

# Scrutiny Committee Minutes

**Thursday 05 September 2024**  
**Meeting Room A & B, Platform, New Station Street, Leeds**

## Present:

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>
Cllr Paul Haslam	York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority;
Cllr Rod Fletcher	Cheshire East;
Cllr Jill Perry	Cumberland;
Cllr Gary McMaster	East Riding of Yorkshire;
Matthew Salter	Lancashire;
Cllr Damian O'Connor	Liverpool City Region;
Cllr Colin Feguson	North East Combined Authority;
Cllr Steve Holland	North East Lincolnshire;
Cllr John Davison	North Lincolnshire;
Cllr John Healy	South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority;
Cllr Steve Parish	Warrington;
Cllr Andy Connell	Westmorland and Furness;
Cllr Eric Firth	West Yorkshire Combined Authority;

## Officers in Attendance:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
Gary Rich	Democratic Services Officer
Katie Day	Deputy Chief Executive
Paul Kelly	Finance Director
Matt Smallwood	Head of Digital Strategy
Julie Openshaw	Head of Legal
Andrew Hough	Planning and Strategy Officer
Simon McGlone	Senior Planning and Strategy Officer

## Item No:

## Item

- 1 Election of the Chair and Majority and Minority Group Vice Chairs**
- 1.1 The Head of Legal opened the meeting and invited nominations for the position of Chair of the Committee. Cllr Haslam was nominated by Cllr Davison and this was seconded by Cllr Firth, and he was elected unopposed.
- 1.2 The Chair invited nominations to the position of Majority group Vice Chair. Cllr Firth was proposed by the Chair and this was seconded by Cllr Davison, and he was elected unopposed.

- 1.3 The appointment of the minority group Vice Chair was deferred until the following meeting.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That Cllr Haslam be appointed as Chair of the Transport for the North Scrutiny Committee for the 2024/25 Municipal Year
- 2) That Cllr Firth be appointed as majority group Vice Chair of the Transport for the North Scrutiny Committee for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.
- 3) That the appointment of the minority group vice chair be deferred.

**2 Welcome & Apologies**

- 2.1 The Chair welcomed all in attendance and informed Members that the meeting is being recorded. Apologies were received from Cllrs Shorrocks, Boughton, Walker, Place, Prescott and Rowe.

**3 Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 Cllr Fletcher declared that he is Vice Chair of the Public Transport Consortium.

**4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2024 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Parish and seconded by Cllr Salter.
- 4.2 Cllr Parish observed that declarations of interest had been received from Cllr Boughton and Broughton, yet their attendance hadn't been recorded in the minutes.
- 4.3 The Democratic Services Officer clarified that whilst both were in attendance this had inadvertently not been included in the minutes. He noted that this should have read as Cllr Boughton and Bamborough and that these changes have now been made and the minutes on the website have been corrected.

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2024 be approved as a true and accurate record.

**5 Scrutiny Committee work 2023-2024**

- 5.1 Members received the report of the Democratic Services Officer.
- 5.2 The Deputy Chief Executive highlighted the key points in the report and thanked the Committee for its work over the previous year. She specifically highlighted the contribution to the Strategic Transport Plan, which supported the plan being presented to the Transport for the North (TfN) Board's meeting in March for approval. Looking ahead, she asked for any comments that the Committee might have as to how Officers can engage with Members in the future.
- 5.3 The Chair commented that this report also helps to inform the work of the Audit & Governance Committee, as it reports on the work of the Committee. He reminded Members that the Committee works on a

Scrutiny first basis, meaning that the Committee scrutinises reports before going to Board.

- 5.4 Cllr Parish stated that the Strategic Transport Plan will need funding and Government decisions on finance may affect some of the work that can be done; he specifically referred to work on the A66.

**Resolved:**

That the Scrutiny Committee activity for the Municipal year be noted.

**6 Transport for the North Priorities to inform Business Planning**

- 6.1 In introducing the report, the Chair explained that TfN is seeking to help save local authorities money and described it as the “added value” of TfN, which is able to offer knowledge and training to authorities who lack sufficient in-house capacity.
- 6.2 Members received the report of the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive. The Deputy Chief Executive then highlighted the key points within the report and requested a steer from the Committee.
- 6.3 The Chair referenced section 8.3 of the report and highlighted the £360k savings as a result of TfN’s work and the importance of this to local authorities with the prospect of further austerity looming. He further highlighted that the spend also generated circa £3 million worth of value.
- 6.4 Cllr Salter commented on the positive cost savings, stating that this news should be shared more widely. He emphasised the importance of continuing to be able to demonstrate this value for money if public finances continue to be limited.
- 6.5 He then asked about the modelling behind the ‘right share’ metrics in the Strategic Transport Plan, and specifically what assumptions had been made on travel behaviours and population growth, given potential for change between now and 2045.
- 6.6 The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the assumptions are based on TfN’s Future Travel Scenarios, which underpin the ‘right share’ metrics. These set the ambition on where TfN would like to see the greater use of public transport and more sustainable transport. The Future Travel Scenarios analysis had allowed TfN to gauge what the appropriate metrics would be. She further explained that the evidence behind that work does include population growth assumptions, and advised she could provide further detail outside the meeting.
- 6.7 In response Cllr Salter suggested that projections may need to be adapted over time should the context change.
- 6.8 The Deputy Chief Executive agreed and explained that alongside the Strategic Transport Plan, a Monitoring and Evaluation framework was in place, which enables TfN to check on progress against the ambitions on an annual basis. TfN members can then consider if any adjustments may be needed to reflect a change in context.
- 6.9 Cllr Davison expressed a general concern about the lack of consideration of infrastructure when locations are chosen for new housing estates, as and the risk of locking in car dependency. He stated that new housing

- developments need public transport links included in considerations when they are being planned.
- 6.10 The Deputy Chief Executive said that she will feed Cllr Davison's comments into a report to Board for them to consider if they would like TfN executive to undertake work on this matter.
- 6.11 Cllr Perry requested that rural public transport issues be given more prominence on agendas.
- 6.12 The Chair added that any new housing estate must provide access not just for cars but for active travel and buses as well.
- 6.13 The Deputy Chief Executive noted that from the comments to date the Committee wants TfN to continue to make rural connectivity a priority. This feedback will be shared with Board and officers can continue to work cross border on matters where effective to do so.
- 6.14 Cllr Ferguson commented on funding for TfN's ambitions. He suggested that public/private partnerships may be one such way in which this can be achieved, and if this is an option that is explored, then it is important that it is done correctly and that lessons be learnt from the past.
- 6.15 The Deputy Chief Executive explained that one of the debates that took place when developing the Strategic Transport Plan was about creating long term certainty around policy and an investment pipeline. The Plan made proposals to give local partners more certainty of funding, which in turn could allow different conversations with the private sector on investment opportunities.
- 6.16 Cllr Davison raised the issue of Section 106 contributions and believes that this is something that needs to be addressed with Government. Cllr Parish questioned how much unspent Section 106 money for transport may be available but as yet unused.
- 6.17 Cllr Healey stated that more consultation with the public is needed particularly on the advisory Labour Party document, and this may allay some of the fears that have been expressed.
- 6.18 The Deputy Chief Executive commented that TFN sees consultation with the public as vital and is intending to build on existing arrangements to engage stakeholders and the public, to ensure their voice is captured where needed. She noted that this can help strengthen work and inform the decision-making process.
- 6.19 Cllr Firth referred to buses in rural areas. explaining that West Yorkshire is moving to a franchising model, and it is hoped that future rural services will expand as a result.
- 6.20 Cllr Fletcher asked for the increase of freight on rail to be included and mooted how this can be increased.
- 6.21 The Chair stated that TfN needs to be conscious of the impact of the withdrawal of HS2 and the impact on freight, with "HS2a" he suggested was seen as better value for money.
- 6.22 The Deputy Chief Executive acknowledged the Committee's strong support for work on rural connectivity, as well as potential work on

spatial planning and integration with public transport. She noted the point around keeping track of the changing context in TfN's modelling work, and reflecting the feedback to the Board as to whether they wish more work to be done on making public private initiatives effective for future opportunities. She made it clear that all comments had been noted and would be captured in the Board report.

**Resolved:**

That the report and Members comments be noted.

**7 Options Paper on Regional Fleet Procurement Support**

- 7.1 Members received the report from the Head of Connected Mobility who provided an overview of the key points within his report.
- 7.2 Following the Head of Connected Mobility's presentation the Chair provided his thoughts. He explained that this is an important item as it helps with economies of scale particularly with the expense of electric vehicles, and will also allow for standardisation. He also spoke about maintaining the supply chain for maintenance and infrastructure. He said he believes that there is much merit in the proposals within the report, which will bring savings to local authorities.
- 7.3 Cllr Parish spoke about Warrington's purchase of 105 electric buses and stated that it has been a complicated process due to the bus company being owned by the local authority. He was unsure as to whether the problems would be ameliorated if TfN was to purchase the buses and then sell them on to constituent authorities. He also commented that the report needs to be clearer on the fact that it is referring to zero emission buses, as this was not obvious in the report.
- 7.4 Cllr Salter believes that options three and four in the report will provide more scope and give greater buying power to authorities as well as driving down costs. However, he expressed concern about the range of devolution deals across the North in that there are a number that do not yet have deals and asked what is being offered to those without a devolution deal.
- 7.5 In addressing the issue of support by existing experienced authorities, the Head of Connected Mobility stated that under the "light support" option TfN would seek to engage partners to share knowledge and experience.
- 7.6 The Chair added that by considering scale it will add certainty to the marketplace.
- 7.7 Cllr Firth enquired about the number of bus manufacturers in the country and the volume they are producing.
- 7.8 Cllr Parish informed the Committee that there are currently no UK manufacturers producing bus chassis.
- 7.9 He then enquired what will happen when the batteries need replacing after eight years.
- 7.10 The Head of Connected Mobility explained that a key area of focus is how the pipeline is identified strategically across the North and when fleets

are ageing. He explained that the supply chain capacity is currently stretched; however, if TfN can provide details as to when fleets need to be renewed, this can allow for manufacturers to build capacity to deal with the demand.

- 7.11 Cllr Ferguson enquired as to what the ultimate objective of the exercise is and once this has been established how the right option can be chosen. He also enquired about timelines for the implementation of each of the options. He also asked if there is anything that can be done to support the smaller operators.
- 7.12 The Deputy Chief Executive explained that this is an opportunity for partnership working at a pan-Northern level, if partners wished to do so. She explained that the report is intended to gauge whether this is a topic Members would wish to work on together and to present some options around what is possible, from knowledge sharing to collaboration. Additionally, the broader reason returns to the Strategic Transport Plan, given one of the key points that emerged during consultation was local connectivity. She highlighted that the North's ambitions for decarbonisation and reducing transport related social exclusion, contribute to why the North is considering options for bus procurement. As TfN, Members have the powers to work together if they want to.
- 7.13 The Chair added that the whilst the ultimate ambition is how TfN implements the Strategic Transport Plan. there are additional-benefits to this such as decarbonisation.
- 7.14 Cllr Holland expressed his support for the next steps set out in section 5.2 of the report, i.e.: 'benchmark the ability of that manufacturing base to meet the demand of the North's bus reform.' He explained that it would be useful to know what national manufacturers can produce and what their plans are for the years to come, as this is especially useful for smaller authorities who lack the resource to find out this information themselves.
- 7.15 Cllr Perry asked if various sizes of buses are being considered including smaller one for rural communities.
- 7.16 In response, the Head of Connected Mobility explained that there will need to be a reflection of the physical geography on this.
- 7.17 Cllr Firth and Cllr Salter both raised the issue of hydrogen fueled buses with Cllr Salter asking that when the environmentally friendly options are being explored then this should be considered as well.
- 7.18 The Deputy Chief Executive explained that TfN has been leading a piece of work with Northern Gas Networks on a hydrogen refueller visualiser in order to understand where the opportunities might be to use hydrogen as a source for refueling for heavy good vehicles. She noted that the points raised by Cllr Frith and Cllr Salter would be points for her team to consider through TfN's business planning process over the autumn.
- 7.19 In summarising the Committee's views, the Chair stated that there is a limiter on the Grid and there is a supply chain issue regarding hydrogen.

He further stated that the Committee supports the report and sees this as an urgent matter.

**Resolved:**

That the report and Members' comments be noted.

**8 Electric Vehicle Charging State of Play report**

- 8.1 Members received the report from the Principal Planning and Strategy Officer who then highlighted the key points within the report.
- 8.2 Cllr Davison noted that the sale of electric vehicles is declining and mooted if this would continue when the tax regime changes. He expressed concern about the infrastructure and wondered if the report reflects the current situation; he challenged dates and targets and believes that they are unrealistic. He also raised the issue of terraced streets and where charging points could be situated.
- 8.3 Cllr Healy enquired as to whether the charging points are accessible to those with disabilities.
- 8.4 Cllr Ferguson asked about how the modelling is informing what TfN believes car usage will look like in future and how work around the infrastructure should be done so that it aligns with the broader aspirations of sustainable transport.
- 8.5 Cllr Holland commented on the time lag regarding the technology and the number of miles an electric vehicle can travel prior to needing to be recharged. He asked if this is impacting on investment and queried where the investment will come from.
- 8.6 Cllr Salter reminded the Committee of a Lancashire County Council Scheme on electric vehicle charging for terraced houses, which he had raised at a previous committee meeting and asked if anyone had contacted Lancashire to discuss this further.
- 8.7 He then expressed concern regarding the first of the draft recommendations in appendix 3 relating to second hand vehicles, believing that this could cause there to be multiple people wanting to buy the same cars leading to the increase in price and not necessarily increasing the number of useable electric vehicles. He stated that this may cost money without achieving anything positive and requested that that more analysis be undertaken before moving forward with it. In relation to the second recommendation, he asked for some more information about the misinformation that is in the public domain on electric vehicles.
- 8.8 Cllr Firth noted that technology is changing at pace and urged caution about investing in current day technology, due to how quickly new developments arise.
- 8.9 In addressing Cllr Salter's point around second hand cars, the Principal Planning and Strategy Officer explained that he expects to see the move to electric vehicles first and this will then drive the second-hand market costs down leading to more equitable access for users. On the "myth-busting" point he commented that more education from the

manufacturing point of view is probably required, to the sales teams and through to the users ensuring that the public has the correct information when they purchase a car.

- 8.10 Addressing Members' comments on targets, he acknowledged that they are challenging but are in line with the Committee on Climate Change. Addressing Cllr Ferguson's question on targets he explained that all the electric vehicle outputs are provided across TfN's Future Travel Scenarios.
- 8.11 On the energy supply and terraced house points, he believes that this is the area where TfN can support with the evidence base that has been built. TfN is doing work in this area including with the energy suppliers and other partners to combine what our evidence indicates is needed for the region compared to the capacity on the Grid, allowing us to identify the constraints on the Grid across the North. Addressing the point on charging on terrace housing, he explained that TfN wants to ensure equality of opportunity and is making a policy recommendation that there should be a VAT reduction on public charging.
- 8.12 On the accessibility point he highlighted a recommendation of the report for PAS1899 to become legally binding.
- 8.13 Cllr O'Connor raised the issue that rapid public charging points are often powered by diesel, which defeats the purpose if the charging points for electric vehicles are being powered by non-renewable sources.
- 8.14 The Principal Planning and Strategy Officer referred to the recommendation on sustainability and Grid decarbonisation and agreed that the fuel needs to be coming from other renewable source for rapid charging.
- 8.15 Cllr Salter asked for recommendation two to be re-worded in order to focus on education.
- 8.16 In summarising the Committee's comments, the Chair asked for recommendation two to be amended to include education and remove the word "misinformation". He also asked that the recommendation relating to the powering of electric vehicle chargers be amended to reflect that all must be powered by renewable energy rather than it being an option to do so. Additionally, he requested that the situation be reviewed on annual basis to ensure that technological changes are kept up with. Finally, he requested that a monitor is kept on travel scenarios as a result of changes to the increase in house building.
- 8.17 The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the report is a point in time and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework supporting the Strategic Transport Plan will help in doing this. She also emphasised the need for a 'just' transition to decarbonisation. She offered reassurance that the stocktake currently taking place on TfN's Regional Transport Decarbonisation Strategy will be looking at this matter in more detail. She also stated that a clearer rationale is needed to explain the increase in car usage compared to the Strategic Transport Plan 'right share' metric for car mileage.



**Resolved:**

- 1) That the Committee notes analysis of electric vehicle uptake and supporting charging infrastructure deployment progress against evidenced future need
- 2) That the Committee notes TfN's actions to support partners across the region, including new evidence capabilities available alongside ongoing partner support
- 3) That the Committee's comments on the State of Play policy recommendations and next steps to work with partners (nationally and across the North) be noted
- 4) That the Committee endorses TfN's Electric Vehicle State of Play report.

**9 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

21 November 2024 at 11am