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Sir Peter Hendy  
Union Connectivity Review  
c/o Department for Transport  
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London  
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Dear Sir Peter

### **Transport for the North's submission to the Union Connectivity Review Call for Evidence**

I am very pleased to submit Transport for the North's response to the Union Connectivity Review initial call for evidence. As you know, in our view the Review is an opportunity to look at strategic connectivity between the four nations, taking a holistic Union view for the first time. Done right, improved connectivity between the nations and regions of the UK will encourage trade and inward investment by improving links to the nationally significant ports and airports, and faster links between the economic assets that they serve.

As a valued and long-standing member of the TfN Board, I know you are well aware of all the work we have undertaken since TfN has formed. Our submission builds from the existing evidence base which has been agreed with our Board members and Local Enterprise Partnerships and forms the heart of the Strategic Transport Plan and TfN Investment Programme. We have sought to strengthen cross border relationships with both Scotland and Wales, putting in place early agreements with our partners and undertaking a series of strategic studies, both North South and East West.

Our response is based on that very clear economic evidence base, developed and agreed through our Board. It draws on the TfN Strategic Development Corridors, the development of Northern Powerhouse Rail and our submission to the NIC's Rail Need Assessment call for evidence. We have made that detailed evidence base available to the review team and stand ready to provide any further detailed analysis required.

Our response emphasises the following points:

Firstly, the vital importance of Northern infrastructure investment in connecting Scotland, Wales and England, as well as serving important local border communities. The North has some of the most congested road and rail bottlenecks on the British transport network, limiting long distance connectivity between the UK nations. The North is unique in having direct surface and sea connections with all three countries. As well as providing the conduit for much of the traffic and goods that come from Scotland, Northern Ireland and north Wales. As our Strategic Transport Plan demonstrates, tackling those Northern bottlenecks and building capacity for growth can unlock wider benefits for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Midlands and other English regions.

Secondly, 2021 must be a pivotal year for rail investment. We need to see clear government commitment to the delivery of NPR and HS2 in full through the Integrated Rail Plan. We have now seen the Rail Needs Assessment and will be responding to government in the new year, but the Board has a clear and consistent position that both east-west connectivity through NPR, and north south connectivity through full delivery of HS2 are essential if we are to level up the UK:

- Early investment in the conventional network, creating capacity at key bottlenecks is across England, Scotland and Wales.
- Early delivery of the East Coast Main Line upgrade between York and Newcastle through NPR, whilst ensuring the West Coast Mainline is upgraded and made “HS2 ready”
- Early delivery of HS2 Crewe interventions, provision of a Warrington Bank Quay NPR station and upgrades to Chester Station to support better connectivity to Wales.
- Upgrading the ECML in Scotland and extending NPR and HS2 services beyond Newcastle to Edinburgh. This will ensure that the key financial centres of Edinburgh, Newcastle and Leeds are fully served by fast services, and that rail provides a genuine alternative to the regional air markets (particularly Edinburgh to London), an essential step in achieving our decarbonisation objectives.

Thirdly having a clear investment plan in place for key road connections, particularly the key cross border routes of the M6 / M56 in the west, and the A1 in the east, as well as alternative routes across the Welsh border such as the A41, the A51, the A54, the A55, the A550 and the A5/A483 corridor from Chester to Shrewsbury.

Fourthly, there are clear cross border freight opportunities – both east west connections from Northern Ireland via Holyhead and Cairnryan, and north -south via the North West and North East. A key example is the Northern Ireland to North East corridor which relies heavily on both the A75 in Scotland, the M6 and the A69 trans-pennine route across to the North East, Tees Valley, Yorkshire and the midlands.

Fifth, the need to recognise the importance of our border communities which face different challenges in terms of local connectivity. Our work on the Wales /Cheshire /Liverpool economic area is referenced in detail in our submission. We also focus on the borderlands community of nearly 1 million people living away from the main transport arteries, with the principal travel to work areas straddling the border.

Finally, we should seek to strengthen cross border relationships. TfN has developed close links with Transport Scotland, and established a new forum covering strategic West and Wales issues. We can see a clear role for sub-national transport bodies in developing proposals for a UK replacement for TEN-T.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to the review process and we look forward to supporting both you and the review team in the next stages of the review.

Yours sincerely,

Barry White  
Chief Executive, Transport for the North

1. **Transport for the North (TfN) – our role**
  - 1.1 Transport for the North (TfN), the UK's first statutory sub-national transport body (STB), was formally established in 2018. The ability to create Sub-national Transport Bodies to plan and prioritise long-term infrastructure investment in a specific region was created by Parliament with an amendment to the Local Transport Act 2008 which was passed in January 2016. Proposals for TfN to become the first Sub-national Transport Body were agreed by all twenty of the organisation's local and combined authority partners before being approved by Parliament.
  - 1.2 Statutory status of TfN means the North can clearly communicate to Government its investment priorities. It also formalises our relationship with the likes of Network Rail and Highways England so we can inform their investment programmes based on the will of communities, passengers, businesses and decision-makers across the region.
  - 1.3 TfN agreed and adopted its first Strategic Transport Plan (STP) in February 2019. The STP sets out a 30 year strategy and outline investment programme to increase the North's economic prosperity through developing our transport provision. The STP and Investment Programme were the culmination of an unprecedented collaborative effort between TfN and its national and local partners.
  - 1.4 Our role is to add value, ensuring value for money funding and strategic decisions about transport in the North are informed by our local knowledge, expertise and needs. It reflects the views of our Partners, bringing the regions together to consider transport solutions which connect the economic assets across the North, both internally to create an economic mass, but also externally as part of a global marketplace.
  - 1.5 As a sub-national body, we support our constituent Local Authority Partners in the creation of their local transport and spatial strategies, and integration at regional and national level. This response has been shared with TfN's partners before its submission and member views have been garnered through the existing TfN governance cycle as well as one to one engagement with partners who share a cross border boundary e.g. Cumbria, North East and Cheshire West and Chester.

## 2. Executive Summary

2.1 Our key messages to the Review included as part of our response include;

- Growing the North's economy is dependent on some critical cross boundary corridors and economic connections with North Wales, Western and Eastern Scotland, and on long distance freight connectivity with Northern Ireland.
- Strategic importance of cross border connectivity more important than ever in the face of our departure from the pending European union and in light of Covid 19. Improved connectivity has the opportunity to make the UK a more attractive place for businesses to invest and to base themselves.
- Shipping companies, airlines and the freight and logistics industry need improved connections to better serve our ports and airports. TfN's work on freight and international trade demonstrates the scale of the opportunity to rebalance international freight, taking pressure off North South routes through England.
- For border communities cross border travel is part of day to day life, it will be important that changes in jurisdictions do not mean there are disconnects in priorities.
- The North's infrastructure network currently acts as a bottleneck for connectivity across the nations of the UK. In particular accelerating investment in East and West Coast mainlines through Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2, can encourage mode shift from air to rail (particularly on longer distance markets such as Edinburgh to London) and therefore an acceleration in decarbonisation towards near net zero.
- East-west connectivity improvements in the midlands and the North can unlock wider benefits to UK connectivity, including investment in freight capacity in trans-pennine routes, investment in central Manchester improving connectivity to Wales
- The Rail Needs Assessment sets out the opportunity to reduce journey times between London and Scotland by up to 50 minutes, and emphasises that further investment is required if the long term aspiration of a 3 hour journey time is to be achieved. However the packages proposed by the NIC fall short of unlocking significant improvements – particularly for Edinburgh and the North East of England if the Eastern Leg of HS2 is not delivered.
- Connecting people to jobs, health, education, leisure and visitor economy opportunities, connecting businesses to each other and employees, and allowing the efficient movement of goods and services are key to sustained economic growth, as such decisions should be made irrespective of administrative boundaries.

2.2 Our extensive evidence base, which we have already shared with the review team, has identified the critical cross borders corridors and interventions required, namely;

- Long distance A69, A75 Northern Ireland to North East corridor
- Strengthening the Sheffield City Region to West connectivity by rail
- Extending NPR and HS2 services north to Scotland and ensuring that the HS2 is delivered in full, including both eastern and western legs, and that key Northern stations such as Preston, Carlisle, Darlington and Newcastle are fully HS2 ready. West Coast Mainline capacity improvements and ensuring connectivity from stations along the route can be enhanced (as outlined within our STP). We also strongly support efforts to improve the East Coast Mainline

between Newcastle and Scotland, extending NPR services to Edinburgh via ECML to connect the key financial centres of Edinburgh, Newcastle and Leeds.

- Borderlands growth area and the extension of the Borders Railway into England to support rural border communities, whilst freeing up capacity on the mainlines as an alternative route for freight and local passenger traffic. A business case looking at the case for reopening the line is currently being developed as part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and the Integrated Rail Plan should carefully consider how the benefits of this proposal can be maximised.
- Road connectivity between Yorkshire and Scotland with further investment in the A1 needed, including dualling of the A1 in Northumberland and Scotland, alongside required capacity works in County Durham.
- West and Wales SDC interventions – and North Wales commuting focusing on north – south / east – west axis of the M6 / M56, but also alongside alternative routes across the border such as the A41, the A51, and the A54 as well as improved passenger rail links between North Wales, Liverpool and Manchester, and an enhanced, more reliable layout at Chester.

2.3 TfN can best support our local authority partners, government industry, and the devolved administrations to enhance UK connectivity in a number of ways including;

Strategic Planning – an example of our work in this space to date includes working with the Welsh government and DfT to establish a West and Wales Transport Forum. Chaired by Lord Hunt and Lord Barry Jones, the forum brings together Welsh government, DfT, TfN and local authority partners to discuss strategic cross boundary transport issues and outline how collectively we can make a cohesive case for improved transport links between the North West & Wales.

Collaboration with Scotland and Wales to promote and accelerate scheme development. There are a number of schemes with cross-border implications which will require us to collaborate with Transport for Wales and Transport Scotland. Proposed new stations at Broughton and Deeside Park in Flintshire, together with planned improvements along the North Wales Coast Mainline and Wrexham to Bidston Line will impact local travel markets in Merseyside and Cheshire. Extension of the Scottish Borders Railway from its current terminus (at Tweedbank) down through Hawick and Newcastleton to Longtown in Cumbria will open a new rail route for local services between Carlisle and Edinburgh.

Data and analytical capability. TfN has developed industry leading analytical capability including bespoke transport and land use planning models that can represent transformational long-term change across the UK. We are also investing in innovative data approaches and opening up our analytical assets for others to use.

Support to train service planning and infrastructure. HS2 is already proposed to extend via the West Coast Main Line to Edinburgh and Glasgow. The gaps where TfN can add value are by working with Transport Scotland, HS2 Ltd and Network Rail to ensure an extension via the East Coast to Edinburgh via Newcastle, supporting infrastructure e.g. stations, and support for new alignments in both corridors. We are working closely with our partner authorities, DfT and HS2 Ltd to ensure that the Crewe North Connection delivers connectivity to North Wales.

Working with the freight and logistics and airport industries, building on work already underway on TfN's freight strategy for the North, to identify the key opportunities for both mode shift from road to rail, greater use of innovation in road haulage and opportunities to rebalance flows into the UK with a greater role for the Northern ports. We already lead the English STB freight community of practice and play an active role in both DfT and Network Rail freight strategy development.

### 3. Assessing the Need for Cross Border Activity:

Q3.1 If you represent a place, what is your current strategy for growing the economy and improving the quality of life there?

TfN is the voice of the North of England for transport – as a statutory body we bring together elected leaders and business leaders from the whole of the North of England who collectively represent the region's 15.4 million citizens.

The people of the North are at the heart of our Strategic Transport Plan<sup>i</sup> (STP). Our Strategy recognises that an effective, efficient Northern transport network is a key part of everyday life – connecting people to jobs, health, education and leisure opportunities, connecting businesses to each other and employees, and allowing the efficient movement of goods and services.

The Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review<sup>ii</sup> published by TfN in 2016 set a blueprint for realising our full potential, delivering nearly £100 billion in annual GVA and creating 850,000 jobs. The steps we need to take toward that transformational economic growth are outlined within our STP.

TfN's vision is of "a thriving North of England, where world class transport supports sustainable economic growth, excellent quality of life and improved opportunities for all." A transport system that is fit-for-purpose with strong North-South and East-West connections will be the backbone of a strong economy for both the North and the UK.

Q3.2 What is necessary to achieve this strategy and what evidence do you have that improved connectivity is needed in this instance?

In order to achieve our strategy for economic growth and transformation of the North we need thriving regional economies. The benefits of a large economy are only achieved when combined with the concentration of economic activity in specific places, such as towns and cities. Therefore, our STP identifies the fundamental challenge for the North's economy is to improve the economic interaction between the key economic assets and clusters of the North to improve the sharing of knowledge, supply chains, resources, and innovation to drive agglomeration benefits and productivity.

To realise the benefits of agglomeration and economic mass, the North requires faster, more efficient, reliable and sustainable journeys on the road and rail networks. Yet these existing networks have a number of challenges.

Over the last two decades, the North's railway has experienced substantial growth in passenger numbers despite a legacy of underinvestment. Much of that growth has been accommodated within pre-existing capacity, but this is no longer possible on many routes, and most of the North's rail hubs in most large and medium sized locations are now at capacity. The North's rail network lacks

sufficient capacity for growth and is severely constrained by on-train congestion, low journey speeds and poor punctuality.

East–West road connectivity is a significant barrier for future growth in the North, and a key constraint to agglomeration and transforming the North’s economy. Currently the M62 is the only motorway standard East-West road link across the Pennines between Derby in the Midlands and Edinburgh in Scotland. Dualling of the A66 is essential to provide resilience to the network. Other major arteries, including the M1, M6 and M56 corridors, are also already heavily congested and are acting as major barriers to transforming the North’s economy.

Transport is social infrastructure which should provide opportunity for all potential users. Strategic transport improvements should not just better connect already connected areas or people to other similar areas or people, improvements should ensure that all areas of opportunity are connected, and that communities are not disconnected and further isolated.

The UK’s strategic transport network needs to be designed and developed to be accessible, ensuring individuals have a choice of services and opportunities to access work and leisure irrespective of administrative boundaries. This strategic transport network needs to be underpinned by a sustained programme of long-term investment, devolved funding and decision-making powers that ensure decisions made are driven by outcomes.

Q3.3 Please provide any information you hold about current multi-nation journeys within the United Kingdom.

In recognition of the travel demands that are generated across boundaries much of TfN’s research, model and business case development have considered cross boundary connectivity particularly between the West into Wales and links North into Scotland which is summarised below and in paragraph 3.6 of our submission.

TfN has developed our Future Travel Scenarios (see Section 4.5) which suggest travel by road between the North and Wales could grow by up to 130% between 2018 and 2050, with growth in rail trips up to 300%. For travel between the North and Scotland, growth to 2050 could be up to 380% for road trips and up to 680% for rail trips.

TfN has two unique datasets that can provide some information on journey reliability on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) & Major Road Network (MRN) – so for example on A1, M6, M56 & A55 which we can make available to the UCR team in early 2021 if required.

As the STP clearly sets out, a lack of a W10/12 gauge cleared route across the Pennines that is forcing freight containers to use one of two options to cross the Pennines either via the midlands or Scotland. Longer routing for trains adds to the carbon impact from transport, increases costs and time and therefore lessens efficiency. Moving more containers via the Diggle rail route as part of Trans Pennine Route Upgrade (TRU) would free up paths via Scotland for other freight or passenger services and therefore should be a key area for consideration as part of this review and the subsequent recommendations made to government

Q3.4 In general terms, is there a need for new or improved transport links between the nations of the United Kingdom?

Yes, the North's infrastructure network clearly acts as a bottleneck for connectivity across the nations of the UK.

TfN has already undertaken a great deal of work to build the evidence base for improved UK connectivity, four of our Strategic Development Corridors (SDCs) and through the development of Northern Powerhouse Rail as well as our more recent evidence we have gathered to feed into the NIC Rail Needs Assessment Call for Evidence which will inform the DfT Integrated Rail Plan. Our evidence focuses on these cross border strategic routes and identify not only current constraints but also what is needed to ensure sustained economic growth.

On rail, there is now widespread acceptance that accelerating investment in East and West Coast mainlines through Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2, can create substantial capacity and performance enhancements for journey's between England, Scotland and Wales, encourage mode shift and an acceleration in decarbonisation. The NIC's Rail Needs Assessment falls short of what is needed to build long term capacity and performance of the network, particularly if HS2 and NPR are not delivered in full. It also remains a concern that connectivity to Wales was excluded from the remit of the NIC commission.

In addition, the key corridors identified in the STP and assessed in detail through the corridor studies include;

West & Wales,

Improving connectivity, for people and goods, to, from and through the important economic centres and assets of Cheshire, Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester, with strategic connectivity into North Wales and the Midlands.

West Coast - Sheffield City Region into Scotland,

Strengthening rail connectivity along the West Corridor, through the West Coast Partnership and infrastructure upgrades, connecting the advanced manufacturing clusters and assets in Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Cheshire, and Sheffield City Region, with improved connectivity from the North into Scotland and the Midlands.

East Coast – Scotland,

Strengthening rail connectivity and capacity along the East Coast Main Line which links the North to Scotland and other key parallel rail lines, such as the Durham Coast Line, to provide enhanced strategic and local connectivity in the North East, Tees Valley, East Riding and North Yorkshire and links into Scotland.

Yorkshire – Scotland,

Strengthening road connectivity between the Midlands, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire, East Riding, Tees Valley, the North East, and Scotland, building on the existing road investment commitments.

Connecting the Energy Coasts

Improving connectivity for people and goods between the nationally significant non-carbon energy and research assets located in Cumbria, Lancashire, North



Yorkshire, the North East, and Tees Valley. This corridor is useful for the review as the route is between the north east and Irish sea ports in Scotland.

Further detail on these routes and specific priorities is included in section 4 of our response.

Q3.5 What are the main obstacles and challenges in improving transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom?

Historic underinvestment in Northern transport network is a key challenge to improving transport connectivity across the United Kingdom due to the knock-on implications for long distance connectivity on both road and rail (but particularly rail). Examples of this include under investment in West Coast Main Line, capacity and performance issues at known bottlenecks on the rail network at Manchester, Leeds, York and Newcastle, as well as poor connectivity to Wales – meaning without a fully integrated rail network the full benefits of investment at Crewe won't be realised.

Different levels of devolution of powers and funding from central government via the Barnett formula or other means, has led to a disjointed approach across the Union. While we agree decisions are best made based on local priorities, securing consensus and agreeing strategic connectivity priorities across the union is required.

In addition to this a further challenge arises from the fragmentation of planning e.g. HS2/NPR/TRU/Local Rail are not planned on a coherent basis and different approaches in England, Scotland and Wales. This fragmentation becomes even more apparent when considering the franchise arrangements of rail and ferry services between the four nations.

A further obstacle are the different levels of economic performance, ensuring distribution of economic and social impacts across large area is complex, we need to make sure any connectivity benefits derived are far reaching.

Q3.6 What evidence exists to demonstrate the potential impacts of improved transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom?

A summary of TfN's extensive and relevant evidence base to support the review team is contained within Annex 1.

Q3.7 When making transport investment decisions which aim to improve connectivity between the different nations of the United Kingdom, does the current appraisal framework capture all the potential impacts?

No, the current transport appraisal system has failed to capture all the potential impacts. A greater more focus on social and environmental impacts is required, focusing on the very long term returns to investment rather than shorter term considerations. TfN has developed analytical tools which can represent the true transformational potential of "levelling up" through long term infrastructure investment. The Revised Green Book issued on 25th November 2020 has moved some way to better represent economic social and environmental transformation change, but we need to see how this is tested in practice in departmental guidance and decision making.

Further research on the importance of long -distance connectivity for supporting business travel and inter-regional trade would help to estimate the wider economic impacts of better connecting the four nations.

It is also important to note that the current approach differs for each nation, Transport Scotland have more devolved powers e.g. to specify its own rail output specification that Network Rail delivers, two fully devolved rail franchises, and a political commitment to allocate more spending on transport – major rail electrification programmes have been delivered with upgrades to the rest of the network e.g. Highland Line and Aberdeen -Inverness. Transport Scotland also have more autonomy over how they choose schemes to bring forward and as such have a much stronger focus on social inclusion. TfN is exploring how it might develop shadow arrangements for the North ahead of any further devolution of powers to the North, through TfN's work on the Northern Transport Charter.

#### 4. Opportunities for Improved Transport Connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom

Q4.1 Which specific journeys would benefit from new or improved transport links?

to Q4.4 Our response to this section identifies the interventions that TfN believes will address the current challenges on the transport network, future proofing for where transport demand is envisaged, and where the interventions will stimulate inclusive, sustainable, transformational economic growth.

Building on the four cross boundary corridors identified in paragraph 3.4 of this response, we see the opportunities for improved transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom falling into two main journey categories;

1. Strategic freight movements
2. Business, commuter & leisure travel

And through our work on Strategic Development Corridors have identified transport investment supporting economic growth, improved productivity, more efficient movement of goods and better access to labour markets.

Strategic freight movements

Key cross border freight movements are:

- England to Wales & Northern Ireland
- Liverpool – Belfast
- England to Scotland and onto Northern Ireland via Cairnryan

TfN's Freight and Logistics analysis forecasts over 50% growth in both road and rail freight movements by 2050, which will play a central role in increasing economic activity and in achieving the GVA growth outlined in the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER). Freight and logistics is also a central enabling capability (as defined by NPIER) for the successful economic development of the North.

The main north - south and east - west rail routes are expected to experience major growth in demand and are already lacking sufficient capacity. Substantial growth in demand for rail freight is expected on the West Coast Mainline (WCML)

and on east-west routes across the Pennines, with lower yet still significant increases in demand for rail freight on the East Coast Main Line (ECML). Demand for rail freight paths is strongest from the main port areas of Liverpool, Humber and the Tees with Port of Liverpool an important gateway to Ireland and Atlantic trade.

There is currently no option for rail freight between Northern Ireland, Scotland and England following the movement of ferry services from Stranraer to Cairnryan. The review should consider how options for a third route between England and Scotland for freight could provide significant extra capacity at relatively modest cost. If we are to improve the modal share of rail on Anglo Scottish passenger flows to help with the decarbonisation of transport, then a further freight route will become even more critical.

For freight by road, which accounts for 87% of freight movements in the North, the M6, M56, M62 and M18 are critical to supporting the efficient movement of goods within and through the North. The M6 providing the main north – south link to Scotland and to the Port of Cairnryan for connections to Northern Ireland. With the A1(M) an important route for north-south movement on the East Coast and combined with A66 and A69 offering an alternative to the M6 for long distance traffic to / from Scotland.

Significant congestion, efficiency, capacity, and reliability impacts on the road and rail networks are constraining economic growth, such as on parts of the West Coast Main Line and M6 Motorway. The freight and logistics industry require enhanced connectivity on both the road and rail networks, as well as exploring opportunities for greater use of waterborne and intermodal freight.

#### Business, commuter & leisure travel

Within this journey category key areas that would benefit from connectivity improvements are;

- Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester & Cheshire to North Wales
- Borderlands region straddling the England / Scotland border
- Longer distance business and leisure travel, England – Scotland and England – North Wales.

#### Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester & Cheshire to North Wales

The economic prosperity of the Cheshire & Warrington LEP area and the Liverpool City Region is intrinsically linked to activities taking place to the immediate west within North Wales. This Mersey Dee area is recognised as a single economic sub-region and having a population close to 1 million, which is a pivotal location in the UK. The economic relationship is especially apparent within cross-border journey to work flows, with movement in both directions, notably between Deeside (within Flintshire) and the Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) administrative areas. The major employment areas of Chester Business Park, Daresbury and Birchwood, as well the Important Economic Centres of Chester, Liverpool, and Warrington, are mirrored on the opposite side of the border by significant employment generators at Airbus (Broughton); Deeside Park; and, Wrexham Industrial Estate.

Significant economic and population growth is forecast within this corridor which will increase demand on transport infrastructure.

Growth Track 360, which is a cross-border alliance of business, political and public sector leaders, has identified a requirement for £1bn of rail improvements to transform the North Wales and Cheshire regional economy and deliver 70,000 new jobs over 20 years. If successful, it would lead to a massive boost to the North Wales, Cheshire and Wirral economies, linking them with the planned HS2 line between London and the North of England.

Connectivity improvements would support the growth of key economic assets such as Manchester Airport, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zones, Atlantic Gateway, North Wales Arc, Port of Liverpool, Holyhead Port and Crewe HS2 Hub. With good connectivity to Manchester and Liverpool John Lennon Airports seen as vital to businesses, communities and the visitor economy in North Wales.

The importance of Crewe and the Northern Connection are stressed in the Strategic Transport Plan and also in TfN's response to the 2017 Crewe Hub Consultation. Crewe is a major rail gateway that serves both South Cheshire but also offers connections to Chester and North Wales, Shropshire, Stoke-on-Trent together with West Coast Main Line destinations and the Northern Connection is important to allow these destinations to benefit by convenient interchange at Crewe. The plans for an NPR station at Warrington are also important for east west connectivity to and from North Wales, the North West and Manchester Airport.

The Borderlands region as a population of over 1 million and includes the five local authority areas of Carlisle City, Cumbria County, Dumfries and Galloway, Northumberland County and Scottish Borders. This region is central to the geography of the UK sharing the Scottish Border and key road, rail and marine routes between Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and continental Europe.

The economy of this region shares significant synergies in terms of travel to work, specialisms in agriculture, energy and tourism (with two World Heritage sites and 60m annual visitors) but also challenges. Supported by the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal partners are working to unlock the potential for sustainable and inclusive economic growth across the South of Scotland and North of England. In particular it seeks to narrow the productivity gap faced by the region; increase the working age population and to deliver inclusive growth.

Infrastructure improvements are seen as central to the success of the region, in particular steps to ensure communities and business can access opportunities, both locally and nationally. The improvements to the A1, A69, ECML and WMCL noted elsewhere in the response will provide the foundations of that connectivity. Supporting this, proposals for the transformation of Carlisle Station as regional hub are progressing at pace while early work is now progressing surround the feasibility of reinstating the Borders Railway linking Carlisle and Edinburgh via the Scottish Borders and the communities within this region.

Good quality, longer distance connectivity is essential to supporting access to / from important economic centres and tourism assets across the UK. For example, Glasgow and Edinburgh are important financial, legal and cultural centres accessed from England via the East and West Coast Mainlines, the A1 and M6. Snowdonia National Park and Anglesey attract over 5.5 million visitors per

annum. With ferry services from Holyhead carrying 1.9 million passengers a year to Ireland.

### Our transport investment priorities

TfN's Investment programme identifies the need for substantial improvements to north - south connectivity. These include upgrades to passenger and freight rail services on the WCML & ECML, which in order to maximise benefits will be aligned with plans for HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail. Increasing capacity on the WCML north of Preston and the importance of maintaining connectivity from stations along the line is identified within our STP and is important when we consider the regional role of the line and growing capacity pressures with HS2. For example, we have previously highlighted the importance of upgrading Preston station in advance of HS2 to enhance rail services between Blackpool and Scotland. The Golborne link is also important to ensure the effective integration of HS2 with Scotland, as well facilitating direct connections to Cumbria and Lancashire, as well as HS2 integration with Scotland. Both the ECML & WCML upgrades will substantially reduce journey times, for example between the North West of England and Edinburgh. We await confirmation through the Integrated Rail Plan that NPR and HS2 will both be completed in full before 2040.

In advance of the longer term large - scale improvements, a number of urgent improvements are needed to the existing rail network, in particular enhancements at Carstairs to improve journey times; at Chester station to improve capacity and reliability; at Portobello junction to improve the reliability of Trans Pennine Express (TPE) and ECML services to/from Edinburgh; at Lanark junction to improve reliability of TPE and WCML services to/from Glasgow; and at a number of locations in the North of England which would have a significant benefit on the reliability of trains between the North of England, Scotland and Wales, including at Darlington, Doncaster, Leeds, Manchester, Preston, and York.

Important north – south highway improvements include upgrading the final single lane section of the A1 from Ellingham to the Scottish border, which to deliver the most benefit will also need the Scottish Government to commit to upgrading the route north of the border. Investment on the A19 North of Newcastle and A1 in County Durham. Improvements to the A69 which is key to linking the north east to south west Scotland and Northern Ireland as well as dualling of the A66 which provides a key link between Yorkshire, east midlands and south east and Scotland. On the west of the country pressure on the M6 means further investment will be needed, upgrading capacity between Preston and the A500 junction near Crewe.

TfN supports the Borderlands Growth Initiative, a partnership between five local authorities located along the England – Scotland border, with plans to improve transport connectivity through extending the Borders rail line linking Carlisle to Tweedbank.

Cross border road freight movements to North Wales, and onto Ireland via Holyhead are principally served by the M56, A494, A548, A483 and A55. The Welsh Government are progressing plans to upgrade the A494 River Dee crossing and to construct a new 13 Km dual carriageway linking the A55 with the A548 near Shotwick on the border with England. Plans are also in development to improve the A483 corridor near Wrexham.

On the English side of the border TfN's Investment Programme identifies the

Chester – Broughton Growth Corridor linking to Chester with Flintshire as an early priority, and proposed improvements to the M56 west of J10, the A51 and A54 as options for strengthening east-west connectivity from the M6 to the Welsh border.

Q4.5 How will demand for these journeys change in the future?

Transport for the North (TfN) has developed its Future Travel Scenarios to expose and explore future uncertainty and consider how the interactions between social, economic, environmental, technological and spatial aspects will affect how we live, work and travel in the future (2050). This was published during December 2020, and can be found here: <https://transportfornorth.com/future-travel-scenarios/>.

Whilst the Future Travel Scenarios are focused on the longer-term, we cannot lose sight of the fact that current global challenges to tackle Covid-19 are creating significant additional uncertainty by changing the way we move and, more fundamentally, what we deem as important. This makes it even more important to build tools that allow for more effective assessment of what these trend changes may mean.

Our scenario analysis tool provides the basis for further interrogation of evolving and new trends, based on evidence as it develops. The Scenarios Framework can be regularly reviewed and adjusted with a mixture of light-touch annual updates and less frequent, or more fundamental refreshes over time as future change trends and new evidence, and supporting an ambition of 'building back better'.

Q4.7 What would be the environmental impact of improving these journeys in the way that you have identified?

As an example, page 31 of the West & Wales SDC OAR document identifies the key Environmental designations have been identified for the as a means to identify the key impacts of transport under existing conditions (such as Noise and Air Quality), but also the areas that are most sensitive to the delivery of new infrastructure within the SDC area.

Q4.8 Are there any interdependencies with other policies that may impact the deliverability of the identified improvements?

There are a number of policies that will directly affect deliverability of the improvements outlined earlier in our response including governments commitment to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. However, there is a lot of uncertainty on national governments policy priorities, we are still awaiting the outcome of the Williams review, Integrated Rail Plan, Devolution Whitepaper, Transport Decarbonisation Plan and the Future of UK Freight Report. All these pending publications should help prioritising improved union connectivity and as such the UCR itself should reflect any recommendations made within these critical policy documents.

Other interdependencies to delivery lie with the interfaces between national, local and regional transport and housing policies. As government's policy priorities become clearer upon the release of the backlog of national

publications identified above, regional and local policies should be reviewed and refreshed to ensure a joined up cohesive approach is undertaken.

4.9 Is there a need for the development of a national strategic transport network to replace the European TEN-T network within the UK?

Yes, in principle TfN would support the development of a UK version of the TEN-T network to develop an integrated multimodal transport network allowing people and goods to move quickly and easily across the UK. Improving resilience, journey times and safety standards across the UK transport network is imperative. Taking a transport corridor approach for long distance journeys is something TfN has been doing since our inception, earlier in this submission we have detailed our work to date on the Strategic Development Corridors and the Integrated Rail Plan.

Applying the principles of the existing TEN – T network within the UK can support our mutual objectives to close gaps remove bottlenecks and technical barriers, as well as to improve social, economic and environmental outcomes. Unlike TEN-T, any UK network must include the eastern routes as well as those in the west. As is the case with the European version, any development of a UK wide network must also be supported by appropriate funding to enable relevant bodies to deliver the required improvements to meet any new regulations imposed as part of a UK TEN – T network.

Establishing such a network will further enhance collaboration between UK nations, which in turn will ensure that infrastructure not only provides economic growth, but also actively supports governments wider priorities such as improved social outcomes 'levelling up' and decarbonisation. A UK strategic transport network and programme would provide greater certainty for Local Transport and Highway Authorities to deliver complementary investment. It would also give businesses in the supply chain, including SMEs, the confidence to invest and grow, plan interventions, build up their skills base, and collaborate across industries.

## 5. Connections to Northern Ireland

- 5.1 With reference to the unique geographical position of Northern Ireland please set out how best to improve cross-border transport connectivity with other nations

As discussed in section 4, connections to Ireland either fixed or ferry, wider infrastructure improvements are needed within Scotland and England to connect these routes. This includes the A69 and A75 route improvements. There are no rail freight options to connect England with Northern Ireland following the move from Stranraer to Cairnryan. To deliver on decarbonisation and net zero targets this is a major flow of freight that could benefit from rail freight terminal investment.

In addition, the absence of W10/W12 loading gauge freight route over the Pennines means any rail freight coming from Northern Ireland would not be able to access the east of the Pennines without a large detour via Edinburgh or the midlands via Nuneaton.

Passenger journeys by some ferry routes (including Heysham and Cairnryan) have declined with the development of low-cost aviation. The North's regional airports are well placed to support innovation in new environmentally friendly small planes for short connecting flights.

- The new Carlisle Lake District Airport provides a regional air option for Cumbria and south Scotland and, prior to Covid 19, offered direct routes to Belfast. DfT should consider how to support the restart of those services from the airport. Trunking the adjacent A689 would also enhance access to the airport and onward connections.
- Blackpool Airport, a key Lancashire gateway, has the potential to better connect Great Britain and Northern Ireland by air. This would be beneficial for both the general and tourist based economy on the Fylde Coast, as well as further afield.

## 6. Final Questions

- 6.1 What else can be done to support greater transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom?

We refer you to the response to question 3.5.

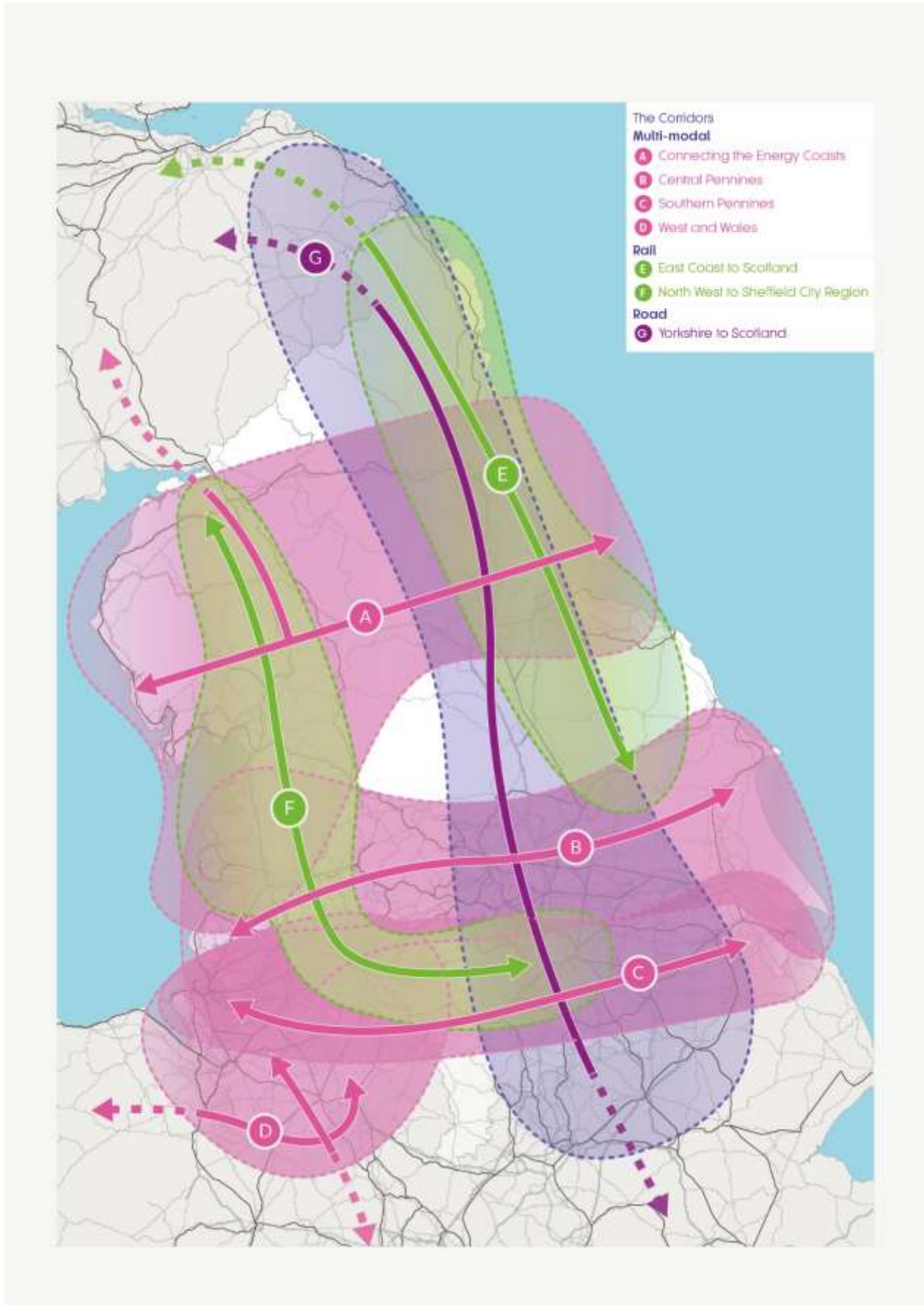
- 6.2 Do you have any further comments?

We would just like to reiterate our offer made in paragraph 2.3 to Sir Peter Hendy and the review team to provide additional support, both in terms of the ongoing review and beyond.

The attached annex contains a full list of documents and references.



Annex 1: TfN Strategic Development Corridors



Transport for the North Evidence Base	Publication Date
<i>Available from Transport for the North website unless stated.</i>	
Strategic Transport Plan	Feb 2019
<a href="#"><u>Strategic Transport Plan - Transport for the North</u></a>	
Future Travel Scenarios	December 2020
<a href="https://transportforthenorth.com/economic-growth/future-transport-scenarios/"><u>https://transportforthenorth.com/economic-growth/future-transport-scenarios/</u></a>	
TfN Cross Boundary Strategic Development Corridors	Feb and Oct 2019
<a href="https://transportforthenorth.com/strategic-development-corridors/"><u>https://transportforthenorth.com/strategic-development-corridors/</u></a>	
East Coast to Scotland Strategic Development Corridor (SDC)	
<a href="https://transportforthenorth.com/strategic-development-corridors/eastcoast-scotland-sdc/"><u>https://transportforthenorth.com/strategic-development-corridors/eastcoast-scotland-sdc/</u></a>	
Yorkshire to Scotland Strategic Development Corridor	
<a href="https://transportforthenorth.com/strategic-development-corridors/yorkshire-scotland-sdc/"><u>https://transportforthenorth.com/strategic-development-corridors/yorkshire-scotland-sdc/</u></a>	
West Coast to Sheffield City Region SDC Strategic Programme Outline Case	
<a href="https://transportforthenorth.com/strategic-development-corridors/westcoast-sheffield-sdc/"><u>https://transportforthenorth.com/strategic-development-corridors/westcoast-sheffield-sdc/</u></a>	
West and Wales: SDC Strategic Programme Outline Case (SPOC)	
<a href="https://transportforthenorth.com/strategic-development-corridors/west-and-wales/"><u>https://transportforthenorth.com/strategic-development-corridors/west-and-wales/</u></a>	
TfN submission to the Oakervee Review:	October 2019
<a href="https://transportforthenorth.com/reports/hs2-review/"><u>https://transportforthenorth.com/reports/hs2-review/</u></a>	
Integrated Rail Plan & Rail Needs Assessment	May 2020
Submission to the National Infrastructure Commission Rail Needs Assessment for the North and Midlands Call for Evidence	
<a href="#"><u>NIC-RNA-TfN-Submission-Final-25-June-Update.pdf (transportforthenorth.com)</u></a>	

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Connectivity and Labour Markets in the Northern Powerhouse	May 2018
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*Evidence on current and future commuting flows and skills needs for the North under both “business as usual” and transformational growth forecasts.*

Connectivity and Labour Markets in the Northern Powerhouse  
([transportforthenorth.com](http://transportforthenorth.com))

Traffic Master & Mobile Phone Data	N/A
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*TfN has two unique datasets that can provide some information on journey reliability on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) & Major Road Network (MRN) – so for example on A1, M6, M56 & A55 which we can make available to the UCR team in early 2021 if required.*

International Trade and Connectivity in the North	May 2019
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*Unpublished – can be supplied on request.*

Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER) – City Region and Local Area Profiles	May 2016
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Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review.

Northern Evidence Hub	Ongoing
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*A collaborative platform developed by TfN to support knowledge sharing between partner organisations.*

Northern Evidence Hub - Transport for the North

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<sup>i</sup> TfN Strategic Transport Plan, *Published February 2019*

<sup>ii</sup> Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review, *Published June 2016*