

Transport for the North Scrutiny Committee Consultation Call Agenda

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 21 November 2023
Time of Meeting	11.00 am
Venue	Virtual

Filming and broadcast of the meeting

Meetings of the Transport for the North are 'webcast'. These meetings are filmed and broadcast live on the Internet. If you attend this meeting you should be aware that you might be filmed and included in that transmission.

Item No.	Agenda Item	Page
1.0	Welcome & Apologies The Chair to welcome Members and the public to the meeting. Lead: Chair	
2.0	Declarations of Interest Members are required to declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they may have relating to items on the agenda and state the nature of such interest. Lead: Chair	
3.0	Minutes of the Previous Meeting To note the minutes of the meeting held on the 5 September 2023 (including updates on agreed matters as appropriate). Lead: Chair	3 - 8
4.0	Transforming the North	To Follow
5.0	Strategic Transport Plan Update To consider the update on the development of the second Strategic Transport Plan (STP), and the revised timescale for adoption given recent government announcements. Lead: Katie Day	9 - 12
6.0	Strategic Transport Plan Implementation	To Follow
7.0	Date and Time of Next Meeting Tuesday 27 February 2024	

	11am Manchester City Council Town Hall Extension	
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Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Tuesday 05 September 2023
Virtual

Present:

Attendee	Local Authority
Cllr Paul Haslam (Chair)	North Yorkshire;
Cllr James Shorrock	Blackburn with Darwen;
Cllr John Boughton	Blackpool;
Cllr Rod Fletcher	Cheshire East;
Cllr Andrew Cooper	Cheshire West & Chester;
Cllr Roger Dobson	Cumberland;
Cllr Tony Markley	Cumberland;
Cllr Leo Hammond	East Riding of Yorkshire;
Cllr Matthew Salter	Lancashire;
Cllr Damian O'Connor	Liverpool City Region;
Cllr Margaret Meling	North East Combined Authority;
Cllr Oliver Freeston	North East Lincolnshire;
Cllr John Davison	North Lincolnshire;
Cllr Kevin Osborne	South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority;
Cllr Steve Parish	Warrington;
Cllr Andy Connell	Westmorland and Furness;
Cllr Rachel Melly	York;

Officers in Attendance:

Name	Job Title
Gary Rich	Democratic Services Officer
Katie Day	Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications
Julie Openshaw	Head of Legal
Lucy Jacques	Acting Head of Strategy and Policy
Darren Oldham	Rail and Road Director
Joanne Barclay	Senior Solicitor

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 Cllrs Kaushik, Furley and Burton.

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 1 June 2023 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Davison and seconded by Cllr Connell.

3.2 The Chair stated that there was one matter arising from the previous minutes, namely the election of the minority party Vice Chair, but this item has been deferred.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2023 be noted as a true and accurate record.

4 Strategic Transport Plan Update

4.1 Members received the report and presentation from the Acting Head of Strategy and Policy who highlighted the key points of the presentation. She talked the Committee through the first few slides and paused to gather the Committee's feedback on the numbers who engaged in the consultation.

4.2 Cllr Dobson asked about the geographical breakdown of those who had participated in the consultation.

The Acting Head of Strategy and Policy explained that this will be part of the further analysis that is taking place and this breakdown will only be available for those that participated in the virtual consultation room. She explained that during the consultation demographic information was monitored in order that activities could be targeted at under represented or harder to engage groups.

4.3 Cllr Parish expressed disappointment that only 9 MPs from across the North had participated.

The Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications explained that all Northern MPs from the all party parliamentary group were invited to participate in a drop in session. Of the 9 who attended there was a good geographical split from across the North. She further explained that separate briefings and materials were provided as well as it being promoted through other channels.

The Committee was informed that there had been an excellent level of response from the Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and that there had been significant engagement through various local groups and committees. Additionally, she noted that the numbers who engaged in the consultation

were comparable to the numbers who have participated in consultations for other Sub-national Transport Bodies.

- 4.4 Cllr Davison was disappointed with the numbers who participated and asked how many were members of the general public as opposed to other stakeholders.

The Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications confirmed that 220 members of the public took part in the citizens' panel and 94 responded via e-mail or letters. She explained that the challenge with this work is who the plan is written for. She stated that it is written at a strategic level so that it can support and guide the work of LTAs, as well as be provided as statutory advice to the Secretary of State on the outcomes and the ambitions for the region. With this taken into consideration she was satisfied with the number of people who had responded.

- 4.5 Cllr Salter commented that the consultation gives the impression that there should be a move towards reducing car travel which may be viewed in a negative light by the public. He added that whilst the information is useful the views expressed cannot be taken as representative of all of the public.

- 4.6 The Acting Head of Strategy and Policy then highlighted some of the key themes that emerged from the consultation.

- 4.7 The Chair focussed on the lack of ambition theme. He addressed the issue of carbon net zero and the perception that it is not ambitious enough, with which he agrees. He also raised the issues of air quality, health and wellbeing, the importance of finding other fuel types, making public transport affordable, freight and how it is moved around, and spending on public transport in the North of England compared to the South of England.

- 4.8 On the issue of freight Cllr Hornby cautioned that there needs to be a careful balance on how freight works across different locations. She highlighted the impact that freight may have on communities and specifically where it goes through residential areas. She requested that best practice on freight development that will reduce the burden on residents be included.

- 4.9 Cllr Salter stated that not enough is being made of existing TfN work on things like freight and hydrogen and that more attention should be given to this. Cllr Salter agreed that there is a lack of ambition but believes that the fault for this lies with lack of enthusiasm from central government rather than with TfN.

- 4.10 Cllr Melly expected to see more on buses and echoed the comments of other Members about affordability. She also stressed the importance of there being services available between major towns and cities in the North. She suggested that all aspects of transport, how they're integrated, whether they are affordable, availability and whether the services exist and where there

are gaps should be included. Cllr Davison highlighted the difference between urban and rural bus services and the difficulties in providing services in rural areas.

- 4.11 On the issue of electric vehicles Cllr Markley highlighted the difficulties that small businesses will have switching to electric. He stated that smaller haulage companies would need to have their vehicles working 24 hours a day in order to justify the investment; this he believes will not be possible with electric vehicles due to the amount of time they take to charge.
- 4.12 Cllr Fletcher raised the issue of funding and the fact that it is constantly being cut for public transport. He stated that traffic needs to be taken off roads and put on rail but this is difficult due to the lack of capacity.
- 4.13 In response the Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications addressed a number of the issues raised by the Committee.

On air quality and health and wellbeing and it being linked into TfN's ambition on decarbonisation, she stated that is a key message that came out through the consultation and TfN is keen to look at that narrative and the health benefits that come with decarbonisation.

Regarding freight, she explained that the STP is intended to set the long-term outcomes and ambitions that are wanted for the North of England as it is statutory advice. Therefore, the plan needs to look at what is needed from the Northern transport network to enable the effective movement of freight and logistics. She stated that some quick wins need to be explored that will move more freight off the road and on to rail.

On the issue of funding, she stated that this is a central issue and is why one of the ambitions in the plan is an economic ambition, and the level of funding needed to unlock the economic potential in the North of England.

Addressing the rural issue, she noted that over 95% of journeys are made on roads and in some rural areas there is no access to rail; therefore, there is a need to make sure that the roads function for good effective public transport as well. She stated that the STP is geared around thinking about people and places because no two places are the same, and no two people are the same.

- 4.14 The Rail and Road Director addressed the issue of buses and informed the Committee that TfN recognises that this is an area where we need do more work. He explained that there seems to be universal support for TfN to be a facilitator in this area. He noted a number of areas that the Partnership Board had highlighted where they would like TfN to support them. These are: helping authorities across the North to share best practice, rural bus services and social connectivity and TfN acting as a facilitator for purchasing

buses. He stated that over the next 12 months Members will see a significant change in how TfN communicates on bus activity.

- 4.15 In summarising the Chair stated that the Committee is supportive of the work that has been done although it believes there is more room for ambition. Specifically, there needs to be a focus on fuelling options, freight, public transport (particularly buses) but this needs to be place specific and how the ambition will be funded.
- 4.16 The Acting Head of Strategy and Policy and the Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications then outlined the work undertaken with the Citizens' Panel and the next steps that need to be taken.
- 4.17 The Chair encouraged the Committee to share the report and the presentation with colleagues in their constituent authorities.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Committee notes the outcomes from the statutory consultation;
- 2) That the feedback provided on areas of the plan to revise post consultation be noted;
- 3) That the Committee notes the arrangements for finalising the plan with the TfN Board in December.

5 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 21 November
11am

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Meeting: Scrutiny Committee
Subject: Strategic Transport Plan Update
Author: Lucy Jacques, Principal Policy & Strategy Development Officer
Sponsor: Katie Day, Director of Strategy, Analysis and Communications
Meeting Date: Tuesday, 21 November 2023

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 To provide an update on the development of our second Strategic Transport Plan (STP), and the revised timescale for adoption given recent government announcements

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee:
- Endorses the decision to defer the adoption of the STP (until March 2024) to enable us to work with our partners to fully consider the implications of the Network North announcement.
 - Notes the work to date to amend the document post consultation, set out at paragraph 3.6 below.

3. Main Issues:

- 3.1 TfN has a statutory duty to produce a STP on behalf of the North of England. Its purpose is to set out, based on robust evidence, the strategic ambitions for transport, specifically pan-regional infrastructure priorities and issues that are common to partners and where there is efficiency in tackling them regionally.
- 3.2 We had intended to bring the STP to the Board for adoption in December 2023. However, on 4 October 2023, the Government announced the cancellation of Phase 2 of High Speed 2 (HS2), from Handsacre to Manchester, and a new government policy, Network North, was published.
- 3.3 The TfN Board's position, which is reflected in the current draft of the STP, is that both Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2 are required in full. TfN is also under a legal obligation to have due regard for government policy. Therefore, given the announcement on 4 October, it is necessary to assess at an officer and Board level the implications of the Network North policy on the draft STP.
- 3.4 We are confident that the STP vision, strategic ambitions and outcomes remain unchanged as a result; however, the cancellation of HS2 phase two does mean that consideration needs to be given to the strategic connections and/or capacity that could still be required. To ensure adequate time for that assessment (which is subject to a separate Board paper), and to reach an agreed position with the TfN Board, we propose approval of the STP is deferred until March 2024. This will allow the narrative for strategic rail, and underpinning evidence (in the Strategic Rail Report), to be updated to reflect any necessary changes as a result of the HS2 cancellation.
- 3.5 We have, nonetheless, continued to work at pace to finalise the STP as far as possible, as we recognise it supports local transport planning. Also, we want to ensure it is provided to the Secretary of State ahead of any spending review. Our focus has been on addressing feedback from the consultation, which took place between May and August 2023, receiving a total of 648 responses (reduced from 649 following further analysis post September Board). The consultation found

that while some areas of the STP required amendment/adjustment, overall the STP vision and strategic ambitions were accepted.

- 3.6 Following steers from TfN Board in September 2023, officers have been working to revise the document, including:
- **Strengthening the vision** by including specific references to affordability and the need to support mode shift.
 - **Amending the headline metrics** for rail freight right share and vision zero to be more ambitious.
 - **Better articulating that the environmental benefits we seek are beyond decarbonisation**, including more emphasis on biodiversity net gain, air quality and the enhancements to the built and natural environment.
 - **Making a stronger case for freight**, embedding throughout the plan more of our existing evidence, including reference to the opportunities that inland waterways present and our aspirations for strategic rail freight interchanges.
 - **Reviewing our narrative on international connectivity**, to ensure we are presenting a fair and balanced view (in line with our agreed policy position) in light of feedback from both environmental stakeholders and airports that is conflicting in nature.
 - **Adding new text** on the affordability of transport for the user, light rail / mass transit and connected mobility.

4. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

- 4.1 TfN officers will review the potential cost implications of the deferral of the STP publication to March 2024. This will consider the impact of any changes that may be required to the STP following the assessment detailed in paragraph 3.4 above.

Resource Implications

- 4.2 TfN officers will review the potential resource implications of the deferral of the STP publication to March 2024. This will consider the impact of any changes that may be required to the STP following the assessment detailed in paragraph 3.4 above.

Legal Implications

- 4.3 The statutory obligations on TfN under the Local Transport Act 2008 (as amended by Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016) ("the Act") in preparation of the STP will be kept under review to ensure the STP is legally sound and complies with the legal requirements.
- 4.4 The Act (section 102I8(c)) requires an STB to have regard to "*any current national policy relating to transport that has been published by or on behalf of His Majesty's Government*". By undertaking the assessment of the new Network North policy via the draft STP, TfN is complying with its legal obligations to take in to account current national policy within the STP.

Risk Management and Key Issues

- 4.5 TfN's Corporate Risk Register includes a risk associated with the STP, and this has been adjusted to reflect the change in timescales and associated risks.

Environmental Implications

- 4.6 A full Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment was prepared to accompany the STP, supported by external expertise. These reports were also consulted upon alongside the draft STP and the findings are included in appendix A of the September 2023 Board report.

- 4.7 The ISA will document how and where consultation comments on the ISA/HRA have been addressed. This will include updated assessments where policies within the STP have been updated in response to the consultation. The revised ISA report, will be brought back to TfN Board alongside the final STP for approval.

Equality and Diversity

- 4.8 To accompany the STP, we have undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the wider Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA), and where possible the findings of these were addressed in the consultation draft.

In addition, TfN's Transport Related Social Exclusion workstream will allow TfN and its partners to better understand the distribution and causes of TRSE in the North and forms an important part of the evidence base for the STP.

Consultations

- 4.9 TfN has followed the relevant statutory procedural requirements, well established legal requirements and government guidance in relation to the consultation process on the draft STP.

TfN has subsequently reviewed all consultation responses received and have updated the STP accordingly.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 TfN Strategic Transport Plan Consultation Outcomes, September 2023 Board paper.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 None

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used (if applicable)

Please include any technical abbreviations and acronyms used in the report in this section. (Please see examples below.) This will provide an easy reference point for the reader for any abbreviations and acronyms that are used in the report.

a) STP	Strategic Transport Plan
b) HS2	High Speed 2
c) ISA	Integrated Sustainability Appraisal
d) HRA	Habitats Regulation Assessment
e) TRSE	Transport Related Social Exclusion

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