

Rail North Committee Meeting – Minutes

Meeting: Rail North Committee
Date: Thursday 12 March 2020, 10.00 to 12.00
Venue: Schiphol Suite, Hilton Manchester Airport, Outwood Lane, Manchester, M90 4WP

Attendees:

Mayor Andy Burnham (Chair)
 Cllr Craig Browne
 Cllr Trevor Ainsworth
 Cllr Richard Hannigan
 Cllr Keith Little
 Cllr Don Mackenzie

Greater Manchester
 Cheshire and The Potteries
 East Midlands Authorities
 Humber Authorities
 Lancashire and Cumbria
 North Yorkshire

Also in Attendance:

Peter Wilkinson
 Sam Caughey
 Bob Morris

Tobyn Hughes

Anna Jane Hunter
 Steve Montgomery
 Louise Ebbs
 Liz Collins
 Richard George
 Nick Donovan
 Barry White
 David Hoggarth
 Jane Cornthwaite
 Salim Patel
 Gary Bogan
 Adam Timewell
 Gary Rich
 Julie Openshaw
 Deborah Dimock

DfT
 DfT
 TfN Rail North Partnership
 Representative
 TfN Rail North Partnership
 Representative
 Network Rail
 First Group
 TPE
 TPE
 DOHL
 Northern Trains Ltd
 TfN Chief Executive
 TfN Strategic Rail Director
 TfN
 TfN
 Rail North Partnership Director
 Rail North Partnership
 Democratic Services Officer
 Head of Legal Services
 Solicitor

Apologies:

Cllr Liam Robinson	Liverpool City Region
Cllr Nick Forbes	North East Authorities
Cllr Carl Marshall	North East Authorities
Cllr Judith Blake	West Yorkshire and York
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	West Yorkshire and York

1.0 Welcome and Apologies **Action**

- 1.1 In the absence of the Chairman, and there being no Vice-Chairman, Mayor Burnham was elected unanimously by voting members present to chair the meeting.

Members noted that the Constitutional quorum for RNC is 6 voting members present, who hold at least 50% of the weighted votes, i.e. 497 votes. 6 members holding 495 votes were present. As permitted by paragraph 23.6 of the Constitution, Members resolved unanimously, on a motion moved without notice, to waive the weighted vote element of the quorum requirement, to enable the meeting to proceed with those members present.

- 1.2 The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2.0 Declarations of Interest (v)

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3.0 Part 1 Minutes of the meeting on 8 January 2020

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2020 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. There were no issues arising from the minutes.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January be approved as a true and accurate record.

4.0 Exclusion of the Press & Public

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of items 5.0, 6.0, 7.0 and 8.0 of business because it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, there will be disclosure of confidential information as defined in s100A(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and/or exempt information as defined in

paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of The Local Government Act 1972.

5.0 Part 2 Minutes of the meeting on 8 January 2020

RESOLVED: The part 2 minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2020 were considered and their accuracy as a correct record confirmed. Members discussed any issues arising from the minutes.

6.0 Rail North Partnership Update

6.1 The report and presentation were received by Members and they were invited to ask questions and make comments on the update.

RESOLVED: 1) That the report from Rail North Partnership be noted.
2) That the discussed recommendations be agreed.

7.0 Blake-Jones Implementation (for discussion)

7.1 This item was deferred to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That Item 7 be deferred to the next meeting of Rail North Partnership.

8.0 Central Manchester Update (for discussion)

8.1 Members received the report and a verbal update. Following the update Members were invited to ask questions.

RESOLVED: That the report and update be noted.

9.0 Re-admittance of Press & Public

RESOLVED: That the press and public be invited back into the meeting.

10.0 Northern Trains Interim Arrangements (r)

10.1 Members received the report on Northern Trains interim arrangements, and this was taken as read.

10.2 The Chair welcomed Mr. Richard George and Mr. Nick Donovan from DfT OLR Holdings Ltd and Northern

Trains Ltd respectively and stated that he believes that this is a new beginning for rail in the north and there is a real will to bring about change which we should support.

- 10.3 Mr George stated that this is an opportunity to reset a number of things within the operator. He explained that times had been difficult for staff over recent months and that this was the ideal time to reset those relationships.

Mr George explained that the only thing that has changed in terms of governance has been the replacement of the owning group and that everything else has remained the same. He explained that they had decided not to repaint the trains as what the public wanted to see is the trains running on time. The Arriva badge has been removed from the trains.

Mr George also informed Members that this is also an opportunity to reset the relationship with the Rail North Committee and travelling public. He explained that Northern Trains are not coming in with a bigger budget to deal with the problems but hoped to realign relationships.

Members were provided with an update on the 100 Day Plan. Mr George explained that this period of time was requested from the Government in order to sort out what needs to be done as well as gain an understanding of problems. After this has been done, they will be able to come back with a more coherent plan.

- 10.4 The Chair asked if it was too early to say what has been found.

Mr. Donovan highlighted the resilience of the network as fundamental and that they have discovered the network is very stressed. This is something that they expected before they came in and the work they have done so far has confirmed this.

Some work is being done immediately, which includes work on lifting staff confidence.

The May 2020 timetable changes are also being examined and mitigations are being explored around getting trains ready and in service by this point.

Mr. Donovan described the depth and breadth of capability of the staff as being very good.

- 10.5 Mr. George told Members that they are unable to repair Northern on their own and he explained to Members that they are examining wider issues including timetable structure and infrastructure.
- 10.6 The Chair asked for a commitment from Mr. George and Mr. Donovan to come back to the committee towards the end of the 100 days which they agreed to.
- 10.7 Concern was raised by Members in some of the larger city areas regarding the stakeholder group which had been formed by Mr George and that not all of the voices were being heard. Mr. George explained that the idea of the group was that it was to allow for all voices to be heard. However, he believed that this was not working out as intended and that a change in direction was needed.

He further explained that he was not worried about hearing from the big metro areas as he would see them separately to get their input. However, he was more concerned that he was not hearing the voices of rural railways, disability groups and other smaller groups and areas.

Mr George informed Members that he will be writing out to explain his proposed revised approach on this.

- 10.8 Members were informed that rolling stock is being looked at as part of the 100 Day Plan.
- 10.9 The Chair asked about infrastructure. He was disappointed to hear suggestions that platforms 15 & 16 at Manchester Piccadilly was not the right solution for the Castlefield Corridor.

Mr George stated that an answer to the Castlefield Corridor issue would be addressed in Network Rail

and DfT's 100 Day Plan for Central Manchester being developed in parallel with the Northern plan.

- 10.10 Members supported the new Northern management team but highlighted that the public would still expect to see accountability.

RESOLVED: That the report and update be noted.

11.0 Rail Service Performance Update (r)

- 11.1 The Rail Service Performance Update report was received by Members and taken as read. The Chair welcomed staff from TransPennine Express (TPE) and Network Rail who provided Members with an update.

- 11.2 Steve Montgomery from TPE informed Members that some significant progress had been in the training of drivers on the new trains. They have also started to re-introduce some of the services that were taken out. Approximately 80-90% of drivers have now been trained and he hopes that by the end of March all drivers will be trained.

Mr Montgomery indicated that the timetable will have been restored by May.

The Chair asked why there was a reduction in performance in February. Mr Montgomery explained that weather and the school holiday period all played a part in the performance drop. The same problem was possible for the Easter holidays however in order to mitigate against this he hoped that driver training would be stepped up until the end of March in order to cover this.

- 11.3 Ms Collins explained that they hope to achieve full roll out of driver training by the start of April.

The improvement plan that they intend to deliver was shared with the Rail North Partnership on 6 March.

Ms Collins explained that they have taken a huge hit to their reputation in the North of England; she also highlighted their current biggest concern as fleet resilience.

- 11.4 Ms Hunter explained that the weather had played a major role in the dip in rail performance, however this was not specifically a North of England problem but had happened across the country. She explained to Members that having a 50mph limit across the network (due to weather) was unprecedented.
- 11.5 Members stated that they were looking forward to improvements in line speeds and wondered if this would be happening with the new fleet.
- Ms Collins explained that they were looking at the timetabling in order to accommodate this.
- 11.6 The Chair challenged TPE on where they anticipated performance being mid-year and end of year in order that they can be held accountable.
- Mr Montgomery explained that he was unable to give figures as there are a number of variables that make this impossible to do, such as train reliability. He stated that the plan they are submitting at the end of March will have these figures.
- 11.7 The Chair requested that TPE give a public commitment on those things they can control and requested that targets be based on these.

RESOLVED: That the performance updates be noted.

Date of next meeting: 12 May 2020