
Transport for the North Board Informal Consultation Call Minutes

Meeting: Informal Consultation Call Minutes
Date: 29 April 2020, 11.30 – 13.15
Venue: Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Chairman:

John Cridland

Chairman of Transport for the North

Also in Attendance:

Sir John Armitt

National Infrastructure Committee

Constituent Authority Attendees:

Cllr Phil Riley	Blackburn with Darwen
Cllr Craig Browne	Cheshire East
Cllr Louise Gittins	Cheshire West & Chester
Cllr Keith Little	Cumbria
Cllr Chris Matthews	East Riding of Yorkshire
Cllr Mark Aldred	Greater Manchester
Cllr Darren Hale	Hull
CC Michael Green	Lancashire
Mayor Steve Rotheram	Liverpool City Region
Cllr Carl Marshall	North East
Cllr Stewart Swinburn	North East Lincolnshire
Cllr Richard Hannigan	North Lincolnshire
Cllr Don Mackenzie	North Yorkshire
Mayor Dan Jarvis	Sheffield City Region
Cllr Heather Scott	Tees Valley
Cllr Hans Mundry	Warrington
Cllr Judith Blake	West Yorkshire
Cllr Andy D’Agrone	York

Rail North Authority Attendees:

Cllr Trevor Ainsworth	Derbyshire
Cllr Chris Brewis	Lincolnshire
Cllr John Ogle	Nottinghamshire
Cllr Mark Winnington	Staffordshire

LEP Attendees:

Graeme Bristow	Cheshire & Warrington LEP
Steve Curl	Cumbria
Kishor Tailor	Hull LEP
Mark Roberts	Leeds
Andrew Hodgson	North East

Matthew Lamb
Peter Kennan
Jerry Hopkinson

North Yorkshire
Sheffield City Region
Tees Valley LEP

Delivery Partners:

Nick Bisson
Margaret Jackson
Lorna Pimlott
Graham Botham
Sir Peter Hendy

Department for Transport
Department for Transport
HS2
Network Rail
Network Rail

Officers in Attendance:

Barry White
James Mills
Gary Rich
Dawn Madin
James Lyon
Maria Unwin
Iain Craven
Tim Foster
Julie Openshaw
Steve Howes
Rosemary Lyon
Tim Wood
Deborah Dimock
David Hoggarth
Peter Molyneux
David Hughes

Chief Executive
Corporate Engagement Lead
Democratic Services Officer
Director of Business Capabilities
Executive Assistant
Executive Assistant
Finance Director
Head of Economic Advice
Head of Legal
Interim IST Director
Legal & Democratic Services Officer
NPR Director
Solicitor
Strategic Rail Director
Strategic Roads Director
Strategy and Programme Director

Apologies:

Mike Blackburn
Asif Hamid
Mark Whitworth
Cllr Adele Williams

Greater Manchester LEP
Liverpool LEP
Liverpool LEP
Nottingham

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

Action

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed Members to the consultation call. As this is the first virtual meeting of the Board it was explained to Members how the meeting would work and how this is a practice run for the meeting in July which he hoped will be streamed live.
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed Emma Ward, the new Director General of DFT.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest received.

3.0 Coronavirus Update (p)

a) Impact on Rail

b) Impact on TfN

c) High-Level Corporate Risk Assessment

d) Economic Recovery Plan

To consider the update from the Chief Executive.

Impact on Rail

3.1 Members received the first part of the presentation from the Strategic Rail Director who highlighted the key points in the presentation which was taken as read.

3.2 The Strategic Rail Director explained that the North of England Contingency group is the main mechanism for consulting with both Members and the industry. He explained that this is a positive way of working with the operators and is also the most effective way of connecting everybody across the crisis.

The Strategic Rail Director praised the operators for how they have been working with Transport for the North. He highlighted an example where the group had had a particular impact, where South Yorkshire had produced a report on key workers and essential travel needs as well as potential gaps in the initial plan. This information was provided to the group resulting with Northern making tweaks to the timetable as well as responding to the opening of the Nightingale hospitals.

He also highlighted that rail usage in the North of England is similar to levels across the country was is approximately 5%.

It was explained to Members that Operators are currently working on the next phase of the key worker timetable, with the implementation of this subject to advice from the Government and Public Health England.

3.3 The Chairman thanked the Strategic Rail Director on behalf of the Board for all the work that has been done for the Rail North Partnership and the excellent communications that have been being sent out to Stakeholders.

3.4 Mayor Rotherham requested that Trade Unions should be included at a future meeting to provide feedback on some of

their stories around their members who contracted Coronavirus and have passed away as well as some of the difficulties front line staff have experienced. He explained that by having their input it may influence thinking going forward with regards to things such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings.

The Chairman commented that this was an excellent suggestion and stated that he would seek to progress the suggestion.

3.5 Cllr Blake raised the issue of passenger confidence and that people may revert to using their cars due to concerns around being in an overcrowded situation. She supported Mayor Rotherham and explained that the work of Trade Unions will be critical.

3.6 Cllr Little asked whether driver training has continued to take place since lock down.

The Strategic Rail Director explained that this had been suspended due to social distancing requirements.

3.7 Cllr Marshall referred to the recovery plan and expressed an interest in being involved in this.

Impact on TfN, High-Level Corporate Risk Assessment and the Economic Recovery Plan

3.8 The Chief Executive updated Members on the impact on Transport for the North and the slides were taken as read.

3.9 The Chairman commended the Chief Executive and the team for the resilience shown in adapting to the challenging situation.

3.10 Cllr Swinburn stated that he believed that the biggest risk being faced in the long term is the availability of funding and stated that Transport for the North needed to push hard for post-Covid recovery business stimulus that will be created by transport improvements.

He requested that TfN accelerate the Strategic Development Corridor and Investment Programme especially where economic growth is the outcome. He highlighted the Grimsby Western Relief Road as one such project. This is a TfN project which is programmed for 2027 and he requested support from TfN to bring this project forward.

3.11 Mayor Jarvis stated that the economic challenges resulting from coronavirus will be massive. He emphasised the

importance of quick wins in order to deliver economic benefits and stated that the Hope Valley line would be one such project that would deliver on this.

- 3.12 Cllr Blake raised the issue of the impact of this on franchises and requested that this should be looked at further at the upcoming Rail North Committee.

She also stated that the current situation may provide an opportunity to start thinking about moving more freight on to rail.

- 3.13 Cllr Hale raised concerns about the impact of this on public transport in Hull. He expressed concern about the impact on bus services in the area post pandemic.

He also raised the issue of Hull Trains in the area and was disappointed not to have received TfN support for them as they, as non-franchised operators, had not received any Government support.

- 3.14 Kishor Taylor raised the issue that certain areas such as Hull have a large manufacturing industry and people will still need transport to get into work.

He also raised the issue of supply chains and how the current situation has shown that the existing ones do not work in the situation currently being experienced and that more local supply chains are needed which will require a better freight network.

- 3.15 The Chief Executive addressed the issue of Hull trains and explained that TfN has worked closely with the DfT in order to ensure that paths are kept open for Hull trains and that when we transition out of this the operator of train services in Hull will be able to resume.

RESOLVED: That the presentations and updates be noted.

4.0 NIC Rail Needs Assessment – Sir John Armitt (v)

- 4.1 Sir John Armitt was welcomed by the Chairman and asked to provide Members with an overview of the work he was doing with the National Infrastructure Committee (NIC).

- 4.2 Sir John explained that the NIC has been asked to provide the Government with a menu of options in different ways in which HS2 phase 2B can be combined with the different projects that Transport for the North is planning, as well as taking into account the Midlands rail hub and providing services up to Scotland.

4.3 The Chairman explained that during the Oakervee Review they argued for the Y-shaped network which they believe to be essential. He further explained the importance to the North of HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and the classic rail network integrating together.

4.4 Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions about the assessment and asked a variety of questions in relation to their constituent areas.

Cllr Green, Cllr Swinburn and Cllr Gittins asked specific questions relating to Scotland, North East Lincolnshire and Wales.

4.5 Cllr Blake requested a conversation following the meeting about moving forward work on the Eastern leg in order that it should not become secondary to the Western leg.

4.6 In responding to the questions from Cllrs Gittins, Swinburn and Blake, Sir John explained that the call for evidence will provide the maximum opportunity for constituent authorities to make the points that they have raised.

He explained that they are not being asked to make specific recommendations and reiterated that the Government are looking for a menu of options.

He explained that the biggest challenge is the process aspect and planning element.

4.7 Sir John was aware of the importance of links to Scotland using a combination of HS2/NPR and then linking in to the conventional rail network.

4.8 Mayor Rotheram explained that some of the options on the menu are unpalatable to the people of Liverpool City Region. He explained that he believed that some of the outputs had been diluted such as the journey time between Liverpool and Greater Manchester.

He also questioned who is responsible for leading on the delivery plan for bringing HS2 and NPR together, requested times scales, and asked if his work will be offering a model for how NPR will be delivered, or if the DfT will do that.

Sir John explained that he is aware of the need to get better connectivity over to Liverpool.

4.9 Mayor Jarvis welcomed the assessment and explained that they are commissioning a specific piece of work for the call for evidence.

- 4.10 Sir Peter Hendy explained that Network Rail is fully collaborating with this piece of work and stated that this is the first proposition for years that has looked to combine classic railway with new rail.
- 4.11 Mark Aldred stated that he wants the plan to consider the whole system and expressed his concerns about the funding.
- 4.12 Sir John explained that there would be an opportunity for LEPs to feedback to them.
- 4.13 The Chairman thanked Sir John for joining the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

5.0 Integrated Rail Plan (P)

- 5.1 Members received the presentation from the Strategy and Programme Director. He explained that a number of discussions have already taken place with Sir John Armitt and the NIC and close working arrangements have been established in the early stages of the Integrated Rail Plan.

He explained that Transport for the North is seeking to provide the NIC with as much support as possible during the initial evidence gathering phase, and this is being done by making available existing evidence and analysis available to them for the North's long term rail requirements.

He explained that the Government is still working to the end of year deadline for completing the process, with evidence needing to be with the NIC by the end of May. A first draft has been produced and he hoped that this would be shared with Members' Officers by the end of the day.

- 5.2 Cllr Green asked how local issues will be included in the submission.
- 5.3 Nick Bisson apologised that Emma Ward had been unable to dial in to the meeting.

He explained that the Ministers still wanted to achieve the Integrated Rail Plan and that the timelines remained the same.

In response to Mayor Rotheram, he explained that the NIC focus on needs assessment is on the "what" and that the "how" will come later.

RESOLVED: 1) That the presentation be noted;

- 2) That the broad approach outlined be supported, subject to points raised by Members being addressed.

6.0 Northern Powerhouse Rail Update (r)

- 6.1 The report was received by Members and taken as read. The NPR Director highlighted the key points of the report for Members.
- 6.2 The Finance Director referred Members to the March Monthly Operating Report which was circulated with the papers. He highlighted the TDF allocation letter in the report, which was received on 31 March, and explained that the letter differed from the draft which the business plan and budget had been based on, and this had introduced uncertainty into the funding arrangements for NPR.

Discussions have been on going with the Department since the letter had been received and funding is now committed for the sifting work. There is also a funding agreement that would take TfN to delivery of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) at the end of the year. However, TfN has not yet had the pre sequence 5 confirmation which is preparatory work that that needs to be undertaken to prepare for the immediate start of outline business cases once the SOC has been agreed.

The Finance Director explained that he understands that the DfT intend to undertake a detailed view of the NPR work plan at the end of the summer, by which point the direction of travel on the Integrated Rail Plan will be known.

- 6.3 Cllr Mundry requested that NPR should look at operating from Liverpool to Manchester on a new 2-line system rather than using any existing lines which he believes will cause issues. In response the NPR Director explained that there will be six trains an hour between Liverpool and Manchester. Whilst a number of options are under consideration, there is an agreed TfN preference for a new line between Liverpool, Warrington and Manchester.
- 6.4 Cllr Scott requested that the Leeds Newcastle sift line be brought forward to September.

In response the NPR Director explained that this is a particularly complex issue on which he is working closely with partners in the Northeast and plans are being formulated. He confirmed that Cllr Scott's comments would be taken into consideration.

- 6.5 Peter Kennan asked how LEPs can have meaningful input into the sifting process.

He also emphasised the importance of quick wins as this is something that did not feature in the report.

The issue of Manchester Piccadilly was also raised, as he wanted to better understand the role of Manchester Piccadilly in the sifting process when the situation regarding it has not yet been resolved.

The NPR Director stated that he would welcome a conversation with the LEPs on this issue.

In relation to quick wins he highlighted the Barnsley Dearne Valley station as well as Darlington and is keen to get some very early survey work done and quickly move to delivery.

- 6.6 Cllr Blake stated that the impact of Covid 19 needs to be taken into account. She also requested that constituent authorities should be consulted on any communications that go out around NPR due to it being an area of sensitivity.

She requested that the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State around the funding issue. She also highlighted the fact the difficult decisions would be required around NPR and believed that Ministers needed to be involved in this process going forward.

The NPR Director stressed the importance of communications and stated that a series of one-to-ones will be being arranged with Members and leaders in the North.

- 6.7 Cllr Aldred asked how TFN will ensure the route Corridor sift and SOC align with the integrated rail plan, particularly with the sift process taking place before the IRP is published and that Piccadilly is expected to be considered as part of the IRP.

- RESOLVED:**
- 1) That the report be noted;
 - 2) That the Progress on the SOC through development of the structure of the five cases and development of the phasing approach be noted;
 - 3) That Members agree to the rephrasing of the NPR programme to change the submission date of the SOC document to align with the March 2021 TfN Board;
 - 4) That Members agree the options appraisal and sifting process that NPR follows, commencing June 2020 in line with the rephased programme.

7.0 IST Phase 3 & 4 Update (r)

7.1 Members received the IST phase 3 and 4 update report which was taken as read.

- RESOLVED:**
- 1) That the report be noted;
 - 2) That Members approve and delegate authority to the Chief Executive to sign off the Strategic Outline Business for Stage 4 of the project.

8.0 Monthly Operating Report (r)

8.1 Members received the Monthly Operating Report which was taken as read.

	RESOLVED:	That the report be noted.	
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r = report; p = presentation; v = verbal

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