

## General Meeting of Rail North Ltd

**Meeting date:** Thursday 22 September 2016

**Item:** B6

**Subject:** Rail North and TfN Governance Update

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### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To provide Association Members with an update on the progress of Transport for the North's (TfN) Sub-national Transport Body (STB) proposal and submission to government.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Association Members note the progress of TfN's STB proposal and that a further report on the proposed draft regulations and legal arrangements in relation to Rail North is provided in due course.

### 3. Information

- 3.1. A report on the key principles of TfN's STB proposal, including recommendations in relation to Rail North, was considered by TfN's Partnership Board and Association of Rail North Authorities in June.
- 3.2. The Boards considered that there is a strong case for Rail North to be included within the new statutory arrangements for TfN. This could allow Rail North to benefit from new statutory powers, to strengthen its role and, over time, support a further shift of responsibility from central government to the North, allowing rail services to be managed more directly from the North, on behalf of the North.
- 3.3. The report noted the following further principles within the STB proposal in relation to Rail North:
  - Two potential options for devolving rail franchising powers in the future (equivalent to the position in London/Merseyside and Scotland/Wales);
  - Membership proposals including an 'associate membership' for those authorities who are part of Rail North, but not within the core TfN area;
  - A proposed voting system including retention of the current system of Rail North weighted voting for Rail North matters;
  - Drawing on current arrangements within Rail North/ DfT Partnership Agreement to allow the north to take a bigger role in developing and acting as client for infrastructure schemes.

- 3.4. TfN's Partnership Board agreed that responsibility be delegated to the Chair and CEO to finalise the proposal for submission to DfT during the summer, subject to consents being obtained from the constituent authority members.
- 3.5. Subsequent to the June Board meetings, 18 of 19 'full member' authorities of TfN have now individually consented to submit the STB proposal to government. A briefing session with North Lincolnshire council is arranged for 29<sup>th</sup> September.
- 3.6. TfN's CEO and Rail North Director continue to progress discussions with DfT to develop arrangements which would allow the north to take a bigger role in developing and acting as client for infrastructure schemes and long term rail infrastructure investment planning i.e. a 'co-decision / joint exercise' role alongside the Secretary of State.
- 3.7. In parallel, officers are continuing to engage legal support to understand and develop the legal and constitutional arrangements that would need to be put in place once the STB is established. It is envisaged that the key principles / heads of terms for these arrangements and any subsequent changes to existing Rail North agreements would be presented to the Boards of Rail North and TfN together with government's draft regulations once these are made available for consultation.
- 3.8. It is expected that TfN's STB proposal will be submitted to the Secretary of State for his consideration in early October with draft regulations subsequently being prepared throughout the autumn / winter.