

Transport for the North Board Minutes

29 September 2022
Manchester City Council, Town Hall Extension

Present:

Lord McLoughlin (Chair)

Attendee

Cllr Craig Browne
Cllr Keith Little
Mayor Andy Burnham

Cllr Mike Ross
Cllr Charles Edwards
Cllr Liam Robinson
Cllr Martin Gannon
Cllr Richard Hannigan
Mayor Jamie Driscoll
Cllr Keane Duncan
Cllr Hans Mundry

Local Authority

Cheshire East;
Cumbria;
Greater Manchester Combined
Authority;
Hull;
Lancashire;
Liverpool City Region;
North East Combined Authority;
North Lincolnshire;
North of Tyne Combined Authority;
North Yorkshire;
Warrington;

Rail North Authorities Attendees

Councillor John Ogle Nottinghamshire

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Attendees

Alyson Armett Cumbria LEP
Mark Rawstron Lancashire LEP
Amir Hussain Leeds LEP
Matthew Lamb North Yorkshire LEP
Peter Kennan South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined
Authority LEP

Partners in Attendance:

Nick Bisson DfT
Lorna Pimlott HS2
David Stones National Highways
Neil Holm Network Rail
John Read Network Rail
Tim Shoveller Network Rail

Officers in Attendance:

Name

Job Title

Martin Tugwell
Gary Rich
David Spilsbury
Paul Kelly
Stephen Hipwell
Julie Openshaw
Owen Wilson
Tim Foster

Peter Cole

Tom Jarvis

Chief Executive
Democratic Services Officer
Finance Controller
Interim Finance Director
Head of HR
Head of Legal
Head of Major Roads
Interim Strategy & Programme
Director
Principal Environmental and
Sustainability Officer
Senior Evidence & Analysis

**Item
No:**

1. Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Members and apologies were noted from Mayors Coppard, Houchen and Brabin, Cllrs Phil Riley, Lynn Williams, Neal Brookes, Louise Gittins Jonathan Owen, Claire Holmes, Stewart Swinburn, Jonathan Dulston, Susan Hinchcliffe, Keith Aspden, Andy D'Agorne, Daniel Jellyman, Audra Wynter, Denise Rollo and Mr. Justin Kelly.
- 1.2 The Chair explained that following the changes in Government he has already written to the new Secretary of State and hopes to meet her in the near future.
- 1.3 The Head of Legal explained that whilst the meeting was quorate in terms of numbers, the Members present together did not yet hold the required proportion of the weighted vote required by the Constitution until the anticipated arrival of Mayor Burnham later in the meeting when this part of the quorum requirement would also be satisfied. She advised that meantime it was possible for a motion to be moved without notice and approved by those present to temporarily suspend the weighted vote requirement until the additional Members had arrived and suggested this would be a way to allow the meeting to proceed in a quorate manner.
- 1.4 The Head of Legal's suggestion was proposed by Cllr Edwards and seconded by Cllr Gannon and duly approved.
- 1.5 The Chair proposed that items 4 & 5 be taken later in the agenda due to the presenter having been delayed.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 The Chair restated his Interest as Chairman of Airlines UK (this has previously been recorded as an interest).

- 2.2 Mr. Amir Hussain declared an interest in relation to his company which is involved in the Southern Gateway Scheme in Bradford.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Transport for the North Board held on 30 June 2022 were considered and approved as a correct record.

The Chief Executive updated Members on the actions undertaken since the last meeting. He informed Members that the Business Plan has now been published and the Chair on behalf of the Board has written to the Secretary of State in relation to HS2 as well as writing to the new Prime Minister and new Secretary of State. A TfN response has also been provided to the consultation on draft legislation for GBR following consultation with Members.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Transport for the North Board held on 30 June 2022 be approved as a correct record.

4. Integrated Rail Plan: Transport Select Committee Report

- 4.1 In introducing the item, the Chair highlighted to the Board the Transport Select Committee's report which was published in July and observed that he considered it to be a good report, one which he thought TfN can support. He explained to Members that the Government will have to provide a response to the Committee's report, but that this is likely to be delayed due to the changes happening in Government.
- 4.2 Members received the report and the presentation from the Interim Policy and Programme Director who highlighted the key points in the presentation.
- 4.3 Members raised a number of issues and were keen that committed schemes should be started on site as soon as possible in order for the full economic benefits of NPR to begin to be realised.
- 4.4 Cllr Robinson emphasised the political consensus that exists on building in full the HS2 and the NPR schemes. He asked about the communications strategy of TfN on this matter in order to ensure that these pledges are included in future party manifestos, as well as stressing the importance of TfN continuing to make the case to DfT for TfN's preferred network.
- 4.5 Mayor Driscoll stated that the core purpose of TfN is the economic prosperity of the North including inclusivity and environmental sustainability. He explained that economic growth would not be achieved if companies are unable to move their goods around and people are unable to travel and supported the need for commitment to a driver training academy in the North.

He highlighted the damage that train cancellations do to passenger confidence and the negative impact they have on the ability to grow the economy.

- 4.6 Cllr Edwards and Cllr Little raised the issue of the Golborne link and expressed their concern at its deletion without a suitable alternative being in place. They sought clarity from the DfT as to the current position in relation to appraising alternatives.
- 4.7 Mayor Burnham expressed the hope that the new Government's commitment to delivering NPR in full will reinvigorate the Board. Greater Manchester will be hosting the Convention of the North in January 2023 and he believes that this will provide an opportunity to set out the big vision and the growth story around it. He also referred to the lack of a levelling up assessment from the previous Government when decisions were initially taken in respect of the Integrated Rail Plan.
- 4.8 In response to the issues that Members had raised Mr. Nick Bisson stated that the NPR Business Case needs to be refreshed following the publication of the Integrated Rail Plan. The supporting analysis has been commissioned from TfN and should be available by the end of the year. The Board was also assured that new Ministers are keen to engage.

On the issue of the Golborne Link he confirmed alternatives are being worked upon but he was unable to provide timelines and stated that he would return to Board on this. He also hoped that the Leeds – Sheffield Study Terms of Reference will be published soon.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Board welcomes the Transport Select Committee's report
- 2) That the Board sets out to the Secretary of State its desire to work with her in responding to the Committee's recommendations
- 3) That TfN seeks an early discussion with the new Government following commitments made during the summer to deliver NPR in full.

5. TransPennine Upgrade

- 5.1 Members received the report from the Investment Sponsor Manager and the presentation from Mr. Neil Holm and Mr. John Read who explained the current position regarding the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU).
- 5.2 The Chair set out the importance of TfN being re-instated onto Programme Board and added that this request will be made again at the meeting with the new Secretary of State. He raised the issue of closures in order to undertake work and stressed the importance of giving the public adequate knowledge of them and reasons for the work.
- 5.3 Cllr Robinson sought clarity on additional freight capacity and enquired as to whether W12 gauge clearance will be available. He also raised the

issue of communication when the works are taking place and stressed the importance of communicating across the country that the North is still open for business despite the work taking place.

- 5.4 Mr. Peter Kennan highlighted that some of the diversionary routes have capacity issues and requested that communication on this work needs to be at a regional level in order that constituent authorities can communicate with their travelling public over any disruption.
- 5.5 Cllr Edwards suggested that first recommendation in the report should 'welcome' the DfT's funding announcement trebling investment in TRU rather than 'noting' it.
- 5.6 Mayor Burnham sought clarity on what Northern Powerhouse Rail means for TRU as currently the extent of NPR is uncertain in light of commitments made during the summer. He also raised the issue of the timeline and full benefit realisation and was open to further discussions on what can be done to accelerate progress with delivery of the project.
- 5.7 The Chair stated that there is a growing view in the industry that extended blockades in order to undertake work (as opposed to overnight/weekend working) are the quickest way for projects to progress.
- 5.8 Mr. Nick Bisson explained that TRU can be looked at in three phases; firstly, Marsden to Huddersfield with much of this phase having wider benefits particularly for freight outputs; secondly, Leeds to York, and thirdly Ravensthorpe to Leeds which is the phase needing the most development and design work.
- 5.9 In response to Members' questions and comments Mr. Holm confirmed that they have a requirement to design and develop a scheme for W12 gauge. On the issue of communication, he explained that there is a PR campaign currently running in order to gain engagement and advocacy for the programme. He also stated that there would be communication around planned disruption two to three months prior to work starting and once the work has started there would be customer service support staff available.

Regarding the timelines of the project, he explained that work is taking place with the train operators and would welcome a conversation on ways programme can be accelerated.

Mayor Burnham asked for information to come back to the Board with options for acceleration.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Board welcomes the Department for Transport (DfT) funding announcement trebling investment in TRU.

- 2) That the Board notes the National Audit Office (NAO) TRU report which has identified a clear case for investment but recognises significant risks to the programme's progress that could cause further disruption if the DfT, Network Rail and the Government fail to work together to manage challenges and deliver the expected benefits for rail users.
- 3) That Board welcomes the establishment of the TRU Stakeholder Forum which is Chaired by TfN, but stresses the importance of TfN being a member of the TRU Programme Board.

6. Socially Inclusive Transport Strategy

- 6.1 Members received the report from the Senior Evidence & Analysis Officer who outlined the key elements of his report.
- 6.2 Cllr Edwards stated that TfN should be mindful of this piece of work when putting together business cases for future infrastructure investment and this should be considered in those business planning processes. A number of suggestions were made as to how transport can be made more socially inclusive including; cheaper fares on bus and rail, and car insurance and why this is more expensive in the North. He also suggested that the report should have greater focus on the issues experienced in rural communities.
- 6.3 Mr. Peter Kennan raised the issue of buses and stated that this work is a good example of how TfN can help local areas in discussions with Government on this issue. He believes that the figures quoted in the report continue to worsen as a result of continuing cuts in bus services.

He stated that whilst it is a vital piece of work it now needs to be used in order to help influence the required changes.
- 6.4 Mayor Driscoll was pleased to see safety included in the strategy and believes that if public transport is to be grown then this is a vital issue. He also suggested that the safety of staff should also be included.
- 6.5 Cllr Duncan expressed concern about the methodology used within the strategy and how it appears to be presenting a better view than is in fact the case in rural areas regarding social exclusion.
- 6.6 Cllr Little highlighted the importance of the car in enabling the public in rural areas to go about their business.
- 6.7 Mr. Amir Hussain highlighted the importance of walkable neighbourhoods to unlocking social inclusion.
- 6.8 Cllr Hannigan suggested that the officer group consults with Directors of Public Health and wider integrated health services. He also raised the issue of buses in rural areas and suggested looking at communal transport.

- 6.9 Mr. Mark Rawstron highlighted the great economic benefits in addressing this issue and asked for the report to address it in stronger terms. He also requested that consultation take place with the business community.
- 6.10 Cllr Robinson raised the issue of affordability of public transport and stressed the importance of having the correct funding packages in place for the rail and bus industries as well as a regulatory framework. He believes that this piece of work should present an opportunity to argue for a price regulator in the bus industry.
- 6.11 In response to Members' comments the Senior Evidence & Analysis Officer stated that data sharing is now available. On the issue of rural areas he commented that it is an analytically complex issue to address. He explained that the urban rural fringe category is the most at risk and that he would change the presentation of the data around this as well as considering changing the presentation in the data tool. He confirmed that a revised version of the strategy will be taken to consultation based on Members' feedback.

Resolved:

That the Board approves the Socially Inclusive Transport Strategy for public consultation.

7. Connected Mobility

- 7.1 Members received the report from the Chief Executive who highlighted the key elements of the report.
- 7.2 Cllr Mundry requested that Warrington be involved in the multi-operating ticketing scheme. Cllr Browne stated that officers in Cheshire East had not yet been contacted.
- 7.3 The Chief Executive stated that he would address these issues following the meeting. He explained that as part of Business Planning process for 2023 -24 TfN is looking at opportunities to develop its support for partners. He added that the new ministerial team are interested in the social and environmental aspects of the transport agenda and that this work will provide an opportunity for TfN to make the case for the North grounded in the relevant evidence.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8. International Connectivity Policy Statement

- 8.1 Members received the report from the Interim Policy and Programme Director who highlighted the key points of the report.

- 8.2 Mr. Mark Rawstron expressed concern about the “faster further” option and demand management. He was concerned that taking this position would be seen as supporting the national moratorium on runway development and that such a position will lead to previous airport capacity that has been closed being unable to be brought back into service.
- 8.3 In addressing the concerns of Mr. Rawstron, the Interim Policy and Programme Director stated that TfN will continue to monitor the situation. He advised that he will report back any issues on this at the December Board as part of the Strategic Transport Plan report before it becomes part of the statutory document.
- 8.4 The Chair commented that TfN should be concentrating on issues that impact on transport issues in the North rather than getting involved in national policy.

Resolved:

That Board agrees the International Connectivity & Aviation Policy Position.

9. Rail North Committee Update

- 9.1 Members received the report of the Strategic Rail Director and Cllr Robinson (Chair of the Rail North Committee) highlighted the key points and updated Members on the current situation.
- 9.2 Cllr Robinson explained that there needs to be a key focus on the operational performance of the train operators. He added that the reason for poor performance is because of a mix of different reasons and not just industrial action. He then stressed the importance of the operators delivering on their commitments of returning to their proposed service portfolio and stated that should they not meet the targets then their position will be untenable.
- Cllr Robinson provided an update on his and the Chair’s meeting with the previous Rail Minister Wendy Morton MP. The meeting had been productive and they were able to emphasise the importance of rail in the North being funded properly in order to avoid the kind of funding gaps that are emerging for Northern and Transpennine Express. He highlighted the consequences of these funding gaps not being addressed with the likelihood of services that were cut during the pandemic not being re-instated and possibly more frontline services being cut.
- 9.3 Mayor Burnham was skeptical that the operators are doing all they can and highlighted the loss of confidence that people are having in trains in the North. He highlighted that the poor service is having a major impact on rail users lives and safety. On the issue of Avanti, he requested that TfN should state its position.

- 9.4 Mayor Driscoll stated that investors are reluctant to invest in the North because of the issues with trains and it is affecting confidence. He further stated that operators can't hide behind the issue of industrial relations as a reason for poor service as this is an issue that can be solved.
- 9.5 Cllr Edwards explained that he believes that industrial relations have not helped and pleaded for operators and unions to get back around the table and resolve this matter.
- 9.6 Cllr Little stated that Network Rail also needs to take responsibility for some of the cancellations due to infrastructure failure.
- 9.7 Regarding industrial relations Cllr Robinson stated that both Unions and Senior Management in the train operators are keen to work out a negotiated settlement but they have not been provided the flexibility from the DfT to do this and any deals need to be approved by the DfT.
- 9.8 Mr. Tim Shoveler stated that no one within the industry believes that the current situation is acceptable or sustainable; railways can only work well when everything works together. He highlighted actions that need to be taken in the short term, these included the Network Rail planning team and the operators ensuring that they are providing good customer information when trains are cancelled. He added that the key focus needs to be continuing to work with the Trade Unions in order to resolve the current situation.

The Chair stated that there are separate issues in what Members discussed; there is the disruption caused by the industrial action and then there is the issue of the service of Avanti. The Chair stated that he will write to the Department for Transport on behalf of the Board requesting a tighter and more detailed recovery plan for Avanti against which performance can be monitored.

The Chief Executive suggested that the letter should also include a request to the Department asking them to give operators the flexibility to negotiate some short-term solutions with the Unions.

Resolved:

- 1) That Board notes the update on rail matters
- 2) That Board endorsed the work with DfT and RNP on recovery plans for train operators including both short and long-term solutions to the current issues with the availability of suitably trained drivers with the appropriate route knowledge. Progress will be monitored by the Rail North Committee.
- 3) That Board endorses work with Rail North Partnership to develop plans for a Rail Academy for the North to provide a pipeline of trained drivers to address the current challenges by positive action in the North. The training academy could also be the first step for a more comprehensive approach to public transport skills including bus and tram drivers.

- 4) That Board endorse use of existing and newly-commissioned (through the TAME team) analysis to make the case for investment in the North's railway to support a growing railway and wider objectives such as reduced transport social exclusion and decarbonisation.
- 5) That Board endorses collaborative working with operators to promote the return to rail to help grow new markets and make rail more sustainable.

10. Annual Accounts

- 10.1 Members received the report of the Finance Director. The Board was informed that in order to sign off the accounts the external auditors require the Pension Fund to be signed off before the accounts can be approved. The Finance Director envisaged no problems with this and anticipated that it would be completed by the end of October. As a result of this he stated that the recommendation in the report be altered to say that 'the accounts be approved subject to the sign off of the pension fund and it require no changes to the accounts.' Should modifications be required the process will be repeated and it be brought back to Board.
- 10.2 Members received the Audit and Governance Annual report from Cllr Little (Vice Chair of Audit & Governance Committee) who highlighted the key areas within the report.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Board approves the corporate governance review and the Annual Governance Statement.
- 2) That Board note that TfN's draft statement of accounts was laid open to public inspection for the statutory period without objection being raised.
- 3) That Board notes the recommendation in the Annual Progress Report of the Audit & Governance Committee to approve the Statement of Accounts for 2021/22.
- 4) That the Statement of Accounts for financial year 2021/22 be approved subject to the sign off of the pension fund.

11. Corporate Risk Register and Risk Management Strategy Report

- 11.1 Members received the report from the Interim Finance Director who highlighted the key points within the report.

Resolved:

That Board note the updates to the key organisational risks and the risk management strategy.

12. Organisational Design Update and Governance

- 12.1 Members received the report of the Head of Legal Services. The Chief Executive outlined the key points within the report.

Resolved:

- 1) That Board notes TfN's revised Senior Management Structure (Director Level);
- 2) That Board notes the current status of Director level recruitment as a result of the revised senior management structure;
- 3) That Board approves the establishment of an Appointments Sub-Committee of the General Purposes Committee with the membership and Terms of Reference as set out in the report;
- 4) That Board approves the delegation of authority for annual objective setting for TfN's Chief Executive to the General Purposes Committee.

12.2 The Chair thanked the Director of Business Capabilities, who is shortly leaving Transport for the North, for all her hard work since joining at the organisation at its inception.

13. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 14 December 2022
10.30am