

Transport for the North Board Minutes

**24 November 2021
The Queens Hotel, Leeds**

Present:

Attendee

Cllr Louise Gittins (Chair)
Cllr Phil Riley
Cllr Craig Browne
Cllr Keith Little
Cllr David Tucker
Mayor Andy Burnham

Cllr Daren Hale
Cllr Charles Edwards
Mayor Steve Rotheram
Cllr Martin Gannon
Cllr Stewart Swinburn
Mayor Jamie Driscoll
Cllr Don Mackenzie
Mayor Dan Jarvis

Cllr Hans Mundry
Mayor Tracy Brabin
Cllr Andy D'Agorne

Local Authority

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

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Attendees

Steve Curl
Mark Roberts
Matthew Lamb
Peter Kennan

Cumbria LEP
Leeds LEP
North Yorkshire LEP
Sheffield City Region LEP

Partners in Attendance:

Nick Bisson
Ben Smith
Nick Harris
Graham Botham

Department for Transport
Department for Transport
Highways England
Network Rail

Officers in Attendance:

Name	Job Title
Martin Tugwell	Chief Executive
Gary Rich	Democratic Services Officer
Iain Craven	Finance Director
Tim Foster	Interim Strategy & Programme Director
Julie Openshaw	Head of Legal
Peter Molyneux	Major Roads Director
Owen Wilson	Major Roads Strategy Manager
Tim Wood	Northern Powerhouse Rail Director
Peter Cole	Principal Environment and Sustainability Officer
David Hoggarth	Strategic Rail Director

Item No:

1. Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Members. Apologies were noted from Cllrs Williams, Brooks, Waltham and Hannigan.
- 1.2 The Chair noted the letter which Board Members had received from UNISON prior to the meeting expressing concern about the Integrated Rail Plan and the impact this may have on Transport for the North staff.
- 1.3 On behalf of Cllr Browne the Chair highlighted that a number of Constituent Authorities have submitted bids to become the Headquarters of Great British Railways (GBR). The Chair wished all such authorities luck with their bids.

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 of the Transport for the North Board held on 29 September 2021 were considered. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Browne and seconded by Cllr Edwards.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Transport for the North Board held on 29 September 2021, be approved as a correct record.

4. Integrated Rail Plan Review and Response Plan

- 4.1 Members received the report, presentation and position update from the Northern Powerhouse Rail Director and Interim Strategy and Programme Director.

The Interim Strategy and Programme Director provided an overview of the implications the IRP will have on connectivity and the economy and the NPR Director updated Members on the implications of IRP for NPR and the preferred network.

- 4.2 Members expressed their anger and disappointment with the Integrated Rail Plan and questioned the Government's commitment to levelling up the North of England. Members explained the impact that the IRP will have on the communities they represent in particular noting how the IRP proposals failed to deliver the step change in connectivity that was required to realise the North's economic potential.

- 4.3 Whilst the proposals in the IRP have implications for the majority of Constituent Authorities, Members were particularly keen to highlight the adverse effects that it will have in West Yorkshire, with no new station in Bradford and the consequent impact this will have on the economy of the area and for the people of Bradford. Mayor Brabin was particularly concerned that the failure to include the Board's proposal for a new line connecting Manchester, Bradford and Leeds was a missed opportunity that would constrain opportunities across West Yorkshire and beyond.

Members were also concerned that the IRP proposals missed opportunities to deliver the step-change in access to/from Hull, the North East and South Yorkshire, all of which had been integral to the network-based approach that underpinned the Board's proposal for NPR. Mayor Jarvis was concerned about the lack of certainty regarding connectivity to/from Sheffield arising from the IRP proposals, whilst Cllrs Heather Scott and Darren Hale both highlighted the failure of the IRP to properly reflect the need for improved access to the freeports in their areas.

- 4.4 Cllrs Mackenzie and Swinburn highlighted some benefits that the IRP brings to the North for their respective areas including reduce journey times across the country for North Yorkshire.

- 4.5 All Members expressed concern as to the changed role that Transport for the North would play as the IRP proposals were taken forward. Members highlighted how TfN had played a key role in the development of the Board's preferred proposal, in particular challenging costs. Members sought clarity as to what the change from Co-client to Co-sponsor would mean for the organisation.

On this issue Cllr Edwards urged the Co-sponsor role to be defined.

Mr. Nick Bisson stated that the Department recognised the need to work with TfN to define the co-sponsor role.

- 4.6 In tabling a Motion to the meeting, Mayor Burnham explained that as a Board the priority was about achieving a step-change in connectivity: both East – West and North-South. He highlighted that what the IRP proposals offer in terms of this connectivity is not good enough and he proposed that the Board should continue to press the need for a better deal. He explained that the proposals in the IRP failed the three key tests of additional capacity, improved connectivity, and minimizing disruption.

Mayor Burnham argued that the Board should continue to make the case for the longer-term ambition that underpins the Board's preferred approach. He suggested that the Board should explore, with the Secretary of State, opportunities to secure additional, local contributions towards the cost of the Board's preferred approach. He explained that land value capture might be one option in this regards that could potentially be captured to be used as contributing funding.

- 4.7 Responding to Members' concerns Mr. Nick Bisson reflected on some of the points raised by Members including the issue of timing of delivery, the £200 million funding identified in relation to the Leeds to Sheffield study and mass transit, the improvements in Liverpool journey times, the benefit of the Crewe North connection and issues relating to the North East and South Yorkshire.

Additionally, in responding to Members concerns that certain areas had been struck out of the IRP Mr. Bisson explained that this is just a start of the programme and there is a potential that more investment may follow.

In response, Mayor Rotherham requested that the evidence base behind the IRP be published as a matter of urgency so that a full assessment could be completed.

- 4.8 Mayor Burnham requested clarity from the Chief Executive on the Board endorsing TfN's role as Co-sponsor at the January 2021 Board meeting.

The Chief Executive confirmed that a discussion was had on the options and variety on the potential mechanisms, but the Board had not resolved that co-sponsorship was the preferred way forward.

- 4.9 Members unanimously agreed the following motion:

This Board notes:

- The publication of the Government's Integrated Rail Plan and the announcement of associated investment;
- That the proposals breach the commitments Government had previously made on Northern Powerhouse Rail, and differ from this Board's preferred option, as set out in statutory advice to the Department for Transport.

This Board recognises:

- That the Government acknowledges connectivity East to West is not only about speed but capacity and connection between towns as well as cities;
- That in failing to deal with the infrastructure constraints, particularly around Leeds and Manchester, the plan is the wrong solution for the whole of the North and does not deliver the long-term transformation required to level up the North's economy;
- That the proposals would present significant operational performance risks with intercity, regional, local, and freight services competing for capacity on critical sections of shared infrastructure across the North;
- That TfN's preferred option for Northern Powerhouse Rail would provide up to 12 fast trains per hour between Leeds and Manchester, compared to 8 through the upgrade option in the Integrated Rail Plan;
- That disruption caused to passengers, freight and the economy by upgrading lines is likely to be more significant than for the construction of new lines;
- That Bradford is the seventh largest local authority area in England by population and its residents currently have no direct rail access to Liverpool, Sheffield, Newcastle, Hull or Manchester Airport;
- The importance of Liverpool as a key destination for business and tourism and the insufficient capacity at Liverpool Lime Street Station to support the desired levels of service;
- That the re-opening of the mothballed Leamside line (TfN's preferred option for NPR) would remove the current constraints of six trains per hour on the East Coast Main Line
- The importance of improving connectivity on strategic corridors between Sheffield and Leeds; Sheffield and Manchester; Sheffield and Hull, and Leeds and Hull.
- That there is a need to ensure the city of Hull and East Riding are reconnected to the Transpennine mainline and plans for electrification are reinstated as part of improved East West decarbonised freight and passenger connectivity.

4.10 The Chair thanked all Members: she reflected that it was clear from the debate the depth and strength of feelings across the North in response to the publication of the IRP.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Chair of Transport for the North writes to the Secretary of State for Transport asking him to explore with Transport for the North funding options for the delivery of the preferred Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Funding options could include local contributions, including through harnessing local economic benefits.

- 2) That the Chief Executive of Transport for the North prepares a report to the Board on the impact the Integrated Rail Plan will have on the North's economic and decarbonisation ambitions.

5. Budget Revision 2

- 5.1 Members received the report from the Finance Director who highlighted the key aspects of the report before inviting comments and questions from Members.

Resolved:

- 1) That the financial performance in the seven-month period to October 2021 be noted;
- 2) That the Revision 2 Budget be approved;
- 3) That the submission for incremental grant be noted and that the budget may need to be increased once the additional funding request to DfT has been confirmed;
- 4) That the compliance with Treasury Management Strategy be noted;
- 5) That the proposal to continue to opt in to the PSAA regime through which TfN's external auditors are appointed and approved.

6. Business Planning Update

- 6.1 Members received the report from the Finance Director who highlighted the key aspects of the report before inviting comments and questions from Members. Publication of the Integrated Rail Plan was noted as a development, but it was also noted that core funding will not be known until January.
- 6.2 Mr. Ben Smith stated that the DfT recognised the challenges faced by TfN in relation to this matter and indicated his team would work as quickly as possible to resolve these uncertainties .

Resolved:

That the Board notes the challenges and approach to the 2022/23 Business Planning process.

7. Approval of the Decarbonisation Strategy

- 7.1 Members received the report and the presentation from the Principal Environment and Sustainability Officer who highlighted the key changes to the Strategy following the comments received in response to the consultation on the draft Strategy.

- 7.2 Members were supportive of the report and the updated Strategy with the Chair also supportive of the actions described within the Strategy, some of which are already under way. Members continued to voice concern about the high amount car usage.
- 7.3 Mr. Steve Curl raised the issue of carbon in Cumbria with 50% of all carbon emissions in the area created by visitors. He supported the Strategy and requested the help of TfN to help Cumbria hit its own net-zero target date of 2037.
- 7.4 Members were keen to emphasise the importance of this work and believe that the Strategy demonstrates the valuable work undertaken by TfN. In particular, Cllr Edwards welcomed the Strategy as demonstration of TfN's purpose added value – ambitious and collegiate. Cllr Edwards requested that the Department should take this report as inspiration as evidence when looking at the funding for TfN.
- 7.5 The Chair requested a summary version of the strategy be made available to the public. The Principal Environment and Sustainability Officer confirmed that an 'at a glance' version of the Strategy would be produced and made available.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Board endorses the updates to the strategy following the public consultation;
- 2) That the Board approves the Decarbonisation Strategy;
- 3) That regular update reports be brought back to the Board.

8. Major Roads Report

- 8.1 Members received the Major Roads Report from the Major Roads Strategy Manager who highlighted the key aspects of the report before taking questions and comments.
- 8.2 Members discussed the issues of active travel and freight, noting that these illustrated the key role that roads have to play in supporting the North.
- 8.3 Mayor Driscoll highlighted the importance of the road network and particularly how vital it is for people of limited mobility. On the issue of improving congestion, he suggested that road schemes need to be viewed from the perspective of how they can be improved to support local bus services.
- 8.4 Cllr Riley commented on pricing policy on public transport and how this impacts on the decision making of the public when choosing their mode of travel.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Board approves the publication of the Major Roads Report;
- 2) That the Board notes the comments of the Scrutiny Committee and the questions raised by Mr. Rae.

9. Rail Reforms

- 9.1 Members received the report from the Strategic Rail Director who highlighted the key areas of the report before taking questions and comments from Members.
- 9.2 Mr. Peter Kennan requested that the recommendations be amended to be explicit about the need to work with the LEPs. The Chair agreed with Mr. Kennan that this should be included.
- 9.3 Cllr Edwards suggested the TfN should be a “test pilot” for developing an approach that strengthens the role of regional and local partners as part of the rail reforms.
- 9.4 Cllr Browne emphasised the importance of the Great British Railways Head Office being located in the North.

Resolved:

- 1) That Board notes the progress on working with the industry on implementing the Rail White Paper in the North;
- 2) That Board endorses the approach set out in the report.
- 3) That Officers are mandated to engage with Great British Railways (GBR) Transition Team, Mayoral Combined Authorities, Local Transport Authorities and LEPs to work collaboratively on developing the proposals;
- 4) That Members support the case for locating the new Headquarters for Great British Railways in the North;

10. Appointment of the Transport for the North Board and Partnership Board Chair

- 10.1 Members received the report from the Director of Business Capabilities and the Chair outlined the current position following the first interviews.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Board notes the current position and next steps with regard to the recruitment process;
- 2) That the Board notes that a report will be presented to the January TfN Board meeting with a recommended preferred candidate for appointment.

11. Governance Report

- 11.1 Members received the report from the Head of Legal Services who outlined the key points within the report.

- 11.2 On the issue of the Membership of the Rail North Committee Cllr Hale confirmed that option two is the preferred option of the Humber Leaders.
- 11.3 Mayor Rotheram commented on meeting locations and the difficulty of travelling to certain locations from Liverpool and Hull.

Resolved:

- 1) That the nominees for the General Purposes Committee as set out in Appendix 1 with the addition of Cllr Laura Crane of Cheshire East as the Cheshire & Warrington Regional Group representative be appointed and Cllr Crane replaces Cllr Corcoran as the Substitute Board member for Cheshire East;
- 2) That as no nominees for the vacancy on the Audit and Governance Committee were received, this position remains vacant;
- 3) That the waiver of the Terms of Reference in respect of the Chair of the Partnership Board currently in place continues until such time as the Board may resolve to the contrary at a future meeting;
- 4) That Appendix 12 of the Constitution as currently reproduced be replaced with the Code of Conduct published by the Cabinet Office in November 2019;
- 5) That Board agrees in principle subject to compliance with health and safety considerations to hold 4 meetings per annum, one in person at a Manchester venue, one in person at a Leeds venue, with the other two meetings held as Chief Executive Consultation calls and any additional meetings convened if required by circumstances;
- 6) That following the request from the four Leaders of the Humber authorities Board agrees to amend the membership of Rail North Committee to allow the Humber Region two representatives, one from the North of the Humber and one from the South of the Humber, each holding the weighted votes currently attributable to those areas in the event of a vote taking place, and delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer, having consulted with the Chief Executive, to make the necessary consequential changes to the Constitution.