for the extension of HS2 (West) to Manchester, the remainder, probably about £40 billion, seems barely adequate for the improvements proposed. Furthermore, of the expenditure expected for HS2 (West) completion, it has been estimated that some £30 billion of the cost will benefit London rather than the Midlands or the North.

Finally, the IRP offers nothing to support the development of rail freight in the region and may in fact tend to hinder that by adding passenger services to an already congested network with numerous pinch points. A particular example is Leicester, where the increasing east-west intermodal traffic from Felixstowe to the West Midlands and the North West via Nuneaton must cross the north-south Midland Main Line. Various solutions for track remodelling and possible grade separation have been put forward, including by Network Rail. This has a bearing on the electrification of the Midland Main Line; if such track alterations are not done in advance of electrification, the costs of such enhancements would be significantly increased.

Notes:

[1] Northern Sparks: Northern Electrification Task Force (NETF) all-party report, March 2015 [EFT_Report_FINAL_web.pdf \(transportforthenorth.com\)](#); TDNS [Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy - Interim Programme Business Case \(networkrail.co.uk\)](#)

[2] Northern Sparks advocated an initial 5-year plan (CP6 2019-2024) electrifying 12 routes across the North. The full Calder Valley line (Leeds via both Bradford and Brighouse via Hebden Bridge to both Manchester and Preston) was the top-ranked scheme on economic and environmental criteria.

[3] Distances as in present GB rail timetable.

[4] Note error in first paragraph on p.14 of IRP, which says that the first phase will reduce journey time to 33 minutes and then the second will “further reduce the journey to 33 minutes”. The truth is that Leeds-Manchester passengers will have to wait about 20 years for that journey time.

[5] The summary of benefits on p.18-19 of the IRP executive summary does not list Sheffield-Manchester journey times.

[6] see Notes 1 and 2

[7] Railway Industry Association. See for example [Electrification Cost Challenge Report \(riagb.org.uk\)](#), March 2019. Invokes earlier HoC TSC report.