



Rail North Committee - Minutes

Meeting: Rail North Committee

Date: 13 November 2018

Attendees:

CLlr Liam Robinson (Chair)
Mayor Andy Burnham
CLlr Trevor Ainsworth
CLlr Rob Waltham
CLlr Keith Little
CLlr Harold Davenport

Liverpool City Region
Greater Manchester
East Midlands
Humber Authorities
Lancashire and Cumbria
Cheshire and Potteries

In attendance:

Richard George (items 4 and 7)

SNC - Lavalin

Observers:

CLlr Chris Brewis
CLlr James Lewis

Lincolnshire County Council
Leeds City Council

Officers:

Barry White
David Hoggarth
Tom Davidson
Mark Hardman
Hugh Chaplain

Chief Executive
Strategic Rail Director
Transport Planner
Democratic Services Officer
Advisor

Apologies:

Mayor Dan Jarvis
CLlrs Nick Forbes and Carl Marshall
CLlr Judith Blake
Mayor Ben Houchen
CLlr Carl Les

Sheffield City Region
North East
West Yorkshire and York
Tees Valley
North Yorkshire

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

1.1 Members of the Committee were welcomed to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies for absence were noted.



2.0 Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3.0 Minutes

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting of the Rail North Committee held on 9 October 2018 were considered.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Rail North Committee held on 9 October 2018 be approved as a correct record.

4.0 Rail Performance Update

4.1 The Board gave consideration to a report of the Transport Planner providing an update on rail performance, the period since the May 2018 timetable change being a period of significant service instability leading to a significant loss in confidence in the railway industry as a whole. The report considered the 'public performance measure', cancellations and short formations performance of both Northern and TransPennine Express in the period to 31 October 2018 and considered areas of concern regarding capacity.

4.2 Network Rail and the train operators had been implementing action plans to stabilise and improve performance. Richard George had been asked, as an independent railway expert, to assist with railway industry performance improvement in the region covered by Transport for the North. Mr George gave a presentation to the Committee advising of the nature of his investigations, assisted by a small team, into rail industry performance in the North, including:

- while what happened in May 2018 was known, rail performance was already deteriorating prior to May 2018;
- rail operations across the North were being observed and conversations held with managers across all organisations to understand all the issues, not just the timetable issues;
- it was clear that the North of England has a much busier railway than it used to and that, in addition to new capacity, it required greater operating discipline; and
- there were indications that a number of changes made over several years for good reasons has reduced the level of local knowledge that was key to robust operations.

4.3 Richard George stated that in looking at the underlying problems and issues impacting on good performance, his focus was on day to day operational matters rather than wider structural issues. In this regard, his team were looking at issues of resource, capacity, pinchpoint

planning and how timetables were put together. It was also becoming clear that the centralisation of timetable planning, station management etc. had led to a loss of local knowledge that might have assisted in alleviating issues.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the matter be further considered at item 7 on the agenda.

5.0 Business Plan for 2019/20

5.1 The Committee received a report of the Strategic Rail Director providing an update on the draft business plan objectives for 2019/20 and seeking a consideration of the level of member contributions for 2019/20. Transport for the North produces an Integrated Business Plan; the Rail North Committee was charged with recommending the Rail North Business Plan, the related budget, insofar as they related to rail franchise matters, to the Transport for the North Board. The report presented draft business plan objectives grouped into the following four areas of focus:

- Performance improvement;
- Service Development/Delivery;
- Long Term Rail Strategy delivery;
- Communications and Engagement,

and the views of members sought as to the objectives listed under each area of focus.

5.2 The Strategic Rail Director advised that the proposals were set within the context of the ongoing review of the Rail North Partnership. It was noted that significant proposals were anticipated from the review and that some of the presented detail may need to be revisited.

5.3 With regard to the budget and member Contributions, the baseline proposal was for Member contributions for 2019/20 was essentially the same as the current year, save for the application of indexation as set out in the relevant agreements. It was noted that 'in kind' or the Additional Contributions had been permitted in the form of staff time working on specific programmes or projects. Lead Rail Officers had discussed priorities for the following year and had suggested work including support of Local Transport Authority Schemes and developing business cases to seek funds from the DfT's Enhancements Pipeline; additional funding and resource would be required for this work which would accelerate progression on the delivery of the Long Term Rail Strategy.

5.4 The Chair, with several Members of the Committee indicating agreement, considered it would be difficult to justify the release of additional funds at this time. A Member commented that there needed to be a clearer sense of what authorities received for their money, querying whether Members' received sufficient information on how the rail system was running in order to undertake their role.

- 5.5 Noting the comments of Members, the Strategic Rail Director advised that further supporting detail would be tabled at the December meeting of the Committee. He also sought support for the continuing use of existing resources within local authorities where those authorities were working collaboratively with Transport for the North.

RESOLVED: That (1) the draft Rail North Business Plan objectives be noted;
(2) with regard to Member contributions in 2019/20, the views of Members as expressed within Minute 5.3 above be noted.

6.0 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business since it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 10972 (as amended), namely information relating to the business or financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

7.0 Rail Performance Update

- 7.1 Further to Minute 4 above and the report of the Transport Planner, Richard George continued his presentation to the Committee presenting 'emerging findings' from the analysis and observations conducted to date, considering operational issues; capacity issues; timetable, train plans and planning resources; infrastructure and rolling stock resources in turn, with a consideration of structural and governance issues outside the scope of this work. Members of the Committee asked a number of questions about issues arising from the presentation.

- 7.2 The presentations from Richard George were welcomed as an honest assessment and identification of the key issues affecting the railways in the North. Taking the review forward, Richard George indicated that he would continue taking to the operators as he firmed up his recommendations, warning the Committee that they may have difficult decisions to take in due course. With regard to timescales and publication of recommendations, Mr George indicated that his investigations were at the 'emerging findings' stage only and it was therefore too early to be able publish recommendations at this stage; the nature of any publication would need to be agreed with parties to the review. Members expressed a clear view that the outcome of Mr George's work should be published in due course.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.



At this stage the meeting became inquorate and, pursuant to Part 4 of the Transport for the North Constitution, the meeting stood adjourned to the next ordinary meeting of the Committee.