

Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Wednesday 16 March 2022
Virtual

Present:

Attendee

Cllr Paul Haslam (Chair)
Cllr Jim Shorrock
Cllr David O'Hara
Cllr Rod Fletcher
Cllr Andrew Cooper
Cllr John Davison

Local Authority

North Yorkshire;
Blackburn with Darwen;
Blackpool;
Cheshire East;
Cheshire West & Chester;
North Lincolnshire;

Officers in Attendance:

Name	Job Title
Gary Rich	Democratic Services Officer
Dawn Madin	Director of Business Capabilities
Tim Foster	Interim Strategy & Programme Director
Rosemary Lyon	Legal and Democratic Services Officer
Lucy Hudson	Principal Policy Officer for Freight and Logistics
Manjit Dhillon	Senior Solicitor

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 Jones, Cllr Salter, Cllr Furneaux, Cllr Johnson, Cllr Parish and Cllr Hughes.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Freight and Logistics Strategy

- 3.1 Members received the report from the Principal Policy Officer for Freight and Logistics who highlighted the key points of the report and the strategy.

- 3.2 The Chair thanked the Principal Policy Officer for Freight and Logistics and congratulated her on the number of responses she had received.

On the issue of road haulage he suggested an improvement of facilities in transport hubs. He also suggested collaborating with an overall freight body if one exists rather than working direct with private hauliers.

- 3.3 Cllr Davison raised the issues of decarbonisation, overhead electrification and line speeds. He raised concern as to how poorly the North is serviced by intermodals with the North currently having six. He highlighted their importance and believed the Local authorities could do more on this issue when planning.

- 3.4 Cllr Fletcher raised issue of gauging and TfN's policy on this.

The Principal Policy Officer for Freight and Logistics explained that the ambition is for w12 particularly across Pennines, whilst in other parts of the North about a key issue is monitoring the industry and what people want.

Cllr Fletcher asked whether there is no longer a Trafford Park to Newcastle service as this was not showing on the map.

The Principal Policy Officer for Freight and Logistics confirmed that she would query this and update for future iterations.

Cllr Fletcher then raised the issue of capacity and whether the Woodhead tunnel would be opened in order to provide this. The Principal Policy Officer for Freight and Logistics agreed that extra capacity is needed; however in order to avoid criticism and not to take away from the credibility of the Strategy she was unable to include the reopening of old lines, but explained that when fiscal opportunities present themselves in the future these will be explored.

On the issues of warehousing and rail connection Cllr Fletcher asked if there were any powers that could ensure that planning officers take this into account when granting permission on warehouses opening.

The Principal Policy Officer for Freight and Logistics stated that Local Authorities should secure network rail opinions as part of the decision-making process.

The Chair suggested that TfN write a letter to Network Rail asking it to agree to participate in any inter local inter modal hubs and that local authority planning authorities be copied into the response.

- 3.5 The Chair asked if the IRP has had an influence on any of the Strategy.

The Principal Policy Officer for Freight and Logistics stated that regardless of what has been published the Freight and Logistics Strategy would still argue for gauge clearance, connectivity and analysis of future

demand for rail traffic. She emphasised that she would rather consider what can be done than what the North has not been given.

- 3.6 The Interim Strategy and Programme Director explained that it is clear that the IRP is not going to deliver on ambitions on freight and work is in progress in the background on the IRP and the implications it will have on freight. He also highlighted that the removal of Eastern leg of HS2 will also have an impact on freight capacity. The implications of IRP on the publication of the Rail Network Enhancement Programme is also awaited. He further explained that the recommendations in the strategy have been “future proofed”.
- 3.7 In summarising, the Chair stated that the Committee supported the report and requested that the following nine points be noted.
- 1) The IRP has meant reduced capacity and the Board needs to be aware of that including that there are insufficient funds to deliver freight ambitions
 - 2) The Committee expects the correct gauges to be in the right place with a preference for a W12 gauge
 - 3) The technology maybe electrical or non electrical.
 - 4) Line speed improvement needs to be explored and strengthening of weak bridges is required to improve speed
 - 5) A letter should be sent to Network Rail and local authorities on Intermodal hubs
 - 6) The Committee expresses the need to look at how access on the network is maximized
 - 7) The Committee suggests the involvement of LEPs and that an integrated and collaborative approach needs to be taken
 - 8) Enquiries should be made around the Trafford park to Newcastle routing
 - 9) The issues around the Penistone line should be examined.

Resolved:

That the Scrutiny Committee notes the activity to date and that the above recommendations on future activity be considered by Board on 30 March 2022.