
Transport for the North Chief Executive Consultation Call (Board) Minutes

Wednesday 09 June 2021
Virtual

Present:

John Cridland (Chairman)

Attendee

Cllr Lynn Williams
Cllr Craig Browne
Cllr Louise Gittins
Cllr Keith Little
Cllr Gary McMaster
Mayor Andy Burnham

Cllr Daren Hale
Cllr Charles Edwards
Mayor Steve Rotheram
Cllr Stewart Swinburn
Mayor Jamie Driscoll
Mayor Dan Jarvis
Cllr Heather Scott
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe

Local Authority

Blackpool;
Cheshire East;
Cheshire West & Chester;
Cumbria;
East Riding of Yorkshire;
Greater Manchester Combined
Authority;
Hull;
Lancashire;
Liverpool City Region;
North East Lincolnshire;
North of Tyne Combined Authority;
Sheffield City Region;
Tees Valley;
West Yorkshire Combined Authority;

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Attendees

Annette McDonald
Steve Curl
Mark Rawstron
Mark Roberts
Lucy Winskell
Peter Kennan

Cheshire & Warrington
Cumbria;
Lancashire
Leeds
North East
Sheffield City Region

Partners in Attendance:

Ben Smith
Lorna Pimlott
Alan Shepherd
Graham Botham

Department for Transport
HS2
Highways England
Network Rail

Officers in Attendance:

Name	Job Title
Dawn Madin	Director of Business Capabilities
Gary Rich	Democratic Services Officer
Iain Craven	Finance Director
Julie Openshaw	Head of Legal Services
Tim Wood	Interim Chief Executive
Tim Foster	Interim Strategy & Programme Director
Rosemary Lyon	Legal & Democratic Services Officer
Peter Molyneux	Major Roads Director
David Hoggarth	Strategic Rail Director
Deborah Dimock	Solicitor

Also in Attendance

Mayor Tracy Brabin (Observer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Anit Chandarana	Network Rail

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

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed Members and apologies were noted. The Chairman placed on record his thanks and the thanks of the Board to Councillor Chris Brewis for all his hard work and dedication to the Board during his time as the Member for Lincolnshire on the Board.
- 1.2 The Chairman asked Members to remind their Officers to update TfN on any changes following their AGMs and this should be done before the meeting on 27 July 2021. Members were also reminded about the Governance Audit consultation which could still be completed.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The draft minutes of the meetings of the Transport for the North Board held on 24 March and 16 April 2021 were considered. The Chairman explained that as this is not a formal meeting of the Board, the minutes

were for noting only and would be presented for formal approval at the 27 July 2021 meeting.

Resolved:

That the draft minutes of the Transport for the North Board meetings held on 24 March and 16 April 2021 be noted.

4. Governance Report

4.1 The report of the Head of Legal Services was received by Members and taken as read.

Appointment of a new Chair

4.2 Members paid tribute to the Chairman and thanked him for his hard work during his time as Chairman of the Board.

4.3 Members highlighted the importance of this appointment at a crucial time for TfN. Members agreed that Cllr Gittins should become interim Chair of the Board whilst the recruitment process for a new independent Chair was taking place, Members also discussed the possibility of a prominent independent Chair being appointed without the need for a recruitment process.

4.4 In summing up the Chairman explained that Members were keen to appoint an Independent Chair with the General Purposes Committee Members' Working Group considering the recruitment process.

Formal Meetings

4.5 Cllr Gittins highlighted the Government consultation on virtual meetings and suggested that this is something that Transport for the North should contribute to. The Head of Legal Services confirmed that Transport for the North is in the process of responding.

4.6 Regarding the meeting in July Mayor Burnham highlighted the current Government advice with regards to travel in certain areas of the North. He requested that the situation be kept under review before a decision is made. Members agreed with Mayor Burnham and stated that it should only be done if safe to do so.

4.7 Members expressed concern on the impact to democracy if all Members were unable to be present at face to face meetings due to Covid related issues.

Members were keen that arrangements should be put in place enabling those who cannot attend to have their views heard. The possibility of hybrid meetings was also discussed.

- 4.8 Mayor Driscoll suggested the possibility of meetings rotating around the North of England.

The Chairman explained that this had happened in the past but that subsequently Members decided that meetings should take place either side of the Pennines on an alternate basis in order to save on Member travel time. However, he explained if there is an appetite amongst Members to go to different locations in the North then this could be considered.

- 4.9 The Chairman stated that a final decision on the July Board meeting would not be made until the situation had become clearer.

He explained to Members that when the Government ended the ability of statutory bodies who need to meet in public to have virtual meetings this prevented the continuation of the Board being able to meet virtually with Members being able to vote at these meetings as has been done since the start of the pandemic. He expressed the opinion that in the future hybrid meetings would probably be the best way to maintain some of what has been in place, with Members who are unable to be present being able to speak although being unable to participate in any formal votes.

The Chairman stated that the Head of Legal Services has a mandate to find the best solution to allow the greatest number of Board Members to contribute to the fullest effect.

- 4.10 Regarding the General Purposes Committee (GPC) the Chairman commented that this had already been addressed and that the proposal is that the Members' Working Group on the GPC would also pursue the proposals on the Chair roles and whether any changes would be required to the Constitution to facilitate hybrid meetings.

Resolved:

Appointment of Chair

- 1 Members noted the report and advised the Chief Executive that they wished to pursue proposals to recruit and appoint an independent Chair of the Partnership Board through the Members' Working Group on the GPC Members' Working Group.
- 2 As Members wished to recruit an independent person they authorised the Director of Business Capabilities to work with the Members' Working Group on the GPC to draw up recruitment proposals.
- 3 Members noted that a report on this matter will be presented to the TfN Board at a future meeting.

Arrangements for Meetings

- 4 Members received the information and approved further investigation into the options available for a return to in person attendance at Board and Committee Meetings
- 5 Members discussed the options available for different ways of working so as to maximise the use of virtual meetings where possible.
- 6 Members requested that the Members Working Group set up to look at the General Purposes Committee also look at new ways of working following the ending of the virtual meetings provisions and noted that a report will be presented to the Board on any proposed amendments to the Constitution.

Review of the General Purposes Committee

- 7 Members received the information and agree to widen the remit of the Members' Working Group to include other governance issues as mentioned in the report.

5. Financial Outturn 2020/21

- 5.1 The report of the Finance Director was received by Members which was taken as read. Members had no questions on the paper.

Resolved:

That the Board notes the outturn position for 2020/21 and the potential for accommodating slippage from 2020/21 into the revised forecast for 2021/22.

6. Spending Review Planning

- 6.1 The report of the Strategy and Programme Director was received by Members. The Strategy and Programme Director informed Members that further reports on this would be brought to the 27 July 2021 and September 2021 Boards.

He explained that due to timing and uncertainty the report recommends starting now which will also allow for a fuller discussion at the 27 July 2021 Board.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Board note the likely timing of SR21 and the need to commence preparatory work in June.
- 2) That the Board agree the high-level approach outlined in section 4 of the report.

7. Government White Paper - Great British Railways: The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail

7.1 The Chairman moved this item to the end of the agenda in order that the Chief of Staff from Network Rail could update Members.

7.2 Members received the report from the Strategic Rail Director. The interim Chief Executive then highlighted key areas of the report. He explained that there are points to welcome within it, particularly the creation of a single accountable guiding mind in Great British Railways, commitment to long term 30-year investment plans in rail infrastructure to support the levelling up agenda and recognition that local knowledge must be harnessed to provide the best outcomes. However he stated that further detail is required on devolution and the role of TfN and the fact that all the accountability sits with GB rail.

He explained that a letter has been sent to the Secretary of State making clear that TfN is an established organisation that can act as a statutory body that is representative of and based in the North of England. He further explained that TfN is in a unique position to make the Williams Shapps plan work quickly to the benefit of passengers and businesses.

The interim Chief Executive stated that a briefing for Members would be set up with Sir Peter Hendy or Andrew Haynes in the coming weeks.

The Interim Chief Executive explained that Mr. Anit Chandarana sees a strong role for TfN due the knowledge possessed in the organisation and the fact that TfN speaks with one voice. He highlighted the fact that Network Rail is split into two in the North and that TfN would like to see a single organisation within GB Rail with which TfN can interface. Mr Chandarana welcomed this and confirmed that further discussions will take place.

7.3 Mr. Chandarana stated that there would be a need for interim arrangements as GBR will not be legislated for until 2024. He explained that he envisages strong interaction and collaboration with various organisations as to what the interim arrangements will look like. He explained the Network Rail welcomes the white paper and it's right to bring industry and stakeholders together.

7.4 Members welcomed the report however Cllr Hale believes that there is as an existential threat to TfN in this. He also highlighted the issue of fairer fare prices and wanted to know what the ability would be to influence this.

7.5 Ben Smith stated that the DfT recognises the important and unique role that TfN can play in this providing a pan regional overview and allowing regions to come together and speak with one voice and wants to use knowledge and experience that exists within the Board.

- 7.6 Mayor Burnham stated that he would welcome TfNs involvement on any Advisory Board, however he believes that a plan should be developed for the North where TfN will work with constituent bodies to develop how Members aspirations can fit with running services across the North. He also suggested that there was a case for TfN to run the cross north services.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Board notes the White Paper, and its focus on addressing the problems caused by the past fragmentation of the railway industry;
- 2) That the Board seeks clarity from Government that the existing
- 3) That arrangements and statutory powers of Transport for the North are not proposed to be changed, and can therefore provide a strong building block for Transport for the North's future role;
- 4) That the Board approves the next steps set out in Section 5 of the report
- 5) That the Board agree that the executive team develop a more detailed Transport for the North response to the Williams-Shapps Plan over the next 3 months, taking the form of a case for change towards a more fully-devolved pan-Northern network. This would build on the recommendations in the White Paper and the commitment to local control cited therein and incorporate feedback already obtained from Transport for the North's partners regarding their ideal scenario for how the railway will evolve in the North over the next 30 years.

8. Manchester Recovery Task Force

- 8.1 Members received the report from the Strategic Rail Director. The interim Chief Executive then highlighted key areas of the report. Following which he invited Mr. Richard George to address the Board. The interim Chief Executive explained that Mr. George would be crucial in being able to break the log jams due to his extensive experience of timetabling and the rail network.
- 8.2 Mr. George stated that he is happy to help and highlighted that he believed the position is similar to where things were in 2018. He stated that he will do whatever he can do to help.
- 8.3 Mayor Burnham stated that the approach from TfN has been vindicated and it makes the case for TfN as we wouldn't be in this position if it wasn't for the fact that TfN were able to intervene with May 2022 originally proposed timetable changes being considered following TfNs suggestion. Mayor Burnham was grateful for the support of other Members at the exceptional meeting of NTAC.

He highlighted the necessity to continue to maintain the pressure on this and continue to be tough on what is being requested even though progress has been made. He highlighted the importance of IRP in this.

- 8.4 The interim Chief Executive explained that an agreement has been made with the DfT that TfN can attend NTAC meetings where the Manchester Recovery Task force is being discussed.

He explained that there needs to be an understanding of how the Transpennine Route Upgrade, HS2, and NPR all integrate. He further stated that Manchester needs to be fixed. He stated that the baking in of the TfN analytical work and regional knowledge would help to move things at pace. He explained that all options remain on the table including platforms 15 & 16 at Manchester Piccadilly.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Board notes the report setting out the current position on services and infrastructure in and around Central Manchester.
- 2) That the Board notes the actions taken by Transport for the North and the proposed pathway to a resolution.

9. Northern Powerhouse Rail - Integrated Rail Plan Update and Programme for Strategic Outline Case Submission

- 9.1 Members received the report from Head of NPR Business Case Development. The Interim Chief Executive then highlighted the key areas of the report. He further added that he hopes that the Government will publish the IRP before summer recess as he believes this is vital, as delays in publication will cause delays to the Transpennine Route Upgrade, HS2 and NPR which will in turn will cause delay to growing the economy of Northern England, and the creation of more, better paid jobs for people to access and help support the creation of an extra £14.4 billion GVA each year by 2060 helping Level up the UK .
- 9.2 Members expressed their concerns about the delay in the publication of the IRP and questioned how pressure could be applied to the Government in order to speed things up.
- 9.3 Mayor Burnham highlighted the 30% benefits figure for the TfN preferred network. He believes that this figure reinforces the need for ambition. He questioned whether the same modelling should also be applied to the whole HS2 NPR interface in the North of England. He believed that if this modelling is accepted then it justifies the higher level of spending.
- 9.4 Referring to the March Board, where Members were informed that the Strategic Outline Case would not be submitted, the Chairman reminded Members that the Board made two commitments. They committed to keep the pressure on the Government to publish the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) as well as committing to continue with the work to produce the evidence to make the strongest possible case. He highlighted that this has produced new encouraging information allowing for the strongest possible case to be made.

- 9.5 The interim Chief Executive explained that the Government are hopeful that the IRP will be before summer recess and requested that Members should continue to push Government on its publication. Members were assured that it was not the DfT who were holding up its publication.

In relation to NORMS he explained that it had not been fully accepted and hoped that it would be by the end of June 2021 but the DfT have not expressed any significant concerns and that this will be approved. He highlighted that three years ago the NPR network had a cost of £80 billion (network) with a BCR of just 0.1, currently the TfN Members preferred network would cost circa £42 billion with a BCR around 1. He stated that the IRP delay has been helpful to this point as it has allowed the completion of the modelling iteration 2 driving the benefits increase. TfN would like to deliver SOC by the end of the year.

Resolved:

- 1) That Members Note progress on implementing the agreed scope of work for FY21/22, model development and the Strategic Outline Case.
- 2) That Members note the plan to review and respond to the IRP.