

Scrutiny Committee Minutes

**Thursday 04 November 2021
Virtual**

Present:

Attendee	Local Authority
Cllr Paul Haslam	North Yorkshire;
Cllr Martin Mitchell	Blackpool;
Cllr Rodger Jones	Greater Manchester Combined Authority;
Cllr Sean Chaytor	Hull;
Cllr Matthew Salter	Lancashire;
Cllr Lindsay Melia	Liverpool City Region;
Cllr John Davison	North Lincolnshire;
Cllr Chris Lamb	South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority;
Cllr Steve Parish	Warrington;
Cllr Manisha Kaushik	West Yorkshire Combined Authority;
Cllr Stephen Fenton	York;

Invitees In Attendance:

Maggie Simpson	Director General of the Rail Freight Group
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Officers in Attendance:

Name	Job Title
Gary Rich	Democratic Services Officer
Iain Craven	Finance Director
Julie Openshaw	Head of Legal Services
Tim Foster	Interim Strategy & Programme Director
Rosemary Lyon	Legal and Democratic Services Officer
Owen Wilson	Major Roads Strategy Manager
Peter Cole	Principal Environmental and Sustainability Officer
Manjit Dhillon	Senior Solicitor
David Hoggarth	Strategic Rail Director

**Item
No:**

Item

1. Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all in attendance and informed Members that the meeting is being streamed live. Apologies were received from Cllr Hughes, Cllr Kaushik and Cllr Groves.

The Chair explained to Members why the meeting had been changed to a consultation call and stated that the next meeting in January would be face to face, subject to Health and Safety considerations.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2021 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Fenton and seconded by Cllr Chaytor.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2021 be noted.

4. Budget Revision Update

- 4.1 Members received the report from the Finance Director who highlighted the key elements of the report, specifically the impact that the delayed publication of the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) is having.

- 4.2 Members expressed their concerns over the delayed IRP and considered what they might be able to do to speed up its publication.

The Interim Strategy & Programme Director explained that unofficial indications from Government suggest that the IRP is expected to be published in November. He highlighted that the delay is impacting on major projects as well as other enhancements on the rail network.

- 4.3 The Chair urged that the IRP be published as soon as possible.

Resolved:

That the Committee note the financial performance in the six months to September 2021 and that Budget Revision 2 will be finalised and presented to the November Board.

5. Business Planning Process

- 5.1 Members received the report from the Finance Director who highlighted the key areas of the report for Members.

He outlined the difficulties in producing the plan this year. He explained that the process is being hindered by not having a core funding settlement for 2022/23 or a budget for Northern Powerhouse Rail, as well as the Integrated Rail Plan not being published.

He explained that early indications from the Government are that Transport for the North are unlikely to get a funding settlement until the end of December or early January. However, departments are working on prioritisation lists so that when a settlement is agreed business planning can commence

- 5.2 Members expressed their disappointment at the lack of certainty that TfN finds itself having to deal with and the Committee expressed its disappointment in the lack of clarity regarding NPR and HS2.
- 5.3 The Chair expressed the Committee's concerns that the Business planning process is being hampered by the delay in the core funding and delayed publication of the IRP and as a consequence a delay to NPR. He stated that Officers are carrying out a prioritisation process but by December significant costs will be being incurred as a result of a lack of detailed settlement from the Government. He further explained that a level of certainty is required in order to carry out TfN's duty to improve transport in the North of England and a decarbonisation policy that involves a modal shift. This is required in order to support officers in undertaking their work.

Resolved:

That Scrutiny Committee notes the challenges and approach to the 2022/23 business planning process.

6. Freight & Logistics Expert

- 6.1 The Chair called on Ms. Maggie Simpson a Freight and Logistics expert and Director General of the Rail Freight Group to address the Committee. Following her introduction Members were able to ask questions and make comments on a variety of issues relating to freight and logistics.
- 6.2 Cllr Chaytor requested that the next time the Committee receives a report on freight and logistics that a briefing note on what happened with Freight Liner and its positives and negatives be included.
- 6.3 The Chair thanked Ms. Simpson for her attendance.

7. Manchester Recovery Taskforce

- 7.1 The report of the Strategic Rail Director was received by Members who highlighted key elements of the report before Members were invited to ask questions and make comments.
- 7.2 Members asked specific questions relating to issues that affected their constituent areas.
- 7.3 The Chair expressed concern about the modelling and stated his view that occurrence of delays should be easily identifiable.

The Strategic Rail Director reassured the Committee that this has been examined leading to a robust timetable structure. He explained that the Rail North Committee will be monitoring issues carefully and is hopeful that the new way of working in which services can be developed alongside infrastructure will be a positive.

- 7.4 Cllr Jones raised the issue of consultation with the public and requested that information be circulated to Members so that this can be passed on and enabling passengers to respond.

The Strategic Rail Director confirmed that he would feed back the comments to the train operators.

- 7.5 The Committee expressed its eagerness to help on any consultation and get responses from the wider public in their constituent areas. The Chair encouraged TfN to speak to the train operators and inform all Council Members on developments.

The Chair further stated that the Committee would like reassurances that all locations where delays occur have been identified.

It was also requested that all Stakeholders are consulted and have an input into the process.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Committee notes the progress made on the development of the December 2022 timetable and the next steps including a further round of public consultation planned for November 2021.
- 2) That the Committee notes the progress on developing an enhanced collaboration with the Department for Transport on the infrastructure solution including work to develop a clear roadmap (a 'RailMap') to identify a co-ordinated long-term service and infrastructure solution for the corridor to restore and improve connectivity.

8. Major Roads Report

- 8.1 This item was taken after item 9.
- 8.2 Members received the report from the Major Roads Strategy Manager who highlighted the key points of the report and the presentation.
- 8.3 The Chair informed Members of the questions which had been received from Mr Rae who represents the Environmental Transport Grouping and explained that the Major Roads Strategy Manager would provide Mr. Rae with TfN's responses. The following questions were received:
- Should the MRR not contain an explicit commitment to compatibility with the Decarbonisation Strategy, as is required by the TfN strategic transport plan?
 - Has an analysis been undertaken that establishes whether TfN's proposed investment in increased road capacity, facilitating more traffic generation, either assists the proposed carbon reduction pathway to Net Zero or alternatively undermines it?
 - How would the MRR manage increased demand for road travel consistent with its preferred future travel scenario and in order to achieve its 2030 & 2050 carbon reduction targets?
 - TfN's Strategic Goal for the environment requires TfN to make best use of existing transport infrastructure before investing in new capacity. Has TfN undertaken such an assessment to see if best use is being made of the road network?
 - Will TfN review (or ask DfT/National Highways to do likewise) the strategic case for all the MRR road schemes in the context of the Green Book?
 - The negative impacts of the MRR on the wider environment are nowhere to be found in the documents. Carbon emissions reduction is not the only emergency – there is a nature crisis and a public health crisis as well. What are the impacts of the MRR investments on these other two emergencies, and why have they not been included within its analysis?
- 8.4 Cllr Melia believed that there were contradictions in the report and raised a number of issues including the reliability of public transport when roads are congested with cars and the issue of air quality leading to a disparity in health outcomes.
- 8.5 Members discussed the importance of the need to decarbonise road vehicles and the need to improve the road network in order to reduce congestion.
- 8.6 In response to the issues raised the Major Roads Strategy Manager explained that highways are a flexible network and noted the reallocation of road space for other modes of transport at the start of the pandemic. He further explained that issues such as air quality will be in part be addressed by a shift to more electric vehicles, and that wider policy

initiatives on decarbonising the power generation would influence the impact of moving to EVs with respect to carbon emissions. . He also updated Members on the TfN's work evidencing the need for, and distribution of electric vehicle charging points across all areas of the North.

- 8.7 The Chair stated that the question of how many vehicles can afford to be on the road in order to meet carbon net zero by 2050 needs to be addressed. The Major Roads Strategy Manager explained that an analysis of how future traffic levels would impact on the decarbonisation trajectory has been undertaken and that he would ensure that was communicated in the Major Roads Report.
- 8.8 The committee requested that the report going to Board in November 2021 include a further section on how much vehicle use will need to change over the next 30 years in order to feed into the debate over road use.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9. Approval of the Decarbonisation Strategy

- 9.1 Members received the report and the presentation on the decarbonisation strategy from the Principal Environmental and Sustainability Officer who then highlighted the key points.

- 9.2 Cllr Fenton raised the issue of the Strategy's ambition.

The Principal Environmental and Sustainability Officer explained that the consultation was an open process and that is reflected in the wide range of responses received, including therefore The 20% who were not supportive which was evenly split between those who felt it should go faster versus those opposed to intervening to combat climate change. He further highlighted that middle ground views are often less well represented in consultations.

- 9.3 Cllr Chaytor raised the issue of decarbonisation in rural areas and the need to make sure that public transport services are not reduced.

- 9.4 The Chair raised the issue of governance and specifically how progress will be measured.

The Principal Environmental and Sustainability Officer explained that there is a monitoring and evaluation framework in development which will be adopted next year which will include a set of metrics to track progress. He further explained that there would be an annual light version stocktake that will also take place.

9.5 The Committee welcomed the Strategy. The Chair explained that whilst the car remains cheaper than public transport and whilst there are not cost effective, convenient and accessible modes of alternative transport in place the strategy will be difficult to enable. It is likely that this will only come about if subsidies for public transport are put in place. The Committee also commented on the need for further work to take place on decarbonisation in rural areas due to the differing challenges faced.

The Committee also noted the need to review the relative price of travel choices and that Transport related social exclusion also needs to be avoided.

9.6 The Principal Environmental and Sustainability Officer explained that relative price to travel choices has been added to the strategy and highlighted that the true cost of a car journey is more expensive than people realised. On the rural versus city issue he explained that this needs to be one of the key focuses moving forward.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Committee notes the content of the report in relation to the outcomes of the public consultation and updates made to the Strategy.
- 2) That the Committee approves TfN's Decarbonisation Strategy.

10. Bus Back Better Strategy

10.1 Members received the report from the Interim Programme and Strategy Director who highlighted the key points in the report.

10.2 The Chair asked if work on Smart Ticketing could be shared.

The Interim Programme and Strategy Director stated that he would need to confirm what was possible to share. All of TfN's work on smart ticketing has been shared with constituent authorities and the new work on digital mobility will further address opportunities to share thinking and best practice.

10.3 The report was welcomed by the Committee. Members were pleased that TfN is being consulted on Bus Back Better and the potential to share information on smart ticketing and other relevant intelligence with constituent authorities.

In order to achieve modal shift the Committee would like to see a fairer funding situation with greater convenience and greater access to public transport.

Resolved:

- 1) That Scrutiny Committee notes the report.

- 2) That the Committee notes the activities currently being undertaken to support LTAs and the forthcoming research on social exclusion.
- 3) That the Committee notes that the DfT has offered additional funding to Strategic Transport Bodies to provide more support to Local Transport Authorities, and TfN's initial plans for further activity in this area.

11. Review of Scrutiny Function and Future Committee Meetings Update

- 11.1 The Chair explained that he is deferring this item until the following meeting and asked for 3-4 Members to join him in a Member's working group to progress the review in the meantime. Cllrs Melia and Parish volunteered to take part, and Cllr Melia suggested that an e-mail be sent out to all Members.

Resolved:

That the report be deferred until the next meeting.