

# Scrutiny Committee Minutes

**Wednesday 28 October 2020  
MS Teams**

**Present:**

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>
Cllr Paul Haslam (Chair)	North Yorkshire;
Cllr O'Hara	Blackpool;
Cllr Laura Crane	Cheshire East;
Cllr Andrew Cooper	Cheshire West & Chester;
Cllr Neil Hughes	Cumbria;
Cllr Jones	Greater Manchester Combined Authority;
Cllr Sean Chaytor	Hull;
Matthew Salter	Lancashire;
Cllr Mckinley	Liverpool City Region;
Cllr Tom Furneaux	North East Lincolnshire;
Cllr John Davison	North Lincolnshire;
Cllr Chris Lamb	Sheffield City Region;
Cllr Ashley Waters	Tees Valley;
Cllr Steve Parish	Warrington;
Cllr Manisha Kaushik	West Yorkshire Combined Authority;
Cllr Stephen Fenton	York;

**Officers in Attendance:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
Barry White	Chief Executive
Gary Rich	Democratic Services Officer
Dawn Madin	Director of Business Capabilities
Iain Craven	Finance Director
Julie Openshaw	Head of Legal
Rosemary Lyon	Legal and Democratic Services Officer
Jeremy Acklam	IST Director
Tim Wood	Northern Powerhouse Rail Director
Deborah Dimock	Solicitor

**Item No:      Item**

Items 9-11 were taken in private first before agenda items 1-8 were discussed in public.

**1.      Welcome & Apologies**

1.1      The Chair welcomed all in attendance and informed Members that the meeting is being streamed live. There were no apologies.

**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 26 August 2020 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Kaushik and seconded by Cllr Cooper.

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 August be approved as a true and accurate record.

**4.      Election of the Majority party Vice Chair**

4.1      The Chair informed Members that he had received one nomination for Cllr Kaushik for the role of Majority party Vice Chair. There were no further nominations.

**Resolved:**

That Cllr Kaushik be elected as Majority Party Vice Chair.

**5.      Coronavirus Update**

5.1      Members received the presentation from the Rail North Programme Manager and following the presentation were able to make comments and ask questions.

5.2      Cllr Jones raised a number of issues around the running of the railways including the issue of franchising and what it should be replaced with.

The Chair commented the Rail North Programme Manager maybe unable to respond to all of the points raised by Cllr Jones and suggested that this maybe something that needs to be picked up and discussed further with the Chairman of the Transport for the North Board.

The Rail North Programme Manager explained that there is currently an arrangement in place whereby TfN and the DfT through the Rail North Partnership manage the rail franchises in the north, with the budgetary and financial elements of it being held by the Secretary of State. Matters pertaining to train services have to be run through the Rail North Partnership.

On the issue of decentralisation, he highlighted how train service increases have been managed over the last 6 months, with the North West contingency group working alongside the Rail North Partnership, operators and officers in a transparent way. This way of working has been seen as best practice across the country in the way it has been able to respond to issues during the pandemic and has shown that local decision making and local engagement is the way forward when it comes to designing train service specifications. He stated that the way in which things are currently working can only help in future discussions with government on the issue of decentralisation and devolution.

- 5.3 Cllr Parish asked if money is still being spent on people working out compensation for delays between the different companies.

The Rail North Programme Manager responded that he would need to go away and check if this is still happening.

- 5.4 Cllr Chaytor was supportive of what is currently being done and suggested that there should be more control on a regional basis.

The Chief Executive explained that the issue of who runs the railways will be addressed in the Williams Review and once the Government response to Williams has been published then Transport for the North can look at possible next steps.

**Resolved:**

That the presentation be noted.

**6. Innovation Partnership**

- 6.1 Members received the presentation from the IST Director and following the presentation Members were able to make comments and ask questions.
- 6.2 Cllr Hughes stated that Regional transport bodies are vital for public transport and asked if Transport for the North is able to ask the government for financial support.

Cllr Hughes also raised the issue of devolution and stated that it is unclear how TfN can take on responsibility for local places as they are not directly elected and therefore not accountable to the local electorate.

On the issue of approaching the Government for financial support, the IST Director stated that Transport for the North is maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the DfT in relation to current and future funding allocations.

Regarding the issue of devolution and placed based strategies, the IST Director explained that the north contains five of the seven major cities outside of London. He explained that it is important that the individual organisations around cities, city regions and Local Transport Authorities can act within their own right, as well as collectively within a wider structure, and why the Innovation Partnership Programme has been constructed in such a way as to provide a solution which can be under the control of individual authorities with devolution at the core of the programme.

6.3 Cllr McKinley raised the issue of ethical procurement.

The IST Director assured Cllr McKinley that Procurement is done on an ethical basis, he explained that TfN's Procurement Strategy addresses these matters and that this is reflected in the content of the supplier response documentation.

**Resolved:**

That the presentation be noted.

**7. Business Planning**

7.1 Members received the Business planning report and presentation from the Finance Director who highlighted the changes that have occurred since the papers were distributed. He explained that the Government has now announced that the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) will be a one year rollover, rather than the initially planned three year review. However there has been little detail as to what this means for the funding that TfN will receive. He further explained that business planning is therefore being carried out in the context of the CSR and the uncertainty that it has created for TfN.

7.2 Referring to a possible announcement on the Williams Review, Cllr Fenton explained that there had been talk that the announcement may come in installments and wondered if some of it may be announced before the budgets are finalised for next year thus allowing the budget to reflect anything that comes out of it.

The Finance Director was unaware of anything regarding Williams Review announcements. He explained that if this did happen, then there is nothing to prevent TfN from applying to the Department for an additional grant during the year which can then be reflected through the budget revision process. He further stated that if an announcement around the Williams Review happened shortly after the completion of the business

plan he was confident that arrangements could be put in place that would enable activity to proceed.

**Resolved:**

That the report and presentation be noted.

**8. Integrated Rail Plan/HS2**

8.1 Members received the report on the Integrated Rail Plan from the NPR Director who highlighted the key points in the report.

8.2 Referring to section 3.9 of the report Cllr Hughes welcomed the proposed extension of the platforms at Preston and Carlisle, explaining that is likely to lead to more visitors to Carlisle and the Lake District entering from the North of the county rather than the traditional route. Cllr Hughes expects that this involve significant numbers and wondered whether this has been taken into account by HS2 in the forward planning.

8.3 The NPR Director explained the HS2 will have taken this into account. He explained that the key issue is the signals for stopping at Preston and Carlisle, and also highlighted the ongoing discussions about stopping at Lancaster and Penrith. He further explained that they would be exploring how regional capacity can be released in order to move more passengers around.

8.4 Referring to section 3.10 of the report Cllr Parish asked about the two new junctions near High Legh and Ashley and whether we need to know the route before they know where to put the passive provision.

The NPR Director explained that TfN is clear as to where the junctions will be due to the work that was undertaken for the Design Refinement Consultation (DRC)<sup>1</sup>.

8.5 The Chair asked about the impact on the ability to improve East -West Freight.

The NPR Director explained that HS2 is about opening up capacity and connectivity due to both the West Coast and East Coast Mainlines currently being full. He explained that by moving passenger traffic on to HS2 this will free up capacity. Regarding the East -West piece this is part of the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) where TfN have called for full electrification and W10/W12 Freight clearance. The NPR Director expressed the hope that once NPR gets approval this will release further capacity for more freight.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **9. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED:** that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, there will be disclosure of confidential information as defined in Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and/or exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

## **10. Part 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

- 10.1 The private minutes of the meeting held on 26 August 2020 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Kaushik and seconded by Cllr Salter.

**Resolved:**

That the private minutes of the meeting held on 26 August be approved as a true and accurate record.

## **11. NPR Update**

- 11.1 Members received the report from the NPR Director who highlighted key areas of the report before taking questions and comments from Members.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.