

# Rail North Committee Minutes

**Meeting:** Rail North Committee  
**Date:** Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2018 – 10.30am - 12.30pm  
**Venue:** Committee Room A, Wellington House, Wellington Street,  
Leeds, LS1 2DE

**Attendees:**

|                             |                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Cllr. Liam Robinson (Chair) | Liverpool City Region     |
| Mayor Andy Burnham          | Greater Manchester        |
| Cllr. Harold Davenport      | Cheshire & Potteries      |
| Cllr. Judith Blake          | West Yorkshire and York   |
| Cllr. Trevor Ainsworth      | East Midlands Authorities |
| Cllr. Rob Waltham           | Humber Authorities        |
| Mayor Ben Houchen           | Tees Valley               |

**Industry Representatives:**

|                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Anna-Jane Hunter | Network Rail         |
| Liam Sumpter     | Northern             |
| Rob Warnes       | Northern             |
| Paul Watson      | TransPennine Express |

**Officers in attendance:**

|                |                         |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Barry White    | Transport for the North |
| David Hoggarth | Transport for the North |
| Gary Bogan     | Rail North Partnership  |

## 1.0 Welcome and Apologies

## Action

1.1 Members were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair, Cllr. Liam Robinson. The Chair proposed moving Item 6 to the end of the agenda as it would involve discussion of exempt items.

1.2 No apologies for absence were noted.

**RESOLVED:** That Agenda Item 6 be re-ordered to the end of the agenda.

## 2.0 Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

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- 2.2 Cllr. Davenport requested clarification on the point about decision making on the return to service post 30 July. David Hoggarth (DH) explained that the views of the Committee had been fed into the industry meeting which had ultimately proposed a solution that the Rail North Partnership accepted.

### **3.0 Rail Performance Update**

- 3.1 Anna Jane Hunter (AJH), Network Rail explained her role to the meeting and gave a presentation on the industry performance recovery plan.
- 3.2 The presentation and subsequent discussion covered:
- Performance is not where the industry wishes to be, but it has improved and incremental improvements are continuing.
  - AJH offered to show members the Railway Operations Centre to show how things work.
  - Mayor Andy Burnham (AB) commented that positive steps were being made in the right direction, but asked why is performance still so poor. He suggested reverting to the pre May 18 timetable as that worked substantially better. He also questioned Northern's Sunday cancellations through August.
  - AJH said they are analysing the data and will be in a position to present an assessment of underlying issues at the September meeting. She also explained why timetables cannot simply go back to pre May 18 and why this would lead to a worse outcome for passengers. The strategy was to improve from the current position.
  - Cllr Judith Blake (JB) agreed that having AJH as a focal point was positive, but expressed her lack of confidence in the ability of the industry to solve the problem and the need for more

information, particularly in terms of full passenger impacts. She asked whether the full workforce planning had been undertaken in relation to the Sunday cancellations on Northern.

- JB also requested a note (Minute) of a previous telecon meeting. DH to circulate
- JB asked Paul Watson (PW) to inform the Committee if there were likely to be issues in the future with capacity. PW agreed to do this.
- AJH said she is rigorously strengthening the readiness process for the December 2018 and May 2019 timetables.
- Liam Sumpter (LS) said performance issues were due to a sub-optimal timetable which created problems. He also spoke about the industrial relations position and offered a separate briefing session on Industrial Relations. LS to arrange briefing
- AB again questioned whether there was a definite diagnosis of exactly what went wrong with the flawed timetable, and when can we tell the public to expect timetables back up to standard. AJH said that the analysis would be shared once complete in September.
- Cllr Harold Davenport (HD) commented that the Potteries and Cheshire have also been badly effected as they too have Sunday service cancellations and stakeholders are very unhappy as the leisure economy is also suffering. He questioned whether Northern were in breach of contract for not providing a full service.
- Gary Bogan (GB) stated that he will be updating the Rail North Partnership Board meeting that afternoon on emerging findings.
- Rob Waltham (RWal) asked for reassurance that the new timetables in

December and May will not bring the same issues. AJH said that December will be better, but still not perfect.

- Barry White (BW) raised concerns on behalf of Cumbria County Council about continued issues on the Lakes Line in terms of cancellations and crowding.
- Several members requested better data including on passenger demand impacts and detailed line of route data.
- JB questioned whether the operators are still on course to deliver passenger improvements through franchise investment and timetable changes. LS said operators are on track to deliver – new trains are now in the country and should be in the system by the start of next year. RWar said bigger, better trains are coming with more capacity.
- AB said that trust in the industry is currently low and raised further questions about Sunday working. LS is happy to explore the challenges in a private session.
- Liam Robinson (LR) questioned why the planned 3 trains per day from Liverpool to Glasgow were not now happening in December 2018. PW said that the timetable needs to be stabilised before adding more to it.

### 3.3

The Chair thanked the presenters and set out some key actions:

- i. Information is the key and more detailed information on the causes of poor performance should be provided at the next meeting.
- ii. The suggested briefing on Industrial Relations is required as soon as possible.
- iii. A clear plan for improving back to a satisfactory position is needed to get confidence back.

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- iv. Information on passenger demand is needed.

**RESOLVED:** That the report and presentation be noted.

#### **4.0 Timetable Development**

- 4.1 David Hoggarth (DH) updated the meeting on the process going forward and the key changes for May and December which need to be finalised by early September.
- 4.2 Mayor Ben Houchen (BH) raised concerns about the draft principles set out in the paper. The principles set out do not include recognition of regeneration or economic improvements which could mean that some areas miss out. He also suggested that the Saltburn service enhancement scheme should be accorded the same status as the North Transpennine proposal.
- 4.3 Cllr. Trevor Ainsworth (TA) questioned whether all the items on the list of planned enhancements (as set out in the Appendix to the report) are achievable. LR suggested that where outputs can no longer be delivered there should be compensation.
- 4.4 AB suggested that the Committee should not endorse something until the industry has provided the detailed analysis on the problems with the timetable . He suggested more radical options for delivering improvements should be considered.

**RESOLVED:** That the principles for future timetable development are re-visited following the industry report back on the review of network capacity.

**RESOLVED:** That further work on the two specific Service Option Fund schemes (Saltburn and North Transpennine) is undertaken with a report back to the September meeting.

## 5.0 Industry Consultations

- 5.1 DH highlighted the two draft consultation responses; Rail Delivery Group (RDG)'s fares consultation and the DfT's consultation on the Cross Country franchise.
- 5.2 In relation to the RDG consultation. AB suggested fares should be linked to performance and this should be a key principle in the TfN response. He also suggested that there should be less differential between peak and off peak fares. HD felt that the RDG consultation document was weak.
- 5.3 LR asked that the response references the need for better value fares for young people.
- 5.4 In response, David Hoggarth said that he would amend the response to take into account the points raised. DH to amend
- 5.5 In relation to the Cross Country consultation members highlighted the current lack of capacity and opportunities to better serve places such as Liverpool and Congleton.
- RESOLVED:** That the fares consultation be re-drafted and circulated around Committee Members for further input.
- RESOLVED:** That the Cross Country response be finalised and submitted.

## 6.0 Future Work Programme

- 6.1 David Hoggarth introduced the paper which had been deferred from the previous meeting. He suggested that 'future fares strategy' would be added to the work programme following the previous item.
- 6.2 AB suggested that the Rail North Partnership review should be brought to the fore such that committee members can provide a clear steer. He suggested a governance/accountability working group may be needed.
- RESOLVED:** That the future work programme priorities be agreed.

## **7.0 Date of the Next Meeting**

- 7.1 The date of the next meeting is Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018, to be held in Sheffield.

## **8.0 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED:** That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph C of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **9.0 Update on Current Issues**

- 9.1 Members received a verbal update on and discussed the following matters:
- Proposal for an independent person to oversee performance recovery
  - Contract management and accountability in relation to the franchises
  - Input to the Rail North Partnership Board.