

Rail North Committee Meeting – Minutes

Meeting: Rail North Committee
Date: Tuesday 5th November 2019 – 14.00 to 16.00
Venue: Leeds Civic Hall, Leeds – Rooms 6 and 7

Attendees:

Cllr Liam Robinson (Chair)
Mayor Andy Burnham
Mayor Dan Jarvis
Cllr Judith Blake
Cllr Don Mackenzie
Cllr Trevor Ainsworth
Cllr Richard Hannigan

Liverpool City Region
Greater Manchester
Sheffield City Region
West Yorkshire and York
North Yorkshire
East Midlands Authorities
Humber Authorities

Also in Attendance:

Barry White
David Hoggarth
Gary Bogan
Tom Davidson
Gary Rich
Tobyn Hughes

Phil James (Items 4 – 6)
Richard George (Items 4 - 8)
Rob Warnes (Items 4 – 6)
Alan Chaplin (Items 4 – 6)
Louise Ebbs (Items 4 – 6)
Julie Openshaw
Deborah Dimock

TfN Chief Executive
TfN Strategic Rail Director
Rail North Partnership Director
TfN Transport Planner
Democratic Services Officer
TfN Rail North Partnership
Representative
Network Rail
Independent Railway Experts Ltd
Northern
Northern
TPE
Head of Legal Services
Legal Services Officer

Apologies:

Cllr Craig Browne
Cllr Rob Waltham
Cllr Keith Iddon
Cllr Keith Little
Cllr Nick Forbes
Cllr Carl Marshall
Ben Houchen

Cheshire and The Potteries
Humber Authorities
Lancashire and Cumbria
Lancashire and Cumbria
North East Authorities
North East Authorities
Tees Valley Combined Authority

1.0 Welcome and Apologies**Action**

- 1.1 The chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2.0 Declaration of Interest

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3.0 Minutes of the meeting on 12 September 2019

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting on 12 September 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 12 September 2019 be approved as a true and accurate record.

4.0 Performance and December 2019 Timetable Update (r and p)

- 4.1 The report of the Strategic Rail Director was received and taken as read.

The Strategic Rail Director highlighted that the performance of both operators was just under 80% which whilst not on target is 5-10% better than this time last year.

An analysis on the background to the poor performance was also given. It was explained that trends nationally are showing an increase in delays over the last 8 years. However there have been higher than national average increases in the north of the country than has happened elsewhere in the country. The Strategic Rail Director explained that these delays can attributed to systems problems as well as day to day operator issues.

This analysis supports what Richard George reported earlier in year.

- 4.2 The Chief Executive explained that he has written to Network Rail highlighting the issues and suggesting a new collaboration is needed.

A suggestion for a taskforce to work in the north will be highlighted in a letter to the Secretary of State.

- 4.3 Phil James provided a Network Rail update. He explained that additional rail head treatments had been put together in order to minimise issues over the Autumn.

- 4.4 Louise Ebbs from TransPennine Express (TPE) updated Members on performance. She explained that Period 7 has been better than the 2 previous periods as well as better than their performance this time last year, however it is not where they want it to be.

She explained that over the last 2 weeks there has been issues with disruption being caused by flooding which has led to a 30% Public Performance Measure (PPM) loss.

TPE have also experienced train crew related cancellations as a result of driver training on their new trains.

The acceptance of new trains is running well with 60% of trains having been accepted to date.

TPE are on track to introduce more trains later this month with the new Nova 2 being also being introduced on the West Coast Main line later this month.

TPE will be running 3 daily services from Liverpool to Glasgow from December 2019.

Louise explained that no additional Nova 2 and Nova 3 trains would be being introduced for December timetable (so the timetable is not dependent on these new trains).

There will be close monitoring of driver training in order to support the changes.

- 4.5 Rob Warnes provided an update on performance for Northern. He explained that there had been an improvement in their performance compared to the same period last year.

Rob explained that train crew has been an issue for them. They have been releasing between 50 and 60 drivers a day to train and this has been placing stress on the system.

He explained that engineering hasn't been as good as they would have liked with flooding and external issues also impacting on their performance.

Delays in service have reduced and wheel flats are at one third of the level compared to this time last year.

A number of new services were highlighted including; 2 extra services a day between Middlesbrough and Whitby, a service which will re-connect Halifax and Hull service and an all-day service running between Southport and Alderly Edge. A brand-new station is also being opened at Warrington West.

Northern has 74 new CAF units in place and delivery of these is going well.

There are currently risks relating to Neville Hill depot and developments at Neville Hill are critical to the work going on at Leeds station.

The crew training for new trains is being watched carefully to ensure that this does not have an impact on services.

4.6 Cllr Mackenzie updated Members on service additions on the Harrogate line, explaining that there will be six new LNER services scheduled from December 2019.

4.7 Cllr Mackenzie went on to explain that there is £12.5 million to invest in supporting 2 trains per hour between Harrogate and York, but this is being held up by capacity constraints at Skelton Junction.

Rob Warnes explained that this is proving to be a challenge for the December 2021 timetable as they won't know if there will be space to operate two trains an hour. A decision on this is expected in early 2020.

4.8 Mayor Burnham challenged Northern on the number of cancelled trains that they had had during the reported period. The average number of cancellations was 116 trains per day equating to 4.4% of the total number of trains. In the West of the region cancellations have been running at 9-10% on any given day and performance is not better than last year. Mayor Burnham stated that Northern have been responsible for 70% of these cancellations.

Mayor Burnham asked for assurances that cancellation levels will be brought down to levels of other areas.

Rob Warnes explained that the vast majority of these cancellations were due to engineering issues with the trains and drivers needing to be released for training.

Mayor Burnham questioned the reasons as to why training had not better managed better and whether overtime was being used sufficiently to cover this training.

Rob Warnes explained that it was and that training should have been done earlier in the year when leave levels were lower, however the late delivery of the new trains had impacted on the training delivery plan.

- 4.9 Mayor Burnham then questioned TPE on their figures for late arrivals. Mayor Burnham stated that just 4 in 10 of their trains are on time using the Secretary of State's new measure of being minute or less late. Mayor Burnham questioned if these figures were going to get worse as a result of rolling stock.

Louise Ebbs stated that the key reason for their issues was also as a result of driver training.

- 4.10 Councillor Blake requested that performance reports should be consistent so that figures can be compared like with like across operators. She asked that operators provide exact figures on the numbers of passengers being left behind rather than an estimated figure. The figures currently being provided are unclear as to the number of passengers not getting on trains.

Rob Warnes explained that it would be towards the end of next year before Northern would have reliable data on this. By this point Northern will have automatic counting equipment live on their trains.

Louise Ebbs explained that TPE have automatic counting equipment on their trains and officers are being provided with the data. Louise is working with them in order to ensure that accurate data is being provided to the committee.

The Strategic Rail Director stated that a methodology for reporting has been agreed with TPE. The next step in the process will be to agree data validation which he hopes can be done by end of year. He also hopes that a data cleansing exercise can also be completed shortly.

- 4.11 The Chair enquired as to the current position on Sunday working in the west.

Members were assured that the unions are being worked with to resolve the issue and it is hoped that something will be put together shortly to present to unions.

- 4.12 The Chair stated that MerseyTravel are giving free travel to serving servicemen on Remembrance Sunday and asked if this is something that TPE and Northern would also do.

Both TPE and Northern stated that they were happy to do this.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted
- 2) That the Chief Executive write a letter to the Secretary of State in which he highlights the need for a performance initiative.

5.0 Business Plan Update

- 5.1 The business plan update was received from the Strategic Rail Director.

The Strategic Rail Director highlighted some key areas of the report. He explained that the appendix in the report was in relation to improvements in the West area and subsequent reports would highlight progress elsewhere.

He also highlighted the priorities and explained that passengers are at the heart of the plan, but some actions are dependent on funding for resources.

Whilst being limited in what can be done due to resources that are in place the plans outlined are dependent on funding received.

Proposals for Member contributions remain the same as last year.

The business plan will now go to the next Transport for the North Board meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Business Plan update be noted.

6.0 Blake Jones Action Plan

- 6.1 The Blake Jones Action Plan report was received by Members and taken as read.

Councillor Blake explained that currently it feels like working in a vacuum due to the General Election. However once this is over she will be looking to set up an immediate meeting with the new Rail Minister.

Councillor Blake referring to Item 4 commented that she was happy to hear that operators are now talking about passengers.

She explained that there is a need to focus on how the Rail North Committee works and that it is the decision maker. More work needs to be done with the Rail North Partnership

so that reports received in a timely manner and that committee can make decisions as a result of this.

- 6.2 The Strategic Rail Director stated that there needs to be joint working and a joint interface with Department. He also explained that he takes Member's views back to the Partnership Board.

He also suggested that there should be Member Officer working groups and that these groups would report back to the Committee.

The Strategic Rail Director suggested that two such Member Officer working groups could be on franchising and Central Manchester Capacity.

- RESOLVED:**
- 1) That Blake Jones Action Plan update report be noted.
 - 2) That the Committee approve the Strategic Rail Directors' Recommendation for two Member Officer Working groups, dealing with Franchising and Central Manchester Capacity

7.0 Exclusion of Press and Public

- RESOLVED:** That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items 8.0, 9.0 and 10.0 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 confidential information as defined in s100A(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

8.0 Investment: Central Manchester Options

- 8.1 The Report and presentation on the Central Manchester Options was noted. Members were invited to ask questions and make comments on the report and presentation.

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- RESOLVED:**
1. That the report and presentation be noted
 2. That the actions be agreed as discussed.

9.0 Rail North Partnership Update

- 9.1 The Rail North Partnership Update report was noted. Members were invited to ask questions and make comments on the update.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the report be noted
 2. That the actions be agreed as discussed.

10.0 Franchise Strategy

- 10.1 The Franchise Strategy presentation was received by Members.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the presentation be noted
 2. That the actions be agreed as discussed.

11.0 Date of the Next Meeting

- 11.1 The Chief Executive explained that due to the General Election the meeting on the 5 December had been postponed and a new date and time would be sent out to Members confirming the date time and location

- RESOLVED:** That the next Committee will be held on Tuesday 5 November 2020 from 10.00 to 12.00 venue to be confirmed [subsequently new date, time and Location confirmed as January 8, 2020, Venue Hilton City Leeds].