

Transport for the North Board Minutes

**23 March 2023
Leeds Civic Hall**

Present:

Lord McLoughlin (Chair)

Attendee

Cllr Phil Riley
Cllr Laura Crane
Cllr Louise Gittins
Cllr Claire Holmes
Cllr Mark Ieronimo
Mayor Andy Burnham

County Cllr Scott Smith
Mayor Steve Rotheram
Cllr Stewart Swinburn
Mayor Jamie Driscoll
Cllr Keane Duncan
Mayor Oliver Coppard

Cllr Jonathan Dutson
Mayor Tracy Brabin

Local Authority

Blackburn with Darwen;
Cheshire East;
Cheshire West & Chester;
East Riding of Yorkshire;
Hull
Greater Manchester Combined
Authority;
Lancashire;
Liverpool City Region;
North East Lincolnshire;
North of Tyne Combined Authority;
North Yorkshire;
South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined
Authority;
Tees Valley;
West Yorkshire Combined Authority;

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Attendees

Alyson Armett
Amir Hussain
Helen Simpson
Peter Kennan

Cumbria LEP
Leeds LEP
North Yorkshire LEP
Sheffield City Region LEP

Partners in Attendance:

John Hall
Nick Harris
Rob McIntosh

Department of Transport
Highways England
Network Rail

Officers in Attendance:

Name

Gary Rich
Katie Day

Paul Kelly
Tim Foster

Job Title

Democratic Services Officer
Director of Strategy, Analysis and
Communications
Finance Director
Interim Strategy & Programme
Director

Owen Wilson
Darren Oldham
David Hoggarth
Angela Harwood
Lucy Jacques

Major Roads Strategy Manager
Rail and Road Director
Head of Strategic Rail
Senior Solicitor
Principal Policy & Strategy
Development Officer

**Item Item
No:**

1. Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed Members and apologies were noted from Cllrs Little, Lynn Williams, Gannon, Miller, Waltham, Hannigan, Aspden, D'Agorne, Quddoos, Jellyman, and Tagg, Justin Kelly, Siobhan McArdle, Matthew Ord, Karen Beardsley, Mark Rawstrone and Mark Whitworth.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed to their first Transport for the North Board the new Rail and Road Director Darren Oldham and the new Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications Katie Day.
- 1.3 The Chair thanked Cllr Little for all his hard work and contributions to Transport for the North and the work he has been involved with on the Board and other committees including his work as Vice Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee. Cllr Gittins echoed the sentiments of the Chair on behalf of the Members.

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 of the Transport for the North Board held on 29 September and 14 December 2022 were considered.
- 3.2 Mayor Brabin highlighted the fact that a Minister had been asked to attend the meeting and this had not happened.

The Chair explained that he and the Chief Executive had met with the Secretary of State and he is keen for a Minister to attend a future meeting; due to the pre-election period and other commitments this was not possible for this meeting but he was hopeful that attendance at a future meeting could be secured.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Transport for the North Board held on 29 September and 14 December 2022 be approved as a correct record.

4. Budget and Business Plan 2023/24

- 4.1 Members received the report from the Finance Director who outlined the key points in his report which included reference to sustainability challenge in the period beyond the current spending period, i.e. from April 2025. In order to maintain our current capacity and capability into 25/26 he indicated that TfN would require a step change in funding from £6.5m to £8.0m (£7.2m to £8.7m if we include the £0.7m of incremental funding allocated for 23/24 and 24/25) for a 3-year term.
- 4.2 Cllr Swinburn asked if inflation had been taken into account with the presented figures.
- The Finance Director explained that a 7% contingency had been included in order to account for rising inflation.
- 4.3 Cllr Crane requested information on the support available on the bus service improvement plan.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Board notes the draft Business Plan for 2023/24, and delegates the steps required to finalise the Business Plan to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair.
- 2) That the Board approves the Budget for 2023/24.
- 3) That Board notes the Outturn report in particular the projected closing reserves at 31 March 2023 of £3.7m.
- 4) That Board approves the proposed use of reserves of £0.83m in 2023/24.
- 5) That Board notes that the Audit & Governance Committee reviewed the Annual Treasury Management Strategy.

5. Draft Strategic Transport Plan 2

- 5.1 Members received the report of the Acting Head of Policy and Strategy. The Interim Strategy and Programme Director, the Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications and the Acting Head of Policy and Strategy highlighted the key points of the report, including consultation plans. The Chair thanked the Interim Strategy and Programme Director for all his hard work for TfN over the past 7 years.
- 5.2 The Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications thanked all partners for their contributions in helping to put together the Strategic Transport Plan (STP). Members were informed that some further amendments may be necessary given recent announcements, and these would be addressed during the consultation period in discussion with relevant partners.
- 5.3 Mr John Hall thanked the team for the great work done on the STP and stated that he is looking forward to working with the Board on this during the consultation process.

- 5.4 The Chair suggested that the plan may want to reflect the recent devolution package announcements in Greater Manchester and the North East. Members were also informed that there would be plenty of time for their input during the consultation period.
- 5.5 Mayor Rotherham highlighted that Freeports had been omitted from the plan and suggested these should be referenced in the Plan; he also highlighted the strategic importance of areas like the Port of Liverpool.
- On the issue of freight he highlighted the lack of progress in moving freight off the roads and on to rail and suggested this should be an ask of Government otherwise there will be an increase in the number of HGVs on the road creating poorer air quality. Cllr Swinburn was supportive of Mayor Rotheram's comments on this matter.
- 5.6 Mayor Driscoll stressed that the cost of not doing this work will be very serious as not acting will have major impacts on people's lives. He stated that he would like to undertake a Citizen's Assembly on transport if the timings can work.
- 5.7 Mayor Brabin was pleased that the plan will have deliverables whilst Cllr Gittins requested that once the plan has been ratified she would like to see some deliverables that can be quickly actioned and a line within the plan stating what will be done within the first 100 days.
- Mayor Brabin also raised the issue of the Leeds Study and requested Transport for the North's support on this matter.
- 5.8 Mayor Coppard welcomed direction of travel and highlighted the prominence that buses play within the plan but expressed frustration that Doncaster/Sheffield airport had not been specifically mentioned and requested its inclusion as he believes that may help the case to get it re-opened.
- 5.9 Mayor Burnham was pleased to see that health has been included within the plan, but requested greater clarity between strategic and local plans as the organisation will benefit from a clearer articulation where strategic ends and local begins.
- 5.10 The Chair reminded the Board to let the executive know of events in constituent areas where Transport for the North might do a presentation on the draft STP during the consultation period.
- 5.11 Cllr Duncan explained that he understands the issues in rural areas but was unsure as to what the solutions are.
- 5.12 Mr. Peter Kennan stated that the economic geography extends beyond the North and connections to other places outside of the North are just as important. He requested Transport for the North's support in ensuring that these links are developed and maintained.
- 5.13 Cllr Ieronimo stressed the importance of delivering tangibles to residents and businesses and highlighted the importance of making simple changes on rail that will have a real impact for relatively low cost.

- 5.14 The Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications stated that the narrative coming through the draft Plan is that this is 'transport for the North.' She also stated that there is an opportunity to bring out the importance of freeports and ports through the plan as well as develop the policy position on freight and logistics on this. She noted that final amendments will be made to the plan, ahead of consultation, address these points; and noted that consultation will enable discussions on the boundaries of local and strategic, and whether recent Government announcements need to be referenced.

Resolved:

- 1) That that Board approves the draft STP for statutory consultation.
- 2) That Board notes the arrangements for finalising and publishing the remaining elements of the evidence base set out at Section 5. This includes the independent Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) undertaken alongside the development of the STP.
- 3) That Board approves arrangements for undertaking the statutory consultation.
- 4) That Board notes the proposed approach to communications and engagement.

6. Road Investment Strategy (RIS)

- 6.1 Members received the report of the Head of Major Roads who then highlighted the key point in his report.
- 6.2 Cllr Swinburn commented that it is important that the road improvement strategy is in place and that it is followed to make sure that everything works.
- 6.3 Mr Nick Harris explained that the reports referred to by the executive are ready to be published and emphasised that they are focused on outcomes. He commented that whilst in some case it is a road solution, in others it maybe a mixture of solutions is required. He reflected that whilst there is a lot of focus on the big schemes there are many small projects that arguably matter more locally and regionally. He told the Board that once the reports are published he will be happy to return to Board to discuss them further.
- 6.4 Cllr Duncan requested clarity on the Secretary of State's statement on 9 March. He said that his understanding of what he said is that all RIS 3 projects have now slipped into RIS 4 which represents a significant delay. He wished to raise awareness and push the case on this and express concern about further delay on some key schemes across the country.
- 6.5 Mayor Driscoll explained his concerns about a number of schemes that have come forward in recent years as their design is locking in a certain way of transport for the future. He provided the example of roundabouts where there are no bus priority measures. and highlighted the importance of improving public transport infrastructure. He added that

work needs to be “future proof” schemes being taken forward and highlighted the importance of local areas have final sign off on any planned works as this will engage businesses and communities in a way which National Highways cannot.

- 6.6 Mayor Rotherham stated the need to do something with transport infrastructure to address road congestion. He added that something needs to be done about the cost of putting freight onto rail and suggested that Government intervention is needed on this matter.
- 6.7 Cllr Gittins suggested that innovations on ways to improve the network should also be included.
- 6.8 In response to Members the Head of Major Roads informed the Board that a piece of work on the Strategic Road Network in Urban areas framework has been done but not yet published and TfN will be supporting this work. He explained that clarity on funding is being sought.

Resolved:

- 1) That Board endorses Transport for the North’s approach to preparing recommendations for RIS as set out in the report.
- 2) That Board notes comments from the Scrutiny committee, reflected in the report.
- 3) That responsibility be delegated to the Board Chair and Vice Chair for approving Transport for the North’s response to public consultation on the National Highways SRN Initial Report, Route Strategy reports and ‘Connecting the Country’ vision.
- 4) That responsibility be delegated to the Board Chair and Vice Chair for approving Transport for the North’s response to public consultation on the National Networks National Policy Statement (NNNPS).

7. NPR Co-Sponsorship

- 7.1 Members received the report of the Head of Strategic Rail who then highlighted the key points within the report.
- 7.2 Mayor Brabin highlighted that when TfN were a co-client, officers in constituent authorities were engaged with well, which she hoped will continue. She also requested that the strategic business case be shared privately with constituent authorities when available.
- 7.3 Mayor Burnham opposed the recommendations as he believes that Transport for the North is being sidelined. He stated that Transport for the North has a different view of NPR to that of the Government, with constituent Members seeing it as being critical to the ambitions of the North for at least a century and this is bound up in the final version of NPR. He stated that by being silent, future generations would be let down.

- 7.4 Mayor Rotherham added his concern on this highlighting that the Government's view as to what is best for the area differs to that of the area itself. He commented that this is a mechanism to water down the limited powers that areas have had.
- 7.5 Mr Rob McIntosh stated that this is not first time the Department has used co-sponsorship arrangements highlighting that Cross Rail had a similar arrangement. He suggested that learning could be taken from this project.
- 7.6 The Chair suggested that more work and consultation needs to be done between now and the next meeting in order to allay the Board's fears.
- 7.7 Mayor Burnham stated that the co-sponsorship role must be a meaningful role and allow for the "brakes to be applied" when required and for visibility of decisions.
- 7.8 Board as a whole was supportive of the Chair's recommendations, with Mayor Brabin stating that the ambition of NPR can't be forgotten.
- 7.9 The Head of Strategic Rail stated he will go back and understand what good would look like in terms of co-sponsorship.

Resolved:

That the matter be deferred and brought back to the next meeting of the Board.

8. Rail North Committee Update

- 8.1 Members received the report from the Head of Strategic Rail who outlined the key points within the report.
- 8.2 Members raised a number of issues relating to rail services in their areas.
- 8.3 Mayor Brabin stated that as agreed at the November Rail North Committee and the December Board a single operator in the North would be the best way forward and allow for economies of scale. She requested that the Chair make clear the Board's collective position to the Secretary of State.
- 8.4 Mayor Coppard commented that he had met with the Managing Director of Transpennine Express (TPE) and requested that they increase their presence on platforms and asked for TPE to be held to account not only on Service Delivery but also on Customer Service.
- 8.5 Peter Kennan raised issue of other operators that run trains in the North stating that they appear to be cutting costs as well by reducing the size of the trains delivering services. He requested that TfN examine this to try to identify interventions.
- 8.6 Mayor Burnham stated that something needs to be done about the TPE decision and TfN should be looking to influence this decision. He stated his opinion that a fresh start is needed with TPE and highlighted that there are a number of disputes between staff and management at TPE and that there has been an erosion of goodwill within the company.

- 8.7 Mayor Rotherham highlighted a number of key issues with operators and explained that whilst they may not cancel trains they will often reduce the number of carriages, leading to the trains being full beyond capacity. He also expressed concern about the public being unable to travel to Liverpool for major events – such as Eurovision – over the coming months.
- 8.8 Cllr Gittins raised the issue of Avanti trains running between London and Crewe being regularly cancelled leaving passengers stranded and negatively impacting on local economies.
- 8.9 On the issue of TPE and a single contract for the North, the Head of Strategic Rail explained this was the TfN position when the franchises were originally put together. He added that this position has formed the basis of comments in response to last summer's consultation on the legislation for Great British Railways.
- 8.10 The Chair summed up, commenting that there is a strong voice about the future direction, and that he will write to the Secretary of State informing him that it is the view of the Board that there should be one operator across the North for TPE and Northern.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Board notes the feedback from the Rail North Committee including detailed discussions with the train operators about their plans to improve performance for passengers.
- 2) That Board endorses the feedback from the Committee (set out in paragraph 3.4) that TPE's recovery plan does not go far enough or fast enough and that Government needs to play a role working with TPE and the Trade Unions to find a way to improve the current situation for passengers.
- 3) That Board endorses the early implementation of Rail Reform in the North noting that TfN is taking action to improve local involvement through the establishment of a further Business Unit under the existing Rail North Partnership Agreement.

9. Review of the Constitution

- 9.1 Members received the report of the of the Head of Legal. The Senior Solicitor then highlighted the key points of the report.
- 9.2 Mr. Peter Kennan highlighted item 3.9 and the LEP review. He explained that the Government has made clear that following consultation LEPs will cease in their existing form and officers will need to explore how the voice of business will continue to be heard.

Resolved:

- 1) That Board notes the amendments to be made under the existing delegated power of the Monitoring Officer as described in paragraph 3.6.

- 2) That Board agrees that the areas identified in paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9 are key to development of the work of TfN and its Constitution in the future.
- 3) That Board approves the proposed extension to the delegated power of the Monitoring Officer set out in paragraph 3.10.
- 4) That Board approves the extension of the membership of Partnership Board to include one representative from the Directors of Public Health of TfN's Constituent Authorities and one representative of the Northern Chambers of Commerce.
- 5) That Board approves the approach to selection of Independent Persons as defined in the Localism Act 2011 in circumstances described in paragraphs 3.12 - 3.16, by approaching the Constituent Authorities in alphabetical order until two suitable Independent Persons can be sourced.
- 6) That Board approves for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.18 the addition into the Terms of Reference of the General Purposes Committee of the words: "(iii) in circumstances where it is impractical for a meeting of full Board to be convened in order to designate the S151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer, following advice from the Monitoring Officer or in their absence the Deputy Monitoring Officer, and following consultation with the Independent Chairs and both the Vice Chairs of Board, designating an officer as the Section 151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer."
- 7) That Board approves a widening of the eligibility of the 6 seats for elected Members on Audit & Governance Committee to include any elected Member of any of the Constituent Authorities, whether or not they are also already a TfN Board Member or Substitute Member.

10. Risk Review

- 10.1 Members received the report from the Finance Director who highlighted the key aspects of his report.

Resolved:

That the Board notes the key organisational risks, the updates to the Risk Management Strategy and that a programme of risk 'deep dives' has been implemented by the Audit and Governance Committee.

11. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

Thursday 22 June
10.30