

Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Wednesday 12 January 2022
Virtual

Present:

Attendee

Cllr Paul Haslam
Cllr Shorrock
Cllr Mitchell
Cllr Rod Fletcher
Cllr Andrew Cooper
Cllr Jones

Cllr Sean Chaytor
Matthew Salter
Cllr Melia
Cllr Foreman
Cllr Tom Furneaux
Cllr Steve Parish
Cllr Manisha Kaushik
Cllr Stephen Fenton

Local Authority

North Yorkshire;
Blackburn with Darwen;
Blackpool;
Cheshire East;
Cheshire West & Chester;
Greater Manchester Combined
Authority;
Hull;
Lancashire;
Liverpool City Region;
North East Combined Authority;
North East Lincolnshire;
Warrington;
West Yorkshire Combined Authority;
York;

Officers in Attendance:

Name

Lucy Jacques
Martin Tugwell
Gary Rich
Julie Openshaw
Rosemary Lyon
Manjit Dhillon
David Hoggarth
Tim Foster

Dawn Madin
Tim Wood

Job Title

Acting Head of Policy and Strategy
Chief Executive
Democratic Services Officer
Head of Legal
Legal and Democratic Services Officer

Strategic Rail Director
Interim Strategy & Programme
Director
Director of Business Capabilities
Northern Powerhouse Rail Director

Item Item

No:

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 Davison, Cllr Lamb, Cllr Southward and Iain Craven.

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 4 November 2021 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Fenton and seconded by Cllr Kaushik.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2021 be approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Monthly Operating Report

- 4.1 Members received the Monthly Operating Report. The Chair explained that due to the busy agenda and the report being retrospective in nature, he was not going to open the report up for discussion. He requested that Members e-mail any questions to the Democratic Services Officer and any answers would be shared with the Committee.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

5. Integrated Rail Plan Update

- 5.1 The Chair explained that the reports for items 5,6 & 7 would all be presented before Members would have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments on the three papers.
- 5.2 Members received the report from the Programme and Strategy Director who outlined the key issues in the report and asked Members to share any key issues that could be included in the submission to the Transport Select Committee.

- 5.3 Members expressed their disappointment with the Integrated Rail Plan and highlighted the missed opportunities for constituent areas to improve rail connectivity as a result of it.
- 5.4 The Interim Programme and Strategy Director stated that Transport for the North is trying to understand why the Integrated Rail Plan had not been aligned with the new Green Book with decisions instead being made on the grounds of affordability and Benefit Cost Ratios.

Members were pleased with the rapid response from the Board following the publication of the IRP. In response to questions from Cllr Salter, the Chief Executive confirmed that a response to the letter from the Board Chair had been received and could be shared with Members. He explained that within the response the Government had restated its position and that Board Members were disappointed that it had failed to address the issue of local contributions and explore opportunities to achieve the Board's preferred network.

He added that there remained an opportunity for Transport for the North to continue to try to address this issue and encouraged Members to continue to make their case, as TfN's strength lies in its advice being based on ambition as well as evidence and it should continue to make the case for step change in connectivity in order for the Board's agreed and approved proposals for NPR to be delivered and that the ambition of connectivity across the North to be achieved.

- 5.5 The Strategic Rail Director added that the impact of the Integrated Rail Plan on the Transpennine Route Upgrade was unknown but the core scheme continues to progress. He further explained that the proposals for a fully gauged cleared route and full electrification are included in the IRP.
- 5.6 Cllr Fenton questioned the Government's technical documents relating to the IRP.

The Chief Executive explained that he understands that the documents will be released but there is no timeframe around when, and it is unclear as to the level of detail that they will contain.

- 5.7 Cllr Fletcher expressed concern about how much of the £96 billion being invested in rail will be used on rail work in the North.

The Interim Programme and Strategy Director stated that there is no certainty as to what will be delivered and when he believed there will be a funding envelope of £23 billion which includes funding for the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) leaving £17 billion net for NPR.
- 5.8 On the issue of local contributions the Chair enquired if LEPs could be a source of funding. The Interim Programme and Strategy Director explained that LEPs are able to be a source of funding and this has been

discussed with Board LEP Members who are already involved in looking for local contributions. He further explained the importance of not displacing other required investment and wouldn't be looking at local contributions on connectivity if this would displace opportunities to improving outcomes elsewhere.

- 5.9 The Chair reiterated the Committee's disappointment that the IRP fell well short of reasonable expectations. The Committee also provided its full support to the Transport for the North Board over their rapid response to the Government on this matter.

The Chair further emphasised the Committee's disappointment on the lack of clarity around the TRU and lack of an evidence base on the economic impact; it is also disappointed at the lack of integration with the IRP specifically around electrification to the largest port in England and concerns about the environmental impact and the rail reduction for passengers and freight in the North of England.

Resolved:

That the information in the report including the economic and environmental assessment of the IRP (para 3.6), and the plan to respond to the Transport Select Committee inquiry (para 3.7) be noted.

6. Rail Reform and Whole Industry Strategic Plan

- 6.1 Members received the report from Head of Rail Specification & Delivery who outlined the key aspects of his report.
- 6.2 Cllr Melia raised the issue of level boarding whilst Cllr Salter enquired how this would work in relation to HS2.

The Head of Rail Specification explained that this issue would be dealt with in the Stations Strategy. In relation to the query on HS2 the Head of Rail Specification confirmed that he would look into this matter further.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Committee notes the progress on working with the industry on implementing the Williams Shapps Plan in the North.
- 2) That the Committee notes the approach set out in the report including the proposal to utilise existing levers within the Rail North Partnership Agreement set out in paragraphs 3.9 to 3.10 and plans to undertake deeper discussion of the development of the new partnership with Great British Railways.
- 3) That the Committee endorses the approach to responding to the Whole Industry Strategic Plan call for evidence which is set out in paragraphs 3.14 to 3.16.

7. Rail Investment Update

- 7.1 Members received the report from the Strategic Rail Director who then highlighted the key aspects of the report.
- 7.2 The Chair raised the issue of focused outcomes and profit and loss account and asked if there would be any measures on social impact.

The Interim Strategy and Programme Director explained that all of TfN's work captures the economic and prosperity, environmental and social benefits for communities, which would be part of any profit and loss account.

The Strategic Rail Director further explained that this innovative approach allows TfN to prioritise against a budget across investment, infrastructure and rail services. As well as social and economic benefits being reflected it will also show that investment is delivering for the wider needs of the North and not just the railway.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Committee notes the progress with development of the case for capacity upgrades to the East Coast Main Line and the impact of the Integrated Rail Plan;
- 2) That the Committee notes the proposal that the Transport for the North Board advises the Department for Transport and Network Rail that a collaborative working model for development of the infrastructure for the East Coast Main Line north of York is created, on the same model successfully being used in Manchester including a 'Blueprint' identifying a co-ordinated long-term service and infrastructure solution to deliver the capacity and connectivity required across the North;
- 3) That the Committee notes the pending update of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline in relation to rail projects in the region.

8. Strategic Transport Plan Policy Development

- 8.1 Members received the report from the acting Head of Policy and Strategy who highlighted the key areas of the report.
- 8.2 Members were supportive of the policy proposals being suggested in the report and raised a number of suggestions and ideas for consideration including freight and active travel.
- 8.3 Cllr Fletcher explained that planning needs to take place with regards to warehousing to ensure that warehouses are built near to railway lines.

On the Multi Modal Hub Members suggested the inclusion of Freight and Bicycles within the policy.

The acting Head of Policy and Strategy explained that work will take place across TfN to ensure a holistic approach taken.

- 8.4 The Chair suggested that within each policy there should be integration with other policies and that the impact the policy has on decarbonisation should be included which will help Local Authorities to access funding. He further suggested that there should be a shared repository of ideas on best practice. A request was also made for Social Value to be considered in the policies.

In response to the Chair's suggestions the acting Head of Policy and Strategy stated that a line on the Government agenda and Decarbonisation could be included in the policies on the issue of the repository she stated that this is innate within the policies but would look at how it could be made more explicit. On Social Value she explained that she would look to give this some more thought.

- 8.5 In summarising the debate the Chair observed that the Committee welcomes the policies but would like suitable planning to be aligned for Freight, local delivery and warehousing in conjunction with public transport and active travel.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9. Review of Scrutiny Function

- 9.1 Members received the report from the Senior Solicitor who provided an overview of the report.
- 9.2 The Chair explained to the Committee that a small Task and Finish Group explored each of the areas addressed in the report and sought to gain the consensus of the committee on these issues. Members discussed the points within the report and the following was resolved.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Committee continues to work on a Scrutiny first basis;
- 2) That the Committee seeks a small budget in order to undertake their work and aid Task and Finish Groups and allow for experts to be called;
- 3) That the Committee continues to meet 6 times a year four of which would take place prior to the TfN Board with the remaining two meetings being used flexibly.
- 4) That in person meetings alternate between Manchester and Leeds venues;
- 5) That a Doodle Poll be circulated to Members to establish a majority view as to how often the Committee should meet in person and how often meetings should be held virtually.