

Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Wednesday 23 November 2022

**The Carriageworks Theatre, The Electric Press, 3 Millennium Square,
Leeds, LS2 3AD**

Present:

Attendee	Local Authority
Cllr Paul Haslam	North Yorkshire;
Cllr David O'Hara	Blackpool;
Cllr Neil Hughes	Cumbria;
Cllr Rhys Furley	Hull;
Cllr Matthew Salter	Lancashire;
Cllr Damian O'Connor	Liverpool City Region;
Cllr Oliver Freeston	North East Lincolnshire;
Cllr John Davison	North Lincolnshire;
Cllr Robert Frost	South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority;
Cllr Steve Parish	Warrington;

Officers in Attendance:

Name	Job Title
Gary Rich	Democratic Services Officer
Julie Openshaw	Head of Legal
Lucy Jacques	Interim Head of Policy
Brian Sloan	Research Manager
David Hoggarth	Strategic Rail Director
Tim Foster	Interim Strategy & Programme Director

Item No: Item

1 Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all in attendance and advised Members that the meeting is being recorded and will be put on the website following the meeting.
- 1.2 Members were informed that this meeting is now the Annual Meeting as a result of the previous meeting being cancelled. He explained that a further meeting will not needed to be added at this time unless Members feel that it is necessary as constitutionally this is not required.
- 1.3 Apologies were received from Cllrs Shorrock, Hammond and Kaushik.

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 15 June 2022 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. The minutes were passed by Members subject to the correction in spelling of Golborne.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2022 be approved as a true and accurate record.

4 Appointment of the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Scrutiny Committee

4.1 The Head of Legal requested nominations for the position of Chair of Scrutiny. Cllr Parish proposed Cllr Haslam and this was seconded by Cllr O'Hara. Members unanimously voted to elect Cllr Haslam as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

4.2 The Head of Legal informed the Committee that Cllr Kaushik (Majority Party Vice Chair) and Cllr Hughes (Minority Party Vice Chair) wished to continue in their current roles. Both Members stood unopposed.

4.3 Cllr Hughes requested that the item on Socially Inclusive Transport which was on the cancelled September agenda be included on the March agenda.

Resolved:

- 1) That Cllr Haslam be appointed as Chair of the Transport for the North Scrutiny Committee
- 2) That Cllr Kaushik be appointed as Majority Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
- 3) That Cllr Hughes be appointed as Minority Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

5 Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER) Update

5.1 Members received the report and presentation from the Research Manager who highlighted the key points in his presentation.

5.2 Cllr Hughes requested clarity on who is leading on Northern Powerhouse as well as asking if a return to the Single Market will make a difference to the productivity gap between the North and South.

The Research Manager explained that delivery of the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER) is the sole responsibility of TfN. He explained that TfN are joint commissioners of this work together with the NP11, and TfN are working alongside partners in the North. In response to the broader question as to who owns the Northern Powerhouse agenda the Interim Strategy and Programme Director explained that this is still unknown.

In response to the question on Freedom of Movement the Research Manager stated that as part of the Transformational scenario there would need to be many hundreds of thousands of additional jobs and where those jobs need to come from would require further discussions with partners.

- 5.3 Cllr Furley enquired as to the time span that the data had been collected over.

The Research Manager explained that the data is the latest available. He stated that different indicators have different time spans with the Labour Market data having been gathered in recent months and other data being older. He further explained that the data includes the impact of the pandemic meaning a weaker starting point in terms of productivity.

Cllr Furley further asked if the projection of growth each year will continue to happen even with the current financial situation, allowing the North to eventually match the rest of the country.

The Research Manager explained that the data presented used Cambridge's annual forecast for 2022 which was produced in March as a baseline. He explained that the work presented to the Committee is from the original baseline but this will be updated in the final published work and will reflect the weaknesses and downturn in the current economy.

- 5.4 Cllr Frost asked if the LEPs have been worked with and is the work they are doing been taken into account.

In response the Research Manager stated that the LEPs have been engaged with this programme. He explained that consultants held workshops with the 11 LEPs across the North with officers also in attendance, with the consultants reviewing the Strategic Economic Plans in each area. He stated that TfN intends to publish the Local Area Profiles which includes these plans in order to show the body of evidence that underpins how the scenarios have been developed. In relation to skills, he highlighted the importance of education and skills spending and stated it is about creating growth that is socially inclusive and decarbonises the economy.

- 5.5 Cllr O'Connor highlighted the importance of both care and retail sectors and enquired as to the type of high-end jobs being looked at to attract into the area.

The Research Manager explained that these jobs are in the prime and enabling sectors of the economy, and these perform well in the transformational scenario, amongst these there is jobs growth in the advanced manufacturing and energy sectors as well as investment in land transport.

He also highlighted the importance of the foundational economy (sectors which allow people to live their day to day lives) which includes things such as care and food production.

- 5.6 The Chair started that the report has given the Committee a complete background with regards to the economy across the North of England and requested that all Members receive the final presentation that will be sent to Board. He explained that this will allow Members to contribute some of the important information to their own authorities. He further stated that the North needs someone to take the lead on this together for the North.

Resolved:

That the Committee notes the update and the intention to brief TfN Board on the emerging conclusions in December.

6 Rail Update

- 6.1 Members received the report from the Strategic Rail Director who highlighted the key aspects of his report.

- 6.2 Cllr O'Hara enquired about how strong the budget will be for overall plan and whether this will also include the branch lines.

The Strategic Rail Director reassured the Committee that the TfN plan will encompass everything across the North. He explained that currently when budgets and funding are being looked at there has been an emphasis on looking at cost reduction and focusing on the largest passenger flows and revenues. He stated that this is a very narrow view. He further explained that the rail network contributes to the social inclusion policy and is more than just about creating revenue.

- 6.3 Members were informed that some work will be undertaken highlighting the role of rail in the North which will be available shortly. He stated that the Rail North Committee is concerned that there won't be enough money not only to support the existing services but future growth. He said that TfN wants to use its evidence base to argue the case that if there is investment in rail in the North there will be more revenue, which will, in turn, reduce the subsidy and deliver wider benefits.

- 6.4 Cllr Davison raised the issue that the report doesn't take into account the new dynamic of homeworking and this has affected both rail and road. He questioned the capability of Network Rail to deliver any plans due to their lack of signaling staff and engineers.
- 6.5 The Chair stated that he is a believer imperfect action and believes that we're currently stuck in a position of perfect inaction. He highlighted the reference to the 121 short term wins on reliability and suggested that the Committee Members should look at speaking with their MPs and ask them to take a Northern perspective on the railways.
- 6.6 Cllr Hughes hopes that TfN will continue to argue for modal shift. He also raised the issue of Double Devolution and requested further information on this. He stated that he hoped that TfN would continue lobbying for a stronger role and a proper budget.
- 6.7 On this issue of Double Devolution the Strategic Rail Director explained that TfN are able to set up Regional Business Units. He also highlighted TfN's powers to set fares and this can be used locally to integrate fares.
- 6.8 Cllr Salter expressed concern that rail might not recover post covid. On the issue of infrastructure, he stated that the Government needs to focus its investment on infrastructure in the North. He also questioned how involved TfN are in the Training Academy. A request was also made for an update on the current position with regards to Great British Rail (GBR). /In response to Cllr Salter the Strategic Rail Director explained that the current picture with regards to rail is mixed, whilst commuting numbers are low during the early and later parts of the week mid-week commuting numbers are higher with leisure and weekend rail travel back to 100% or more than pre Covid. He stated that going back to where things were pre covid is not the answer and there is now a need to be creative and to adapt to how things have changed.

Regarding the Training Academy he stated that TfN are involved in this through the Rail North Partnership and are working closely with Northern and are playing a strong co-ordinating role and exploring a funding package for it through the Rail North Partnership. On the issue of GBR the Strategic Rail Director stated that TfN are not clear on the current position and the legislation has been delayed.

- 6.9 Regarding the Training Academy Cllr Furley asked if a variety of jobs would be covered.

The Strategic Rail Director explained that the focus will initially be on drivers but this can be extended to other areas.

- 6.10 The Chair stated that the Centre of excellence for training is really important. He also highlighted climate change and the need for modal shift and the importance of trains in the decarbonisation agenda.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

7 Strategic Transport Plan Development

- 7.1 Members received the report from the Interim Head of Policy who highlighted the key elements of her report and presentation.
- 7.2 The Chair raised the issue of Combined Authorities commitments and stated that North Yorkshire will be required to have an area transport system comparable to Transport for London in 10 years and stated that the timelines of TfN and those of Combined Authorities are not aligned.

The Interim Head of Policy stated that when developing a strategic plan for a multitude of areas then there will be a challenge in marrying these different dates up. She stated that the STP is a long term vision and the 2050 end state has been widely agreed with partners and is considered critical to enabling a plan to be brought forward that is both aspirational but also intentional to set out longer term priorities beyond government political cycles. This is a critical to the argument regarding funding. She explained that as part of the STP2 objectives TfN are looking to set interim milestones for 2030 that complement the long term ambition but more clearly articulate where we need to be in the short – medium term.

The Chair requested that there be a recognition of the earlier dates that Combined Authorities have in order that credibility will not be with local partners. He suggested that within the policy TfN may wish to say that the policy for the Combined Authorities is different. The Interim Head of Policy agreed and explained it will be clear in the document that while STP2 sets the pan regional targets, local and combined authorities own plans and strategies will vary.

- 7.3 Cllr O'Hara asked how much the STP is linked into the development of local transport plans.

The Interim Head of Strategy stated that work has been taking place with officers and partners on this to make sure that these documents complement each other as integration between national, regional and local level is key to delivering the outcomes that everyone wants.

- 7.4 Cllr Davison made a number of points around the practicalities of transitioning away from the car in order to travel from A to B.

The Interim Head of Strategy was confident that Cllr Davison's points could be picked up in the final plan and explained there are a number of workstreams at TfN that explore this in more detail including the emerging work on Clean Mobility Visions, and suggested that the Committee might want to consider whether it should be considered on a future agenda.

- 7.5 Cllr Salter raised the issue of poor public transport in rural areas and provision of transport for younger and older people in rural areas.
- 7.6 The Chair stated that it is important that the permanent population is recognised in the bedrock of the plan. He also highlighted the infrastructure issues particularly those relating to energy should be included as this infrastructure is required in order to support the plans. He also stated that there needs to be a move towards imperfect action on this issue.

Resolved:

That the Committee is asked to note the report.

8 Transport and Health Policy Position

- 8.1 Members received the report from the Research Manager who highlighted the key points in his report and presentation.
- 8.2 Cllr Hughes stated that there is little mention of the impact that aircraft has on health and asked if it is the intention of TfN to do more work on this are.

The Research Manager stated that he would take this away.

- 8.3 The Chair stated that he would share this report with Public Health in his Authority as well as the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to get support for TfN and its ambition as he believes that this should save both lives and money.

Resolved:

That the Committee note the report.

9 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 2 March 2023
11am