

Scrutiny Committee Minutes

**Wednesday 09 December 2020
MS Teams**

Present:

Attendee

Cllr Paul Haslam (Chair)
Cllr Shorrocks
Cllr Mitchell
Cllr Laura Crane
Cllr Andrew Cooper
Cllr Neil Hughes
Cllr Jones

Cllr Sean Chaytor
Matthew Salter
Cllr Mckinley
Cllr Tom Furneaux
Cllr John Davison
Cllr Steve Parish
Cllr Manisha Kaushik
Cllr Stephen Fenton

Local Authority

North Yorkshire;
Blackburn with Darwen;
Blackpool;
Cheshire East;
Cheshire West & Chester;
Cumbria;
Greater Manchester Combined
Authority;
Hull;
Lancashire;
Liverpool City Region;
North East Lincolnshire;
North Lincolnshire;
Warrington;
West Yorkshire Combined Authority;
York;

Officers in Attendance:

Name

Gary Rich
Julie Openshaw
Rosemary Lyon
Deborah Dimock
Jeremy Acklam
Dawn Madin
Iain Craven
James Lyon
Tim Foster

Job Title

Democratic Services Officer
Head of Legal
Legal and Democratic Services Officer
Solicitor
IST Director
Director of Capabilities
Finance Director
Legal Assistant
Interim Strategy & Programme
Director
Principal Environmental and
Sustainability Officer
Principal Policy Officer Freight

Peter Cole

Lucy Hudson

Item No: Item**1. Welcome & Apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all in attendance and informed Members that the meeting was being streamed live.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from the Chief Executive.

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 21 October 2020 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. There were no issues arising from the minutes. Confirmation of the minutes was proposed by Cllr Haslam and seconded by Cllr Kaushik.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October be approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Monthly Operating Report

- 4.1 Members received the report from the Interim Strategy and Programme Director who highlighted the key elements of the report before inviting questions and comments from Members.

The Interim Strategy and Programme Director explained that at the November Transport for the North Board Members had agreed the preferred network and phasing for Northern Powerhouse Rail. This decision has now been communicated to the Secretary State in order to inform the Integrated Rail Plan. He explained that the priority for TfN is to complete the Strategic Outline Case. He explained that the integrated Rail Plan is being awaited.

He also highlighted the Comprehensive Spending review and explained whilst the Department has received its settlement, TfN has not yet had the budget confirmed for next year; however business planning has been taking place.

- 4.2 Cllr Hughes raised a number of questions on a variety of subjects including the funding situation in relation to TfN schemes, the Beeching Rail plans, Northern Transport Acceleration Council (NTAC), adaptation of

listed buildings for the IST programme and the promotion of road schemes.

In response to the funding question the Interim Policy and Planning Director explained that the point raised within the report is a concern that has been raised with the Government. He explained that some of the fiscal scenarios presented to Government by the NIC appear stringent, and once the Rail Needs Assessment has been published then this can be explored further and advice provided to Members. In relation to the Beeching question the Interim Policy and Planning Director stated that a note would be circulated to Members on this.

On the issue of NTAC he clarified that the role of the two organisations are very different.

On the Integrated and Smart Travel (IST) programme the IST Director explained that all the issues have now been resolved in relation to card validators in listed buildings. Members were informed that in order to ensure that delays were minimised validators have been placed on moveable concrete blocks whilst a permanent solution is found.

- 4.3 Cllr Davison raised the issue of KPIs and asked how success is measured in terms of things such as infrastructure constructed.

The Finance Director explained that the KPIs in the report are operating KPIs and are a measure of how the organisation is going about the tasks for the year rather than wider strategic objectives.

On the issue of KPIs the Chair asked for measurable KPIs to be included such as the number of people making modal shifts.

- 4.4 Cllr Jones requested a note on funding be circulated to Members early in the new year in order to increase Members understanding. He also requested an update on progress that had been made on schemes to alleviate congestion in the Manchester Rail Hub.

The Policy and Planning Director explained that once TfN had received clarity on the position regarding funding a note would be circulated. In response to the question on congestion in Manchester he stated that he would need to return to Members on this.

- 4.5 The Chair returned to the issue of road schemes raised by Cllr Hughes. He commented that it should not be that roads are being built for the sake of it but because there is a clear benefit for the future.

- 4.6 Cllr Chaytor stated that work on road networks may prove to be essential, whilst the Government is not investing in modal shift and getting the public using trains. He stated that buses are not effective in rural areas.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

5. Freight Strategy

- 5.1 Members received the report of the Principal Policy Officer for Freight who highlighted key areas of the report. Following this Members were able to make comments and ask questions.

The Principal Policy Officer explained that as the strategy will underpin activity it therefore needs to be a strategy in its own right. She further explained that it would look at other TfN projects and explore how freight arguments can be strengthened in each programme.

Members were informed that consultants have highlighted a number of themes including, better East - West connectivity, connectivity to ports and the Last Mile of a delivery journey for a lorry or a van making a delivery. She explained that there is a need to see that these issues are still current and that they underpin what is wanted in the future. She stated that these are suppressing demand for freight on rail and road. She then explained to Members how suppressed demand is worked out based on current activity and what future activity they expect to see. This gives an evidence base as to what infrastructure needs to be developed.

She explained that due to funding constraints there is a need to maximise what is currently in place as well as what is developing in order to make sure that cases are strong.

The Principal Policy Officer then returned to questions that were asked during her May presentation to the Scrutiny Committee. Members were given updates on the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU), Modelling and Data, gauge clearance, the Northern Ports and Decarbonisation.

In concluding she explained that activity in this area needs to continue to be underpinned in order to ensure that freight continues to remain an area for consideration.

- 5.2 Cllr Jones requested that the Freight and Logistics Group meet soon. He also requested early sight of the paper that will be going to the March Board for approval in order to allow Members to make comment.

The Principal Policy Officer explained that she intends to host a Freight and Logistics working group. The Chair requested further input into the strategy as it develops.

- 5.3 Cllr Hughes asked about Decarbonisation and Freight and whether transport and particularly Freight will have to make a greater contribution to achieve decarbonisation targets. He also asked if the industry is geared up to achieve it.

The Principal Policy Officer explained that the issue of decarbonisation and freight is an extremely complicated issue and is being thought about in the industry.

5.4 Cllr Davison believes an opportunity has been missed in emphasising the key objective of the strategy, to get as much freight as possible off the road and on to rail. He also expressed surprise that there was no mention of HS2 in the report and the benefits that this will have to freight.

5.5 The Chair stressed the importance of including the figures around how much freight goes on the road and how much carbon dioxide is going into the atmosphere as a result. He stated that communication is the first step in change leading to a switch in modes for freight. He also stated that in order to engage the Government on this TfN need to demonstrate how this is helping them to achieve their decarbonisation goals.

5.6 Cllr Fenton requested for Last Mile to be included in the strategy in its own right.

The Principal Policy Officer stated that this would be included in the Strategy.

5.7 Cllr Parish raised the issue of freight through Diggle.

The Principal Policy Officer explained that if the right upgrades happen with TRU and if there is investment through NPR there will hopefully be some capacity release which will allow for freight as well as passenger trains. She stated that it is the ambition to see what freight train an hour on the Diggle route.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

6. Decarbonisation Strategy

6.1 Members received the report and the presentation on the Decarbonisation Strategy. Following the presentation Members were able to make comments and ask questions of the Principal Environmental and Sustainability Officer.

6.2 The Chair asked about timescales. The Principal Environmental and Sustainability Officer explained that the Strategy won't be adopted until October or November 2021 at the earliest due to consultation needing to take place and Board approval being required. He then highlighted areas where TfN might have a role to play in implementing the strategy. One such area is the Development of a Pan Northern Low Carbon Charging Network plan, which currently has elements of being undertaken by local

authorities. He then went on to emphasise the importance of the two dovetailing together to ensure that important points are not missed.

6.3 The Chair highlighted that decarbonisation needs to be “in the DNA” of everything that TfN does and that the issue needs to be considered in all reports.

6.4 Cllr Fenton highlighted that each Local Authority would be doing things in different ways and at different speeds. He then went on to ask about the support that TfN will provide for authorities.

The Principal Policy Environmental and sustainability Officer explained that the policy analysis will help decide what each area may need. He stated that TfN wants to produce a “policy basket” of ideas that local authorities can draw upon. He also explained to Members that TfN would like to introduce a Regional Roadmap for Decarbonisation which will help TfN understand where the challenges are at different times and allow for focus on specific areas.

He added that he would like to draw on expertise from local authorities and wants to set up a decarbonisation working group.

6.5 Cllr Cooper was supportive of the idea of TfN working with individual authorities in finding the right approach for each authority.

7. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item 8 on the grounds that

- (1) It is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during such item(s), confidential information as defined in S100A(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) would be disclosed to them in breach of the obligation of confidence; and/or
- (2) it / they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the Paragraphs [where necessary listed below] of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

8. Part 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

8.1 The private minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 9 December 2020 were considered.

Resolved:

That the private minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 9 December 2020 be approved as a correct record.

