

# Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Thursday 2 March 2023  
Virtual

## Present:

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>
Cllr Paul Haslam	North Yorkshire;
Cllr James Shorrock	Blackburn with Darwen;
Cllr David O'Hara	Blackpool;
Cllr Rod Fletcher	Cheshire East;
Cllr Andrew Cooper	Cheshire West & Chester;
Cllr Roger Jones	Greater Manchester Combined Authority;
Cllr Rhys Furley	Hull;
Cllr Matthew Salter	Lancashire;
Cllr Damian O'Connor	Liverpool City Region;
Cllr John Davison	North Lincolnshire;
Cllr Steve Parish	Warrington;
Cllr Manisha Kaushik	West Yorkshire Combined Authority;
Cllr Stephen Fenton	York;
Cllr Marshall	Greater Manchester Combined Authority;

## Officers in Attendance:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
Lucy Jacques	Acting Head of Policy and Strategy
Martin Tugwell	Chief Executive
Gary Rich	Democratic Services Officer
Paul Kelly	Finance Director
David Hoggarth	Head of Strategic Rail
Owen Wilson	Head of Major Roads
Tim Foster	Interim Strategy & Programme Director
Emma Young	Senior Solicitor
Katie Day	Strategy, Policy and Communications Director

## Item No:    Item

### 1        **Welcome & Apologies**

- 1.1        The Chair welcomed all in attendance and informed Members that the meeting was a Consultation Call and was being streamed live. Apologies were received from Cllr Hughes and Cllr Southward.

## **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 23 November 2022 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed.

### **Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022 be noted as a true and accurate record.

## **4 Budget and Business Plan 2023/24**

- 4.1 Members received the presentation of the Finance Director. The Chief Executive and Finance Director then highlighted the key points in their presentation.
- 4.2 Cllr Jones requested more information on the Centre of Excellence and its funding.

The Chief Executive explained that as well as the core funding Transport for the North has been granted an additional £700,000 for each of the next two years to develop its offer. He commented that the organisation is already a centre of excellence which has good quality data that is evidence-led with clear policy development and a strategy that flows from it. He added that the additional funding is an evolution of the current role rather than something new and was pleased to see that additional funding.

- 4.3 Regarding Great British Railways Transitions (GBRT) Cllr Fenton requested further information on the Northern Proposition and asked when there is likely to be an announcement on the location of the GBR Headquarters.

The Chief Executive replied that he has no information on when the announcement regarding the headquarters will be.

On the Northern Proposition he stated that across the North a degree of devolution is already in place through the Rail North Agreement provides a role for TfN alongside the DfT in overseeing delivery of the Northern and TransPennine contracts as well as allowing Transport for the North to establish sub-Regional Business Units.

He explained that a number of activities have been identified by the Rail North Partnership as opportunities going forward including taking account of revenue as well as costs when undertaking business planning and building on the stations as a place initiative. He then went on to

state his belief that there are some aspects of rail reforms that can be moved forward in the North at pace due to the devolution that exists.

Addressing the specific issue of the proposition he explained that work is taking place through a subgroup of Members to help develop a detailed proposition about utilising the opportunities created by GBR of having a single guiding mind for the rail industry and how Transport for the North would like this to work.

- 4.4 Cllr O'Hara asked about support for smaller areas if all the money is to be directed into the bigger locations.

The Chief Executive explained that the evidence base shows that there needs to continue to be investment in growing the railway if strategic outcomes are to be delivered for the North as well as economic growth that is sustainable and provides people with access to opportunities and services. He added that in order to do this it is important to continue to make the case for revenues to be considered as well as costs as the strength of the recovery means that there are revenues for services.

He stated that there needs to be continued pressure in support of maintaining the delivery of services that are needed now, as well as being supportive and helping to deliver the investment that is already in the pipeline.

- 4.5 Cllr Davison stated that this is a significant change and a "reboot" in the direction of travel for Transport for the North and enquired as to how much of the original plan has remained the same and how much is a new direction.

The Chief Executive explained that the role of the organisation remains unaltered as a statutory body with no change to its functions and roles. He also explained that the ambition of wanting Northern Powerhouse Rail being built in full also remains unaltered. He highlighted commitments through the Integrated Rail Plan which is delivering improvements such as electrification on the TransPennine upgrade; however, some of the ports and the gateways need to be connected to them.

He informed the committee that there are some good foundations to built on and he wishes to be able to strengthen TfN's arguments for further investment on the basis of successfully delivering on current projects.

Members were reassured that projects such as the reopening of the Leamside line, the electrification to Hull, the importance of looking at alternatives to the HS2 Eastern leg, are all projects where Transport for the North will be continuing to make the case for investment.

He explained that the ambition in the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) comes from the evidence base and is being fed into it.

- 4.6 The Chair stated that he felt reassured that the evidence base is driving the decisions being made and that the ambition remains the same. He added that the strategic leadership is an interesting development with TfN not having a specific connection to any one local authority.

He believed that the two-year funding this will provide stability. He encouraged Committee members to prompt their authorities in approaching Transport for the North to see if they can assist with resources when developing their Local Transport Plans.

**Resolved:**

That the presentation be noted.

**5 Draft Strategic Transport Plan 2**

- 5.1 The Chair informed Members that a public consultation will be taking place and stated that having Members' ideas about how the consultation can be undertaken would be beneficial.
- 5.2 Members received the report from the Acting Head of Policy and Strategy who highlighted the key points of her report.
- 5.3 Members suggested several ways to engage with the public in their constituent areas during the consultation period including using libraries to help the public access the consultation room, attending council seminars, using area people's panels, engaging with Councillors and local authority committees and using Town and Parish Councils. The Committee was also keen to stress the importance of using social media and the need to manage expectations and 'keeping things sensible.'
- 5.4 The Chair stated that all constituent local authorities will be happy to assist in whatever way possible.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That the proposed overarching narrative for STP2 agreed by the Transport for the North Board be noted
- 2) That the remaining process to complete and consult on the draft STP be noted.

**6 Road Investment Strategy (RIS)**

- 6.1 Members received the report from the Head of Major Roads who highlighted the key points.
- 6.2 Cllr Cooper asked about the network drivers and enquired if they are robust enough to help with the long-term rebalancing of the North.
- 6.3 Cllr Salter commented that the report comes across as "anti-car". He highlighted the fact that decarbonisation has always been a key focus for

Members and for the organisation and suggested that this should be done by having hydrogen and electric vehicles rather than reducing the number of cars on the road.

- 6.4 Cllr Jones requested an update on North West quadrant project study which is aimed at alleviating congestion on the M60 Junctions 8-18.
- 6.5 Cllr Davison expressed his concern about the lack of electric vehicle chargers and infrastructure.
- 6.6 In response to the Committee's comments the Head of Major Roads explained that this work provides an initial view as on there is the greatest need for interventions on the Strategic Road Network, also that conversations on the priorities for investment were ongoing with local authority officers. And explained that this work does not focus on specific solutions at each location, which would need to be developed in partnership with local stakeholders and which should deliver Place based outcomes appropriate to the location.

In response to Cllr Cooper's question on network drivers and specifically the connectivity metric he explained that it is important to consider the relative importance of roads both in terms of traffic flow and the level of service in terms of connectivity, the latter being a particular issue for more remote areas often particularly reliant on road connectivity to access goods and services.

Addressing Cllr Salter's comments on being viewed as anti-car he explained that TfN is carefully considering how to communicate messaging on roads. This needs to reflect the ambitions set out in the emerging Strategic Transport Plan and find the right balance in highlighting the importance of road investment to underpin good transport connectivity, whilst promoting the benefits of supporting modes other than the car as the first choice, wherever practicable.

He explained that electric vehicles need to be part of the solution and stated that Transport for the North has undertaken significant work with partners and local authority officers on evidencing the requirement for electric vehicle charging. With regards to the Manchester North West Quadrant he stated TfN and TfGM have been updated on National Highways work exploring a package of potential interventions for consideration, and potential delivery in the RIS3 or RIS4 periods. (e.g. junction improvements, additional capacity on sections of the M60).

- 6.7 In summarising the Chair highlighted the importance of messaging on this issue. He informed the Committee that just under 2,000 people a year die on roads as a result of physical accident whilst 10,000 die from emissions attributed to road traffic. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of a good road network for those in more rural areas that are not as well connected.

**Resolved:**

That the comments of the Scrutiny Committee on Transport for the North's approach to preparing recommendations for RIS be noted.

**7 NPR Co-Sponsorship**

- 7.1 Members received the report of the Strategic Rail Lead. The Head of Strategic Rail highlighted the key areas of the report.
- 7.2 Cllr Davison is pleased that the organisation continues to promote the importance of delivering HS2 in full; however he was critical that the project had been sold on speed rather than capacity, and explained that without capacity it is difficult to remove freight from the roads; getting connectivity for passengers can only be done with HS2.
- 7.3 Addressing the issue of the Eastern leg, the Head of Strategic Rail expressed the importance of the Leeds Area Study, which is part of the co-sponsorship work, with the brief still awaited. He explained that the previous Eastern leg HS2 proposal is one of the ways of connecting Leeds into the network and will be pushing this as part of the work looking at a variety of options.

He highlighted the importance of starting this work and stated that Transport for the North has a strong input into this work using its evidence base. He explained that there are two aspects to the co-sponsorship, being the local detail and the network.

**Resolved:**

That the Committee notes that the Board will be asked to endorse the Northern Powerhouse Rail Sponsorship Agreement at the Board meeting on 23 March 2023.

Date and time for the next meeting Thursday 1 June 2023 – 11.00am  
Carriageworks, Theatre Leeds