
Rail North Committee Minutes

**Tuesday 14 July 2020
MS Teams**

Present:

Attendee

Cllr Liam Robinson
Cllr Craig Browne
Cllr Trevor Ainsworth
Mayor Andy Burnham

Cllr Rob Waltham
Cllr Carl Marshall
Cllr Don Mackenzie
Mayor Dan Jarvis
Cllr Heather Scott
Cllr Judith Blake

Local Authority

(Liverpool City Region) (Chair)
Cheshire and the Potteries
Derbyshire;
Greater Manchester Combined
Authority;
North Lincolnshire;
North East Combined Authority;
North Yorkshire;
Sheffield City Region;
Tees Valley;
West Yorkshire & York

Partners in Attendance:

Sam Caughey
Cavendish Elithorne
Francesca Glyn-Jones
David Golding
Anna Jane Hunter
Jake Kelly
Nick Donovan
Richard George
Louise Ebbs
Jerry Farquharson

DfT
Dft
DfT
Network Rail
Network Rail
Network Rail
Northern Rail
OLR Holdings
TPE
TPE

Also in Attendance:

Bob Morris
Tobyn Hughes

TfGM
North East

Officers in Attendance:

Name
Barry White
Adam Timewell

Chris Roberts
Gary Rich

Job Title
Chief Executive
Commercial Manager - Northern Rail
North
Commercial Manager - TPE Franchise
Democratic Services Officer

Dawn Madin
Jim Bamford
Gary Bogan
Salim Patel
David Hughes
Deborah Dimock
David Hoggarth
Jane Cornthwaite

Director of Capabilities
Head of Investment Planning
Director Rail North Partnership
Programme Manager - Rail North
Programme and Strategy Director
Solicitor
Strategic Rail Director
TfN Advisor

Item No:

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.

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 12 May 2020 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. There were no issues arising from the minutes.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 May be approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Rail Operations and Covid-19 Recovery

4.1 Members received the report of the Rail North Partnership Director.

4.2 The Chair invited the Chief Executive to make some introductory comments on the report. The Chief Executive stated that there are many good things currently going on in the industry which is helping to build confidence, however he explained that this is a balancing act which may go on for some time. He stated that the paper outlined some of the thinking as to how public confidence could be rebuilt.

4.3 Anna Jane Hunter explained that the paper is representative of the current situation and that little has changed since the last Committee meeting. Collaborative work is continuing with the North of England

Contingency Group where the industry is able to get together and stakeholders are able to provide feedback which is then built into the plans.

Ms. Hunter highlighted that TPE are currently operating around 86% of services with Northern operating approximately 67% of services which is focused on delivering capacity into the key urban areas whilst at the same time continuing to provide a service for key workers. Network Rail are continuing to support key freight flows. She further explained that demand continues to remain low, with it being 15-20% of usual levels with some localised peaks which are being managed.

On the issue of face coverings Ms. Hunter explained that this has improved and is consistently 'quite good.'

Ms. Hunter explained that there would be another timetable uplift in September but this will not include TPE as they uplifted in July, meaning that they are now using approximately 90% of their resources, Ms. Hunter explained that this is a good level for things to be at as it does not risk the resilience of the timetable. Northern's uplift will take into account the return of schools. She explained that work has commenced with the industry on the December 2020 timetable changes.

- 4.4 The Chair highlighted reports in the media that First Group may cease trading and asked about the protocols that are in place should for an operator of last resort (OLR) should this happen.

The Director of the Rail North Partnership explained that as a result of Covid the Section 30 function has been mobilised across the board.

Richard George confirmed that OLR and Section 30 arrangements are always in place. He highlighted that Emergency Measure Agreements (EMAs) are due to end in September and hopes that the Department has something in place to prevent all operators falling off the cliff.

Cllr Mackenzie raised the issue of the York to Scarborough line and wanted to know what plans are in place to deal with increased demand as the weather improves.

Mr. Jerry Farquharson explained that things are already being assessed in relation to this route and a proactive view is being taken as demand arises.

- 4.5 Cllr Scott raised the issue of the Bishop Auckland to Saltburn line and wondered if there was an opportunity for improvements to this service.

Mr. Nick Donovan explained that the service to Saltburn is being watched due to demands in the area. He explained that he is very conscious of satisfying any demands in this area in any future uplifts.

- 4.6 Cllr Little commented on the number of empty trains that are currently running.

Mr. George explained that everyone in the industry is conscious of this. He highlighted that their biggest worry for the long term is the psychology of passengers and when they will have the confidence to begin using trains again.

- 4.7 Mayor Burnham raised the issue of face coverings and public compliance wearing them whilst using public transport.

Both Ms. Hunter and Mr. George agreed that compliance would improve once there is consistency, they also agreed that there would be improvements once face coverings became mandatory in retail outlets.

- 4.8 Cllr Blake highlighted the importance of communication in building up confidence levels of the public. She suggested the possibility of television adverts illustrating what a journey looks like.

In response to Cllr Blake Ms. Louise Ebbs explained that TPE have produced a number of videos showing what customers can expect on their trains and in their stations. She explained that TPE would be happy to work with others in order to provide passengers with reassurance.

Mr. Donovan shared survey work that they have undertaken, he explained that the results had shown that the most important thing for getting customers back on trains is safety and confidence and that this is more important than pricing.

Mr. Donovan explained that the Government's essential travel only message has now been dropped but a degree of caution is still there as the core message. He explained that they are trying to balance encouraging people to come back to public transport against the national message.

- 4.9 The Chair thanked those involved for the collective work taking place across the industry including the Trade Unions.

He highlighted the fact that the current situation needs additional resources. He explained that whilst the pandemic has allowed for a reset on some of the challenges on the railway it has also led to some major financial issues. He highlighted the fact that at the start of the crisis Government had stated that it would do whatever was required. He further explained that Transport for the North (TfN) would continue to make the argument for getting the required resources for the rail network for both the short term and the long term.

5. Blake-Jones Review Update

- 5.1 Members received the report of the Strategic Rail Advisor. Cllr Blake then highlighted key points in the report.

She explained that many of the key issues had been discussed in the previous item. Members were informed that she was glad to see that operators and Network Rail putting a strong emphasis on 'putting passengers first.'

The issues of franchising and the Williams Review were highlighted as areas of concern, and she was concerned that the Williams Review may not get published. Cllr Blake was also disappointed with the reluctance of the DfT to share information with TfN.

Cllr Blake informed Members that she is seeking an urgent meeting with the Minister, Chris Heaton Harris MP before the recess, to discuss the elements that are important to the North and she reassured Members that this is at the forefront of the work.

- 5.2 Mayor Burnham supported Cllr Blake in seeking clarity on the status of the Williams Review with the Minister. He also highlighted the importance of integration and devolution in getting a transport system of a different kind and similar to how things work in London.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

6. Rail Reform and Devolution

- 6.1 Members received the report on rail reform and Devolution. Cllr Blake then highlighted the key points in the report.

The importance of devolution and the importance of it getting us through the current crisis were emphasised. She also explained that business leaders are keen to be involved and that they want to understand what the future is for public transport in order to help with their planning going forward.

The subject of funding was highlighted with the issue of accelerating infrastructure spend of particular importance. She stated the importance of being on the same page as government when talking about priorities.

Cllr Blake stated that she believed that work needs to be done on the issue of transparency and explained that the work that has been done in ensuring that the Committee is a sovereign body in the partnership needs to continue at pace.

- 6.2 The Strategic Rail Director informed Members that he would pick up the suggestion to include 'integration' for both local transport services as well

as track and train as this issue is at the heart of the Blake Jones review. He explained that the next step will be to take the issue to the meeting with the Minister.

The Chair expressed his support for the report. He explained that the ultimate aim should be to get all rail services across the North of England devolved. He further explained that this should be further devolved for service delivery to the local constituent areas and funded by a proper rail grant from Government.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

7. Date of Next Meeting plus forthcoming meetings dates for 2020/2021

7.1 The Members agreed the dates of future Rail North Committee meetings.

Resolved:

That the future dates of the Rail North Committee be agreed.

8. Exclusion of the Press and Public

9. Northern Trains Update and 100-day Review

9.1 The report and presentation on Northern Trains and their 100 day Review were received by Members and they were invited to ask questions and make comments on the update.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

10. Manchester Recovery Task Force.

10.1 The report was received by Members and they were invited to ask questions and make comments on the report.

Resolved:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the report's recommendations be agreed.

11. Service Changes to Support Improved Reliability

11.1 The report was received by Members and they were invited to ask questions and make comments.

Resolved:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the report's recommendations be agreed