

1. Chief Executives Update

- 1.1. To provide the opportunity for the Chief Executive to update the Board on matters arising from the previous meeting, as well as any other significant issues not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

2. Quarterly Operating Report

- 2.1. Board members will recall that the purpose of the Quarterly Operating Report is to report progress against the milestones set out in the Business Plan. It is presented to and discussed at the Audit and Governance Committee as part of their regular cycle of meetings. It is also provided to this meeting for information.
- 2.2. Following the General Election the TfN Executive is keeping the milestones under review for consistency with the new Government, particularly its 5 Missions. Where there is a need for revision or amendment to the milestones these will be reported in the next QoR (covering Q2).
- 2.3. The Board will note that the Q1 QoR reports on further additions to the 'TfN Offer'. The new Government has emphasised the importance of investing in the capacity and capability available to support MCAs/LTAs with implementation. Take-up of the 'TfN Offer' continues to grow, as summarised elsewhere on this agenda, this includes an initial financial estimate of the added value of the TfN Offer. With additional tools being added to the 'Offer', and as TfN partners press forward with their own activities, it is expected that demands on the TfN Offer will grow further.

3. Diversity

- 3.1. My update to the March Board set out the opportunities identified, in discussion with the Chair and Vice-Chairs, to ensure greater diversity of thinking. Those are being followed through by the TfN Executive, of note is the ongoing discussion with Citizens UK which has been particularly encouraging. Alongside the expansion of TfN's own Citizens Panel (Northern Transport Voice), this is helping to enhance the voice of the user in the work of TfN moving forward.

4. Business Representation

- 4.1. The March Board reaffirmed its commitment to having a strong business representation on TfN. It also agreed actions to secure that representation following the establishment of Business Boards as successors to LEPs. With the support and assistance of partners we have business representatives identified for most of the North and are liaising with partners where a little more work is required to identify a representative.

5. Convention of the North

- 5.1. The TfN Executive continue to work closely in support of the work of the Convention of the North, including through the work we undertook on the Northern Powerhouse Independent Review (NPIER) and in support of the

Convention's transport theme. In addition to supporting the recent summit held in York, we are actively supporting work to prepare for the 2025 Convention hosted by Lancashire in Preston.

6. Engagement with Secretary of State

- 6.1. Following the General Election the Chair, supported by the two Vice-Chairs wrote to the new Secretary of State welcoming her to the role and submitting to her the revised Strategic Transport Plan adopted by the TfN Board at its March meeting. The Secretary of State's response is attached to this update.

7. Spending Review

- 7.1. The new Government has commenced work on the Spending Review, with an initial outcome (covering the next 18 months) expected in October, and an outcome for the period beyond that expected next Spring.
- 7.2. As part of this the Secretary of State is undertaking a review of the Department's capital programme. Given the pressures on public finances in the short term the review will be challenging.
- 7.3. The ambition underpinning the revised Strategic Transport Plan makes the case for additional investment in the North's transport infrastructure and services to unlock economic opportunity, improve social inclusion and reduce the environmental impact of our transport system.
- 7.4. As the Rail North Committee heard at its meeting on 3rd September investment proposals in the North account for over half of the plans inherited by the new Government. The new Government has been consistent in its support for transforming the North's rail system, however there is a need to continue to restate the case for that investment in the face of wider pressures on investment.
- 7.5. Investment by the National Highways in the North's Strategic Road Network is governed by the Road Investment Strategy (RIS): the current 5-year investment period covers the period up to the end of March 2025. Key projects identified in the RIS of importance to the North include both the A66 dualling project and the A1 North of Morpeth. Also relevant in this context is the allocation of funds in the RIS to improve access to the Port of Liverpool.
- 7.6. A decision on the Development Consent Order (DCO) relating to the A1 project has been pending for several years following the conclusion of the inquiry, whilst the outcome of the inquiry into the DCO for the A66 project is currently the subject of challenge.
- 7.7. The funding envelope for the next 5-year investment period (RIS3) will be set through the Spending Review. As with investment in rail infrastructure, there is a need to continue to restate the case in support of investment in our strategic road network throughout the spending review process.

8. Juergen Maier Review

8.1. Formally the Rail and Urban Transport Review, the outcome of this review was published on 20th August ([An assessment and ambition for a new government](#)). The review benefited from the support of industry experts, as well as considering submissions from organisations with an interest in its work: TfN made a submission to the review and the Chair and Chief Executive were interviewed as part of the process.

8.2. Although not government policy the review's report is a timely and constructive contribution as to how best to achieve the shift in the way we plan, develop, and implement investment. Amongst the proposals set out within the final report that are relevant to the work of TfN:

- a) It sets out the importance of having a long-term transport strategy, one that sees transport policy linked to the outcomes of a long-term UK Industrial Strategy.

It is worth remembering that the foundations of TfN's revised Strategic Transport Plan (STP) are the outputs of work on the North's economy (the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review), our understanding of the extent to which lack of access to transport increase social exclusion (the Social Inclusion Strategy), and our understanding of the need for modal shift to reduce the environmental impact of transport (the Regional Decarbonisation Strategy). In this way the STP already reflects the aspiration for higher economic growth that is inclusive and delivers greener prosperity.

- b) Related to this the review reminds policy makers of the importance to achieve modal shift to achieve a balance between economic growth and environmental impact.

The STP includes specific, measurable outcomes for the North's transport system that demonstrate the collective commitment to achieve modal shift. The Monitoring and Evaluation framework now in place will enable the TfN Board to critically assess progress.

- c) The review argues that the medium-term objectives for transport should be set out in an integrated Transport Strategy for England (TSE), which would be part of a 10-year infrastructure plan, locked in by parliamentary debate that ensures a transparent long-term strategy and pipeline for infrastructure projects. This it argues will enable the private sector to invest in skills and capacity with greater confidence.

Were the Government minded to take this recommendation forward the work of TfN, and in particular the revised STP, would be a key input given the time and investment made by the North's Business and Political leadership in assembling the Northern evidence base.

- d) The review recommends building on the progress to date with devolution, advocating that Government should further decentralise and give clear and mandated roles to sub-national transport bodies and Combined Authorities. It continues by suggesting that there

should be a clear pan-regional transport and spatial focus, supported by appropriate governance and with the work informed by local growth plans developed and delivered by Mayors and Combined Authorities.

TfN is the most well established of all the sub-national transport bodies and has the benefit of being of a statutory body to which previous Governments have devolved some powers and responsibilities to the North's Political and Business leaders. As a Member-led organisation TfN has evolved in response to the wishes of the TfN Board and has an established governance framework that allows further evolution.

- e) A key theme throughout the review is the critical importance of linking transport strategy with industrial strategy, and in that regard, it highlights the need to give greater emphasis and priority to meeting the needs of the freight and logistics sector. There is support for ambitious targets for freight and logistics to unlock economic potential.

Elsewhere on the agenda there is a report on the first freight roundtable which focused on ports. This Board has previously identified the need to strengthen TfN's engagement with our key global gateways (ports and airports), as well the distribution sector and pan-regionally significant centres of economic activity. This may well be an area that the Board wishes to give greater priority to as part of next year's Business Planning for TfN.

- f) The review strongly supports the continued devolution of powers and responsibilities to MCAs, and advocates extending the approach adopted with the Greater Manchester and West Midlands authorities to other MCAs. It also argues for consistent Mayoral powers, similar to the London Mayoral model.
- g) For all other local authorities, the review calls for a transparent, fair, and needs-based long-term integrated transport settlement, one spanning transport modes and combining revenue and capital funding.
- h) The importance of investing in the capacity and capability of MCAs and local authorities to deliver investment is a recurring theme.

As reported later the agenda, the response from constituent authorities and other bodies to the 'TfN Offer' demonstrates the extent to which having access to the capacity and capability held by TfN is already being drawn upon. The added value of a publicly owned asset of this nature at the pan-regional level is enhanced by the ability to accumulate and quickly disseminate experience from individual authorities more widely to the benefit of all Northern authorities.

- i) The review is critical of the control asserted from the centre of government and comments that the desire to hold on to the sponsorship of projects is indicative of central government not trusting local delivery organisations, nor wanting to cede control or oversight. It continues by advocating that government should remove itself from decisions and control where it is not appropriate.

Board members will recall that when first established TfN had the capability to oversee pan-regionally significant investment proposals. TfN were co-client for Northern Powerhouse Rail until following publication of the previous government's Integrated Rail Plan this was downgraded to co-sponsor. However, the technical capability and capacity held by TfN remains fundamental to the technical work underpinning the business case for NPR, albeit it is now directly commissioned by the Department.

- j) The report calls for a review of the Department for Transport's project appraisal guidance to recognise transport's far-reaching social benefits, with the goal of moving beyond cost benefits and journey time optimisation.

This Board has been a long-term champion of the critical importance of using the flexibility that exists within the current HMT Green Book to better reflect the wider social and environmental benefits of investment. Work by the TfN executive to develop a 'Northern Playbook' has been prioritised as part of this year's Business Plan and could be used to support a wider review of project appraisal guidance.

- k) Strengthening the user voice in policy making and the development of scheme proposals is a key focus for the review, citing the importance of capturing the diverse views of transport users as a driver for change. It also notes that women and disabled people are disproportionately impacted by unreliability and inconsistency in levels of service across public transport.

This Board has emphasised the need for TfN's work to better reflect diversity of thinking. As noted earlier, the March meeting agreed a series of actions that the executive is taking forward that reflects the importance of this issue.

- l) Although the primary focus of the review is rail and urban transport, it highlights the importance of wider linkages with other strategically significant infrastructure – such as energy and digital.

This recognition of the wider linkages is particularly and is consistent with TfN's own work that increasingly highlights how the delivery of transport outcomes is reliant upon aligning investment in other infrastructure. TfN's work on EV Charging Infrastructure has created strong working relationships with the energy sector that have in turn helped shape the work of OfGEM on Regional Energy Supply Planning. In this way the focus provided by the STP is helping to break down silos across infrastructure sectors in a way that the review touches on.

- 8.3. It is interesting to note that several specific project proposals critical to the North are used throughout the report to illustrate its recommendations.

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