

Transport for the North Board Minutes

9 December 2024
Friends Meeting House Manchester

Present:

Lord McLoughlin (Chair)

Attendee

Cllr Phil Riley
Cllr Louise Gittins
Cllr Denise Rollo
Cllr Eammon O'Brien

Cllr Mike Ross
Cllr Rupert Swarbrick
Mayor Steve Rotheram

Cllr Martin Gannon
Cllr Stewart Swinburn
Cllr Tim Mitchell
Cllr Tom Hunt

Cllr Stephen Harker
Cllr John Murray
Mayor Tracy Brabin

Local Authority

Blackburn with Darwen;
Cheshire West & Chester;
Cumberland;
Greater Manchester Combined
Authority;
Hull;
Lancashire;
Liverpool City Region Combined
Authority;
North East Combined Authority;
North East Lincolnshire;
North Lincolnshire;
South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined
Authority;
Tees Valley;
Westmorland and Furness;
West Yorkshire Combined Authority;

Business Representative Attendees

Clare Hayward
Mark Rawstron
Ken Perritt

Business Representative
Lancashire Business Representative
South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined
Authority Business Representative

Partners in Attendance:

Andy Rhind
Richard Leonard
Rob McIntosh

DfT
National Highways
Network Rail

Officers in Attendance:

Name

Martin Tugwell
Gary Rich
Katie Day
Paul Kelly
Julie Openshaw
David Hoggarth
Peter Cole

Joanne Barclay

Job Title

Chief Executive
Democratic Services Officer
Deputy Chief Executive
Finance Director
Head of Legal
Head of Strategic Rail
Principal Environmental and
Sustainability Officer
Senior Solicitor

Also in Attendance

Simon Elliott
Stephen Rhodes

Transport for Greater Manchester
Transport for Greater Manchester

Item No:

1. Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Board Members and apologies were noted from Mayor Skaith, Cllrs Gorman, Mannion, West, Kilbane, Lynn Williams, Renwick, Wharmby, Khan and Robinson as well as Nick Harris, Tim Smart, Mandy Ridyard and Stephen Parnaby.
- 1.2 The Chair opened the meeting by wishing the Monitoring Officer Ms Julie Openshaw all the best on her retirement and thanked her for all of her work during her time at TFN.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Transport for the North Board held on 16 September 2024 were considered.
- 3.2 Members received an update from the Chief Executive following the last meeting as well as the Quarterly Operating Report.
- 3.3 The Chief Executive provided an update on role changes within the executive team. He informed Board that Ms Katie Day (Deputy Chief Executive) will be taking directorial responsibility for the Strategic Rail Team from January 2025 (in addition to her responsibilities for TAME, Comms and Engagement and Legal), while Ms Rachel Ford will become the Interim Strategy Director with responsibility for the Strategy and Research functions along with the Major Roads team and Connected Mobility. These arrangements, which flow from the work on Business Planning, will be in place for 15 months from the start of January.
- 3.4 Mayor Rotheram highlighted that his name had been misspelt in the minutes of the previous meeting at para 4.7.
- 3.5 Cllr Hunt requested an update on exploring the potential for regional fleet bus procurement and reiterated the offer to host TfN in South Yorkshire for a future Board meeting.
- 3.6 The Chief Executive explained that the procurement issue is currently being discussed with partners through the Bus Forum. On the question of Sheffield hosting the Board he stated that he hoped that a Board meeting will take place in in South Yorkshire soon.

Resolved:

- 1) That the minutes of the Transport for the North Board held on 16 September 2024 be approved as a correct record (with Mayor Rotheram correctly spelt).

- 2) That the Chief Executive's update and the Quarterly Operating report be noted.

4. Presentation: Transport for Greater Manchester

- 4.1 Note: this item was discussed prior to the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 4.2 The Chair welcomed Mr Stephen Rhodes and Mr Simon Elliott from Transport for Greater Manchester to address Board on the Bee Network. Members received their presentation, which highlighted a number of aspects that may be applicable more widely across the North.
- 4.3 The Chair asked about the 'adult Bee anytime' bus ticket and what kind of savings passengers should expect to make.
- 4.4 Mr Rhodes explained that they are seeking to make fares lower and simpler for people to understand and have achieved a modest reduction.
- 4.5 Cllr Swinburn highlighted a number of barriers faced in North East Lincolnshire in trying to implement similar but smaller projects. He explained that the DfT would not support electrification of existing buses, and the authority could not use their BSiP funding to implement contactless payments on buses. He also highlighted issues in seeking to franchise services where there may be only potential operator in the area.
- 4.6 Mayor Brabin thanked TfGM for its support as WYCA commences its bus franchise journey. She enquired about what had been done to achieve an 11% increase in punctuality and asked about how the public received information on service performance. Finally, she asked about how fast delivery of EV buses had been achieved.
- 4.7 Mr Rhodes answered that they are happy to help other authorities by sharing experience and information: they had also been sharing TfGM's experience with DfT as it prepares the forthcoming Buses Bill. Addressing the issue of punctuality, he commented that they have had to 'live it' to understand the factors that impact on punctuality, noting the need to focus on issues such as roadworks, temporary lights and gritting routes. Additionally, there had been a series of sessions with operators focused on performance and punctuality: experience showed that use of data and analysis enabled judgements to be made as to how to improve performance.
- 4.8 On the dashboard question (performance information), he explained that Mayor Burnham publishes information on social media on a weekly basis as well as having a weekly slot on local radio allowing for performance to be scrutinised. This maintains public interest in performance and encourages officers to deal with issues immediately.
- 4.9 He stated that TfGM pursues manufacturers on a regular basis to get new vehicles delivered on time. Additionally, he highlighted the limited capacity that exists within the manufacturing sector and is open to working collaboratively with other authorities on procuring buses.
- 4.10 Cllr Swarbrick sought reassurance about cross border issues and how the relationship works with neighbouring authorities and their operators. This

issue was also raised by Ms Hayward and Cllr Gittins who suggested that TfN can play a role in facilitating cross boundary solutions.

- 4.11 Cllr Gannon raised the importance of ensuring integration of the rail system and bus systems, suggesting that the greater flexibility of the bus system needs to be taken into account in this regard.
- 4.12 Ms Hayward asked whether there is a relationship with Trainline that enables public bodies to access its customer information to allow for a more effective integration between bus and train.
- 4.13 In addressing the cross-border issue Mr Rhodes stated that this remains of paramount importance.
- 4.14 Mr Elliott spoke about service integration and the network reviews that are being undertaken as a means of improving this; additionally, he echoed the point made by Cllr Gannon regarding the importance of timing and aligning bus services with the trains.
- 4.15 With regard to ticketing, he informed the Board that the use of Pay Go is being pursued not simply because it offers a better product for the user, but also provides great insight around the journeys passengers are making, including whether the journey is multi-modal. This insight will help in designing what services are needed and where capacity is best served. On the question of Trainline he presumed that the rail industry will have the data; however, with advance purchases the data is harder to obtain.
- 4.16 Cllr O'Brien provided an elected Member's perspective of how things have improved since the introduction of the Bee Network. Under the new system there is now a sense of empowerment and self-belief that services can improve, and that users can approach TfGM directly to discuss issues and examine solutions rather than speaking to what might be considered 'faceless' organisation. Now it is possible to draw everything together and integrate, both from a transport perspective and a public services perspective.
- 4.17 The Chair thanked Mr Rhodes and Mr Elliott for their presentation. He explained that as Board meetings are held in different venues around the North the host partner will be invited to showcase a project or proposal for their location.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted.

5. Business Planning for 2025/26

- 5.1 Members received the report from the Deputy Chief Executive who highlighted the key points within her report.
- 5.2 Mr Mark Rawstron reinforced the importance of improving east-west connectivity, the challenges of rural connectivity and the importance of giving greater consideration of freight and logistics given the key role they play in supporting the economy. He explained that all of these things are interlinked and welcomed the focus being given to these in Business Planning.

- 5.3 Cllr Swinburn spoke of past commitments to provide a direct rail service between Cleethorpes and London and requested TfN's support in getting this resolved.
- 5.4 The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to contact him to discuss this matter further.
- 5.5 Mayor Brabin thanked the previous Secretary of State for her work in setting out a vision for integrated transport and the importance of having a clear trajectory with milestones and deliverables against which progress is measured. Mayor Brabin hoped that the previous Secretary of State's focus on moving quickly and fix issues continued. She expressed the hope that that the new Secretary of State will soon attend a TfN Board meeting.
- 5.6 Mayor Brabin sought assurance that the outcomes of TfN are aligned with the Mayoral Growth Plans. She also welcomed the work being done by the TfN executive in developing the Northern Appraisal Playbook and requested a further update on this at the next available opportunity. Mayor Brabin was particularly interested to understand how the Playbook may better reflect the urban disadvantage; she asked for this to be factored into TfN's thinking.
- 5.7 The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that TfN will continue to ensure its work aligns with that of the Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Transport Authorities: stating that TfN exists to support the work of its constituent authorities.
- 5.8 With regard to the Northern Appraisal Playbook she explained that the TfN executive is currently working through the feedback from the recent Partnership Board discussion and hopes to bring a report to Board in the New Year.
- 5.9 Mayor Rotherham highlighted the expertise available amongst the constituent authorities and more widely across the North. He encouraged the TfN executive (in business planning) to make best use of this expertise.
- 5.10 The Chair agreed with Mayor Rotheram and highlighted the good work at Huddersfield University on transport. He suggested that an audit of transport related research at Universities across the North should be done.
- 5.11 He then also expressed his thanks to the previous Secretary of State who had put the Department for Transport on to a more outreaching footing and expressed his hope that this will continue under the new Secretary of State.
- 5.12 On the Northern Appraisal Playbook Ms Hayward informed the Board that North West Business Leaders have undertaken some work on the Green Book and suggested that they are contacted for information. She highlighted that the Business Planning did not explicitly reference the need to work on improving North-South connectivity (Birmingham to Manchester) and asked if TfN is no longer supporting the alternative approach to HS2.

- 5.13 The Deputy Chief Executive explained that TfN continues to support HS2 and whilst not specifically referenced within the report on Business Planning, the commitment set out in the Strategic Transport Plan remains. She noted that the Government is undertaking an infrastructure review as part of the next phase of the Spending Review and reassured the Board that the TfN executive continued to work on the need to improve connectivity to/from the North, including with Scotland, Wales and the rest of England. The Board was informed that TfN officials had been in Crewe the previous week working with partners in seeking to address some of the issues in and around the Crewe area.
- 5.14 Cllr Hunt welcomed the approach set out in the report and commented that this illustrates that transport is an enabler for growth. He also welcomed the commitment to place-based rail task forces, as well as the important advocacy role that TfN plays and stated that it is incumbent on constituent authorities to inform TfN of schemes they wish to progress on to ensure a consistent approach.

Resolved:

That the report and the Board's comments were noted and will inform the preparation of the draft Business Plan for consideration at the March Board meeting.

6. Annual Governance Statement, Statement of Accounts and Audit Opinion 2023/24

- 6.1 Members received the report from the Finance Director who outlined the key aspects of his report.
- 6.2 Mr Graham Bell Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee presented his annual report. He informed Board of the high quality of presentations received during the year and complemented the TfN executive team for the high professional standard of those officers who present these reports.
- 6.3 The Chair thanked Mr Bell and his colleagues for all their hard work on the Committee.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Corporate Governance Review and the Annual Governance Statement be approved;
- 2) That Board noted that Transport for the North's draft statement of accounts was laid open to public inspection for the statutory period without objection being raised;
- 3) That the Statement of Accounts for financial year 2023/24 subject to their being no material adjustments, as agreed with the external auditors be approved.

7. Decarbonisation Strategy Stocktake and Action Plan Update

- 7.1 Members received the report from the Head of Decarbonisation who highlighted the key points within his report.

- 7.2 Mayor Brabin commented that the change in travel patterns because of the Covid pandemic appeared to have helped targets be met during the period under review and enquired as to whether targets will be met during the next period.
- 7.3 The Head of Decarbonisation stated that the early output from the re-basing work suggests that the pandemic did indeed enable the carbon reduction targets to be met between 2018 and 2023. However, going into 2023 things are not as positive due to the lower than assumed sale of zero emission vehicles and the faster than expected rebound in car use more generally. He stated that the challenge remains difficult. He continued by explaining that the Decarbonisation Pathway will provide an illustration as to the level of regional commitment that needs to be undertaken if targets are to be met. The Pathway work will be reported back to the Board in 2025.
- 7.4 Mr Rawstron expressed concern about the adoption of the “no net increase” in car and HGV Mileage metric. He noted that this does not exclude mileage undertaken by electric vehicles and is not linked to the improvement of public transport infrastructure which he believes should be a pre-condition. He set out his concern that being clear on such interdependencies is important if the North’s ambitions for economic growth are to be realised. He also emphasised the importance of recognising that the solutions in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas will be different.
- 7.5 The Head of Decarbonisation clarified that the “no net increase” metric only relates to cars and taxis and not HGVs. He then outlined why the metric does not exclude electric vehicle mileage, explaining that this is linked to TfN’s social inclusion ambition. He agreed that sustainable public transport needs to be a pre-condition if the North is to realise economic growth that is sustainable for the longer term. He also explained that the no net increase is a regional target and acknowledged that some areas including rural areas may have an “uptick” compared to others.
- 7.6 The Deputy Chief Executive reiterated that the metric is predicated on having sustainable public transport choices as set out in STP.
- 7.7 Cllr Hunt highlighted the challenge of improving air quality across the north and suggested the importance of investment that addresses this issue as well as supporting economic growth should be supported.
- 7.8 Cllr Gannon questioned whether the set targets are correct and whether the correct strategic direction is being taken. He highlighted the importance of having consistent messaging when it comes to the outcomes being sought. He expressed his concern that the price of private transport does not reflect the true costs and questioned whether taxation on this should be higher in order to factor in the costs of maintaining roads, costs of pollution and the costs on the health service.
- 7.9 Cllr Rollo highlighted the increasing number of storms that Cumbria has had to deal with in recent years and the impact that has on local communities and businesses. She noted that the evidence is clear that

these will continue to increase over the coming years. She welcomed the work to map out the vulnerability of climate change in the area. In doing so she added that tourism is huge in the area and highlighted the importance of any work on carbon reduction targets to take this into account.

- 7.10 Ms Hayward stated that decarbonization of the transport system can only be achieved with improved grid capacity and that there needs to be greater emphasis on supporting investment in improved energy systems.
- 7.11 Mayor Rotherham stated his interest in the Carbon Assessment Playbook and believes this could be important tool upon which constituent authorities can draw in the future. He also emphasised the importance of having a high-quality public transport system across the north, one that offers an alternative to using the car as this will help to reduce pollution levels.

Resolved:

- 1) That the report, including the timescales for delivery be noted;
- 2) That the feedback from Board on the early findings of the stocktake are noted and taken into account in moving forward.

8. Spending Review: Priorities

- 8.1 Members received the report from the Chief Executive who outlined the key points within the report.
- 8.2 Mayor Brabin stated that there are assumptions attached to HS2 which are going to fall away and that these need to be factored into looking at the future of NPR. She also emphasised the importance of drawing on work within the MCAs in relation to energy and digital infrastructure in order to avoid duplication. She also asked about the timeframe to which TfN is working for submission of the spending review.
- 8.3 Cllr Ross raised the importance of making the case for rail electrification in the Hull and East Yorkshire area. He noted that this was a topic of discussion as part of the devolution deal and wanted reassurance that the case would be supported by TfN.
- 8.4 Cllr Swinburn asked that the importance of investing to maintain connectivity along the A180 between Grimsby and Immingham be recognised.
- 8.5 Mayor Rotherham spoke about the Port Access Scheme and the importance of the Port of Liverpool as a strategic asset to UK PLC. He reminded Board of the failed road scheme which was opposed locally, but the need to improve connectivity to/from the port still exists. He believes that this could be solved by getting more freight on to rail and suggested that Lord Hendy be invited to address Board on this matter.
- 8.6 Ms Hayward asked that the key role of regional airports be taken into consideration in any submission to the Spending Review. She also encouraged any submission to draw out linkages with the priorities of the Manifesto of the North prepared through the Convention of the North.

- 8.7 Referring back to the issue of improving connectivity to/from Port of Liverpool, Mr Leonard stated that National Highways is looking to work with TfN and the MCA with a view to undertaking a study to identify the opportunities available for improving port access. Mr Leonard confirmed that whilst National Highways would provide some funding the scope of the study would consider rail as well as road access.
- 8.8 The Chief Executive stated that the way of working proposed by Mr Leonard reflects how TfN has worked with National Highways and constituent authorities in looking at connectivity issues between Sheffield and Manchester. He explained that this experience can be used to inform the study associated with access to the Port in Liverpool.
- 8.9 Addressing some of the other issues raised the Chief Executive stated that the TfN executive is already working with Officers in West Yorkshire to ensure that work in relation to digital and energy systems was complementary. He anticipated that something will be required for the spending review by February/March 2025. Additionally, he observed the importance of aligning submissions to the spending review to the Government's Missions: in this he suggested that transport's role as an enabler of economic, social and environmental outcomes is important.
- 8.10 The Chief Executive informed the Board that he will work with the Executive Board, senior officers and the business community to ensure that comments are reflected into the proposal.

Resolved:

That Members comments on priorities were noted and will be used to inform the development of a submission.

9. Governance Update

- 9.1 Members received the report from the Head of Legal.
- 9.2 Cllr Mitchell requested clarity on the voting rights of the new Lincolnshire Combined Authority on the TfN Board: he was concerned that it would no longer have a vote at Board level other than on any matters relating to rail.
- 9.3 The Chair and the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that this would be the case however, as a co-opted member of the Board the new Combined Authority would still have a voice around the table. Both the Deputy Chief Executive and Mr Rhind explained that this is because an authority can only be full member of one Sub National Transport Board and the new Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority have opted to be a member of Midlands Connect. The Chief Executive reassured the meeting that the new Lincolnshire Combined Authority, as a Rail North Authority, would have full voting rights at meetings of the Rail North Committee.

Resolved:

- 1) That with effect from the date when the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA), the Lancashire County Combined Authority (LCCA) and the Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority (HEYCA) are in place, the groupings for Rail North Committee (RNC) and General Purposes Committee (GPC) membership are abolished and each

Constituent Authority and co-opted member of TfN be allocated a separate seat on RNC;

- 2) That from that time, each Constituent Authority of TfN be allocated a seat on GPC, and that there be one Business representative co-opted to the GPC from those co-opted on TfN Board on a non-voting basis;
- 3) That with effect from the date of the establishment of the GLCCA, North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council are removed as Constituent Authorities of TfN and that the Secretary of State for Transport be advised of this resolution;
- 4) That once the GLCCA is established:
 - it be co-opted as a Rail North Authority on to TfN Board; and
 - the voting shares at Rail North Committee formerly allocated to Lincolnshire County Council, North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council are allocated to GLCCA.
- 5) That substitute members for the Audit and Governance Committee be permitted;
- 6) That the Members in Appendix 1 be appointed as AGC Substitute members for the remainder of the municipal year;
- 7) That the Constitution be amended accordingly;
- 8) That Mr Graham Bell's term of office as an Independent Member of Audit & Governance Committee be extended from 30 April 2025 until 30 September 2027.

10. Rail North Committee

- 10.1 Members received the report from the Head of Strategic Rail who highlighted the key points of his report.
- 10.2 Cllr Riley highlighted the problems with Northern services in East Lancashire and expressed his deep concern that this is undermining everything else discussed at the meeting. He also expressed concern about reputational risk associated with Northern failing to deliver the service it is required to do.
- 10.3 The Chief Executive noted that an additional meeting of the Rail North Committee will be held with Northern on 13 January. This meeting had been called by Committee Members as they were as concerned about the basics as Cllr Riley.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

11. Communications and Engagement Strategy

- 11.1 Members received the report of the Deputy Chief Executive.
- 11.2 Mayor Rotherham requested that this report be deferred to the March Board due to its importance and to allow for discussion with greater Member participation. He added that communication is the key way for people to understand TfN's work.

- 11.3 Members were supportive of the proposal to defer the paper until March 2025.
- 11.4 Mr Rawstron requested for engagement with the business community to be included in the preparatory work.
- 11.5 The Chair suggested that this item be discussed earlier in the agenda in order to allow for a longer discussion.

Resolved:

That the item be deferred until next meeting.

12. Corporate Risk Register

- 12.1 Members received the report of the Risk Manager and the report was taken as read.

Resolved:

That the Board note TfN's corporate risks and risk management activity over the last 9 months.

13. Appointment of Monitoring Officer

- 13.1 Note: this item was taken after the presentation from Transport for Greater Manchester.
- 13.2 Members received the report from the Head of HR. The Chief Executive introduced the item and thanked Cllrs Swarbrick, Kilbane and Gorman for their work on the appointment panel.

Resolved:

That Board approves the appointment of Ms Joanne Barclay as Transport for the North Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal from 1 January 2025.

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting

17 March 2025 – 1-3pm