

Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Thursday 10 March 2022
Hilton Leeds City, Neville Street, Leeds, LS1 4BX

Present:

Attendee	Local Authority
Cllr Paul Haslam	North Yorkshire;
Cllr David O'Hara	Blackpool;
Cllr Andrew Cooper	Cheshire West & Chester;
Cllr Neil Hughes	Cumbria;
Cllr Sean Chaytor	Hull;
Cllr Matthew Salter	Lancashire;
Cllr Manisha Kaushik	West Yorkshire Combined Authority;
Cllr Stephen Fenton	York;

Officers in Attendance:

Name	Job Title
Lucy Jacques	Acting Head of Policy and Strategy
Gary Rich	Democratic Services Officer
Matt Smallwood	Head of Digital Strategy
Paul Kelly	Interim Finance Director
Tim Foster	Interim Strategy & Programme Director
Rosemary Lyon	Legal and Democratic Services Officer
Owen Wilson	Major Roads Strategy Manager
Tim Wood	Northern Powerhouse Rail Director
Simon McGlone	Senior Planning and Strategy Officer
Manjit Dhillon	Senior Solicitor

Item No: Item

1. Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all in attendance and informed Members that the meeting is being streamed live. Apologies were received from Cllr Jones, Cllr Parish, Cllr Mitchell and Cllr Shorrocks.

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 4 November 2021 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Kaushik and seconded by Cllr Salter.
- 3.2 The minutes of the meeting 12 January 2022 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Kaushik and seconded by Cllr Hughes.

Resolved:

- 1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2022 be approved as a true and accurate record.
- 2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2021 be approved as a true and accurate record.
- 3.3 The committee was then addressed by the Northern Powerhouse Rail Director at his final meeting.

4. 2022/23 Budget and Business Planning

- 4.1 Members received the report from the Interim Finance Director who highlighted the key points in the report.
- 4.2 The Chair sought clarity on staffing reductions and asked about support available to staff./The Interim Finance Director explained that the Business plan would need to be set before the staffing situation could be looked at. The Committee was informed that staff have been invited to consider whether they wish to apply for voluntary redundancy.
- 4.3 Cllr Salter enquired about the criteria that Transport for the North would be judged against in the future when decisions are made by Government on funding. He also enquired as to whether inflation had been taken into account with the figures within the report.

The Interim Finance Director explained that there had been no clear targets set around future funding, and on the issue of inflation, he stated that this had been factored in where the organisation had been able to do so.

- 4.4 Cllr Hughes raised the issues of co-Sponsorship of the NPR programme and the impact of the loss of funding for the Northern Infrastructure pipeline and the impact these will have on TfN.

The Interim Finance Director explained that the co-sponsorship role is being worked on between the Department and TfN. Regarding the pipeline funding the Interim Programme and Strategy Director explained that this is not core funding and has been put in place in order to support

local authority schemes. He explained that had the funding remained then it would have built on TfN's strengths and capabilities and allowed the organisation to support local authorities' scheme developments.

- 4.5 Cllr Cooper asked if TfN would be able to fulfil its statutory obligation with the current funding levels across the whole of the North. The Interim Finance Director commented that it would, and it will be looking to explore what can be achieved within the current funding levels, with the Chief Executive keen to work closely with partners to explore opportunities.
- 4.6 Cllr Chaytor expressed his disappointment at the lack of funding for the North and sympathised with officers who are now unable to deliver a first class transport system for the North./Responding to Cllr Chaytor the Chair stated that there is still a lot in the budget but expressed his concerns as to how effectively TfN would be able to operate with the current level of funding.
- 4.7 The Chair expressed concern that reports received by the Committee lack quantitative data; in future he would like to see metrics, units of measure, and the ambition of TfN as well as tables, charts and graphs included in reports to make them more effective.
- 4.8 The Chair requested that the June report to Committee include reference as to how staffing resources will be managed and that any reduction in staffing be managed sympathetically. He also requested that the report include the criteria that TfN will be measured against in order that resources can be managed accordingly. Further to this he stated that the Committee would also like to see the priority aspirations for the organisation, any risk and their full assessment, the statutory functions of TfN and the co-sponsorship role and what it involves included in the report.

Resolved:

- 1) That the funding position for 2022/23 and the impact that that will have on TfN's ability to undertake its intended programme of activity be noted.
- 2) That the objectives set out in paragraphs 4.3 – 4.8 of the report as the basis for business planning be noted.
- 3) That the Committee notes the process by which TfN will proceed to a business plan and budget for 2022/23, in particular the intention to adopt an Interim Budget on 30 March.
- 4) That the Committee notes the cost control measures proposed to safeguard TfN reserves until such time as the objectives for 2022/23, and the Interim Budget are approved.

5. Strategic Transport Plan Policy Development - International Connectivity & Rural Mobility policies

5.1 Members received the report from the Acting Head of Policy and Strategy who highlighted the key areas of each policy.

5.2 On the Rural Mobility policy Cllr Fenton referred to the Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPS) and asked what had been gleaned from the plans submitted from Local Transport Authorities.

The Acting Head of Policy and Strategy explained that an initial review has been undertaken on those that have been submitted, and delivery plans are being developed with the DfT as well as work taking place to establish TfN's role in this.

The Major Roads Strategy Manager explained that the analytical framework is being used and that he anticipated that the Bus network would be included in this framework. He further explained that the outputs would be used to support local authorities with their BSIPS. He hoped that in the next 12 months there would be three or four case studies with local authorities in the North.

5.3 Cllr Salter enquired about the selection process for choosing case studies. He also raised the issue of rural isolation.

The Acting Head of Policy and Strategy stated that she would circulate a response to the Committee regarding the selection process for the case studies. On rural isolation and deprivation she referred to the Transport Related Social Exclusion work that has been undertaken which has strengthened the evidence base, and the policy can build on this base. Further work will be required once the policy has been published.

5.4 Members commented on rising costs and how the strategy will be able to deal with this and the need for better public transport.

5.5 The Acting Head of Policy and Strategy addressed the International Connectivity policy and emphasised that this policy is currently only for noting and comment and not for approval. She stressed that the policy is not an aviation policy, rather an International Connectivity policy. She noted that a number of questions had been received from Mr. Anthony Rae on this matter prior to the Committee and that she has responded to Mr. Rae. Mr. Rae stated he was content with the information that he had received.

5.6 The Chair suggested that rather than a "rail first" policy there should be a "public transport first" policy. Regarding the visitor economy he stated that it is important to have the right people involved. He also suggested that scales should be included in the policy such as the amount of freight and passengers passing through ports.

- 5.7 Cllr Salter suggested that the policy should include references to carbon offsetting and sequestration.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

6. Integrated Rail Plan Update

- 6.1 Members received the update report from the Interim Programme and Policy Director who highlighted the key points.
- 6.2 Cllr Chaytor suggested that the report be noted until the Select Committee reports back on its findings.
- 6.3 The Chair noted the Committee's concerns about the co-sponsorship arrangements and stated that the voice of the North needs to be heard. He added that the Committee needs to understand how comprehensive the analytical support is and requested that the report be brought back to the Committee following the findings of the Select Committee.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

7. Approval of the Freight and Logistics Strategy

- 7.1 Members requested more time to review the strategy and asked for Consultation call on this item prior to Board.

Resolved:

That a Consultation Call be set up prior to the Transport for the North Board for Members to discuss this item.

8. Setting the Scope & Objectives of the Northern Digital Mobility Strategy

- 8.1 Members received the report and presentation from the Head of Digital Strategy who highlighted the key issues in the report.
- 8.2 Cllr Fenton was supportive of adding value and not seeking to duplicate practice. He stated that he would be keen for this to be used for the tourist and visitor economy and commented on micro mobility.
- 8.3 Cllr Salter suggested the inclusion of modes of transport such as ferries and added that once in place, in order to get public support, this needs to be as visible as possible.
- 8.4 Cllr Cooper asked how this proposal fits in with the work of the DfT and whether non Mayoral authorities would have the same powers.

The Head of Digital Strategy stated that there is work on going with the Department on contactless ticketing on bus and rail, and that TfN's priorities are understanding it at a local level and allowing for engagement with it. Regarding local authorities' powers on ticketing he explained that they do have powers on ticketing and one of TfN's statutory powers was being able to create a statutory ticketing scheme.

- 8.5 The Chair asked about the adoption of the London scheme in the North and wanted to establish the 'pain points' for the customer and local authorities. He also suggested that this work should start in non-Mayoral authorities.

The Head of Digital Strategy explained that the London system is expensive and not necessarily suitable for the North; however, the core pillars are useable. With regard to the 'pain points' for passengers he believes these are around accessibility and education on existing ticketing systems whilst for local authorities it is duplication of systems.

- 8.6 The Chair stated that the Committee welcomes 'frictionless' payment for travel but needs to go beyond buses and trains and needs to be fully interchangeable.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Framework Update

- 9.1 Members received the report and presentation from the Senior Planning and Strategy Officer.
- 9.2 The Chair requested further information as to how this will be dealt with in rural areas and raised the issue of broken-down charging points. He suggested that a smart solution may be required for their repair.

The Senior Planning and Strategy Officer stated that TfN's evidence indicates the potential requirement for charging points in all area types of the North of England, whether that's rural, urban or coastal areas. This allows TfN to articulate a whole network view of need, which is key for effective public planning and delivery but also encouraging private investment in all areas of the region.

- 9.3 Cllr Cooper suggested that the focus should be on charging points at home and at the office, rather than "en route" charging. He also asked about standards for maintenance of charging points.

The Senior Planning and Strategy Officer explained that that a mixture of charging categories are needed to support an effective and holistic network of charging for the user. TfN's evidence points to a large need for public residential charging, to meet anticipated user patterns and

demands, but also the needs identified for those without driveways. He further explained that they have looked at the locations of rapid charging. He stated that a mixture of charging categories can allow for efficiency gains as the more that vehicles are linked to the electricity grid, the more efficient the system of electricity transmission and use becomes. This will also have a positive impact on decarbonisation. With regard to standards of maintenance, the policy does not do enough on this currently; he explained that the National EV Strategy is due to be released soon and expects this to go some way to addressing the issue.

- 9.4 Cllr Salter raised the issue of applications for funding for charging points in rural areas and suggested that such opportunities could be made more visible. He also enquired as to whether any similar work will be taking place around hydrogen vehicles.

On the hydrogen question the Senior Planning and Strategy Officer explained that TfN is undertaking a separate programme of work, in partnership with other organisations across the North, to develop similar evidence for Hydrogen refueling infrastructure. TfN will look to join these elements up where appropriate in future phases of work. In relation to funding opportunities, he explained that there are a number of funding pots, and TfN's regional EV Steering Group could be a useful mechanism to support planning and delivery of these more.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.