

Minutes



Transport Focus Board Meeting

Date: Thursday 17 March 2016

Location: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester

Time: 10.00 – 12.40

Present

Jeff Halliwell	JH	Chair
Dr Stuart Burgess CBE	SB	
Philip Mendelsohn	PM	
Bob Linnard	RL	
Marian Lauder MBE	ML	
Stephen Locke	SL	
Paul Rowen	PR	
Anthony Smith	AS	Chief executive
David Sidebottom	DS	Passenger director
Nigel Holden	NH	Resources director
Guy Dangerfield	GD	Road user director
Jon Carter	JC	Head of business services
Ian Wright	IW	Head of insight
Sara Nelson	SN	Head of communications
Dr Douglas Dalziel	DD	Head of business innovation
Robert Pain	RP	Senior insight advisor
Robert Samson	RS	Passenger manager
Lee Rowbotham	LR	Road user manager
Rodger Cobbe	RC	Arriva Trains
Leo Goodwin	LG	Trans Pennine North

Part A: Preliminary

1. Chair's opening remarks; apologies

JH welcomed everyone to the board meeting, and noted apologies from Isabel Liu, Theo de Pencier and Diane McCrea. He also welcomed three members of the public.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting (January 2016)

The Board approved the minutes and authorised the Chairman to sign them, subject to some minor changes.

3. Board action matrix

The action matrix was discussed and updated and is attached.

4. Chair's report

JH reported that he had recently attended the RDG annual conference with Anthony which was well represented by most parts of the industry. He also attended meetings with the new Chair of RSSB, met with Virgin Trains and, most recently, met with Sir Peter Hendy which led to a discussion of how passengers' requirements could be embedded in future railway infrastructure planning. AS commented that instead of assuming that if the train operator wants it, it must be what passenger's want, which is not always the case, they need to make sure that the passenger voice is heard. This was a key element of Nicola Shaw's report.

5. Chief executive's report

AS observed that road and rail improvements had featured in the recent Budget, but no mention of buses. He also reiterated that the Shaw Report, combined with the Bowe Report on Network Rail's infrastructure investment in the current control period, make clear recommendations to government on passenger input. The direction of travel for Network Rail was more route based structure on maintenance and renewal. There will still be a core central function, but greater power and autonomy will be devolved to the regions.

There is likely to be a stakeholder panel in each region, with a score card approach. There was a further recommendation that train companies and route managers should meet biannually, plus a new route for the north with an east west focus. There were suggestions for concessions, rather than franchises, which could be funded like HS1, but it is not clear what the government's response will be to this proposal.

SL believed that route score cards were a positive step but we should not assume this is costless. Also, from a London Travelwatch perspective, it was disappointing that there are no mentions of London and the Home Counties. These reports sits awkwardly with devolution and DfT / TFL plans.

The Secretary of State had released a statement this morning, which highlighted the need for Transport Focus to work more closely with ORR. It had also indicated that the DfT are accepting the Competition and Markets Authority report on railway competition and they intend to legislate to make it easier for open access operators to bid for track access.

AS noted that we are still waiting for the timetable on the buses bill – this should be out by May 2016.

In light of the previous day's conference, it was clear that use of bikes, cars and trains is up, while the use of buses is down. Maybe if passengers are voting with their feet, the government will allocate funding accordingly? Do we need research in order to discover the reason for this drop in bus use? Does it actually matter? Is it that car use provides better access to employment, and if so, is that not a good thing? A counter argument was that employment opportunities for many rural residents are often severely limited because there are no, or poor, public transport links to the places where employment is. However, promoting increased bus use isn't an objective in itself, rather it is a means to an end.

A further thought was that town transport planning should include the use of the car. Park and ride facilities in York were a good example (there are many others) which means that the buses are busier, and the service more sustainable. The bus industry – including local authorities need to address the fact that buses are slower on the uptake when it comes to technical improvements, such as real time bus apps. But rural areas were suffering in the current economic climate; so far the bus debate had been very urban-centric. 9.7million people live in rural areas and they must not be forgotten.

Finally, AS reported that he had met with the Shadow Rail Minister, Andy McDonald, last week. They had now met all major political parties in GB; Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem and SNP; only Plaid Cymru was left, but as the Scottish and Welsh elections were around the corner, they would probably have to restart this process anyway.

Part B: workplan report

1. Final Work Plan report

The final workplan report of 2015-16 was **noted** by the board. Funding for the south east quadrant emotional tracker would lapse at the end of March. Transport Focus would continue to be an active part of the Ministers working group.

It was agreed that where colour coding was applied to the workplan report, it should be consistent across sections.

2. Finance Report

NH reported that the 'passenger' side of the budget was on track but there was a forecast underspend on the 'road' side. This was largely due to delays in work being carried out (relating to third parties) and also some delays in recruiting to posts already budgeted for. JH congratulated him on the report (which was brief due to the fact that everything was under control) and the board **noted** the report.

Part C: corporate affairs

1.1 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee: minutes from meeting on 13 January 2016

ML highlighted some key points from this meeting: Firstly, relating to the project framework, the team had taken a step back due to issues in respect of unsupported software, but progress was being made. ARAC would hear more about it in April and it was still the intention to bring it back to the board early in the new financial year.

BM 1516-258	14/03/16	Project framework	Brief board on new framework (Michelle)	JC	May 2016
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The committee had received two internal audit reports; on external communications there is substantial assurance and on research methods moderate assurance. These ratings will remain, notwithstanding some concerns on inconsistency raised by the committee.

An update on the status of the name change was provided. The Statutory Instrument giving effect to the change had been rejected by the JCSI because of poor drafting. The department had hoped to have this complete by December, but it was not now known what the timetable was. There are unlikely to be any practical problems, unless the change happens suddenly without any prior warning, which is perfectly possible.

The board **endorsed** the minutes of this meeting.

1.2 Remuneration Committee: minutes from meeting on 11 February 2016

SB reported that an updated policy in respect of buying and selling annual leave, and leave for voluntary work, had been approved.

The board **endorsed** the minutes of this meeting.

1.3 Statistics Governance Group

SL updated the board on the meeting of the group held on 16 March 2016. The National Rail Passenger Survey spring pilots are underway and the results will be looked at in detail in June, along with a comprehensive draft invitation to tender for the next contract from Autumn 2016. This has previously been delayed, but can't be delayed any more. Work is also needed on what the future holds – the Shaw Review can only impact on the NRPS work and make it more complex.

The results of the Bus Passenger Survey results had been reviewed – 8% completed online and 92% on paper. There are therefore questions about how to manage the transition from paper to online surveying. Also, people who answered online *appeared* to be less satisfied; although these numbers are quite small at the moment, they may change over time, but there is work to be done to make sure that the statistics are sustainably credible.

In respect of the Road User Survey, discussions with DVLA about using their database are ongoing, with a decision expected imminently. The DVLA had expressed some concerns about the handling and management of their data, however the team is confident that they will get the go-ahead. This is a huge step forward and the culmination of over a year's work.

2.1 NRUSS survey

The board **noted** and **reconfirmed** its approval of project B32 previously approved out of meeting.

3.1 Board approval process

JC presented his proposal for board approvals given that the programme for 2016-17 provided for board meetings only every four months. It was agreed that more opportunities for advance discussion would be useful so that issues could be debated informally before coming to a decision.

The board **agreed** the new process.

3.2 Membership code

JC introduced what he hoped would be the near-final version of this document, explaining the tabular approach that had been used to get rid of several pages of complicated text. He thanked PM and IL for their help in the redrafting. After some discussion the board suggested that the table should be clearer on owning groups, rather than just operational companies, and that given the boards periodic approval of major research contracts, research companies should also be included. AS congratulated JC and PM on this piece of work.

The Code was **approved** and **promulgated** on the basis that these amendments were incorporated.

3.3 Expenses Policy

NH explained the rationale behind the revisions to the policy and explained its journey through both the Remuneration Committee and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The board **approved** the revised policy subject to minor amendments to sections 3.3 and 3.4.

3.4 Workplan 2016-17

AS introduced the near-final version of the workplan which will be posted to the website after approval. The context of the plan was changing all the time, given the Shaw, Bowe and other reports, but he believed it was as good as it could be at this point in time. The board felt these potential implications should be made clearer in the introduction. PM reiterated there was no 'for' in Transport Scotland. The board also requested a clear statement of objectives at the front end of the document which could be used to measure success during, and at the end of, the year.

The board also noted that in respect of the RIS2 project, Highways England wanted more granular information, so action is needed on this within the next few weeks. The data could be reused for other projects like the RUSS. AS commented that the project was a big one and this was a significant vote of confidence from Highways England.

Subject to the above amendments, the board **approved** the workplan for 2016-17.

4.0 Online Panel

DD gave an overview of the panel one month from launch and the work involved, and how it would function as both a research tool and a communications tool. The issue now was some form of oversight group that could convene both regularly and on an ad hoc basis to make operational decisions on the recommendation of the panel manager.

The board agreed there was a strong case for a governance group of this nature, of which the SGG would need some visibility. There were major implications for tracker surveys in the longer term. The board were also concerned about the implications for data protection, and that the operation of the panel should be email-light. A high level of email traffic could easily put off potential panellists.

The board agreed:

- (a) The oversight group should be created without delay with appropriate terms of reference to be approved by management team
- (b) Notes of meetings should be provided to the SGG once agreed and an opportunity on each SGG meeting created to discuss them.
- (c) There was no case at present for a board member to be included on the oversight group.
- (d) The SIRO however should be a member of the group to ensure data protection issues were given the attention they demanded.

BM 1516-259	14/03/16	OPG terms of reference	Develop and agree by Management Team (Steve)	IW	Apr 16
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Questions from the public

Tony Young of Travel Watch North West asked whether anyone was monitoring the scale of loss of bus services in rural areas. AS replied that tracking is being carried out by the Campaign for Better Transport and that there were logs of services which were being lost. However, this did not track how many people were affected by the loss of these services.

SB commented that DEFRA captures some information of this kind, but it is difficult to analyse. Some areas such as Lincolnshire and Northumberland also provide good local information although this subject to ongoing funding. It is clear that in other areas, such as Cornwall, many services are being lost without much of an attempt to capture the implications for those users who depend on them.

Part D: Public affairs

1.0 Roger Cobbe (Arriva Trains) gave an overview of the new franchise.

RC described the scope of this franchise, explaining that work would begin from 1 April 2016 to deliver Pacer replacement, service improvements, station renovations, and the introduction of smart technology.

The required spend of £30m would actually be £38m and would set the stage for a 40 year asset management programme. The fare system would be more uniform so that all passengers would have access to off peak fares. The move to smart technology in the form of apps would help improve the customer experience and would mean that season ticket holders could register their commute, giving the option for auto completion on their smart phone. RC also highlighted the work being done with regard to community and diversity, pointing out two key initiatives; improving the funding for community rail and sharing best practice.

Finally, he mentioned plans to introduce the living wage for all staff and even going as far as to request that their suppliers do the same.

Regarding the Ordsall curve - and Manchester Victoria, where services were currently poor - and planned disruption at Manchester Piccadilly, RC stated that in light of the recent improvement works carried out at Victoria, Trans Pennine are planning to bring more mainline services there. There are also plans to increase Calder Valley services linking to Victoria in December 2017. This will mean improvements for most passengers and further details of these plans will be available on the Arriva website. There will also be a communication plan for stakeholders, however, no concrete plans have yet been made to address the disruption caused by the impending works at Manchester Piccadilly.

There would be a new northern management team dealing with integration and planned disruption, and the website would carry information on this in time. They were keen to engage with stakeholder groups, not least because the franchise has committed them to liaise with other authorities to deliver holistic solutions which will dovetail with other service providers. He acknowledged that there would be logistical and IT issues to overcome.

2.0 Leo Goodwin - First Trans Pennine Express (FTPE) - gave an overview on the plans for their franchise.

LG explained that if the north was a country in its own right, it would have the 10th largest economy in the EU, however, person for person, the economic output is lower than that per person in many other areas. He said that FTPE felt that this was due in part to a need for greatly improved public transport services. £500m of new investment has been agreed and this will mean 13 million more seats per year on the rail network. The three year improvement plan would start in December 2017 with changes to stations such as Greenfield, in order to make better connections between Leeds and Manchester and improvements to links to Manchester Airport. He pointed out that Manchester Airport services a mass of passengers from Edinburgh who prefer to use Manchester Airport rather than Heathrow, and there is therefore a case for improved transport links to Manchester Airport.

He also outlined that the Glasgow to Manchester and Glasgow to Liverpool routes would have faster and more frequent direct rail services.

There were plans in place for free Wi-Fi to be available on all trains, alongside media streaming of movies and programmes, the like of which is available already on flights. There will be new fares and improved discounts, including group discounts for three or more people travelling together. There are also plans for replacing on-train and platform ticket equipment. There will be better integration with other transport providers and improvements to stations, including £18m investment into customer information systems, station toilets and customer lounges.

He acknowledged that there were high punctuality targets to meet, and NRPS survey targets for passenger experience. After speaking with 7000 customers and hundreds of stakeholders, this has been fed into a collation of many ideas for the franchise.

There are plans for increased recruitment and growth via university graduate schemes and apprenticeships.

Finally, there will be a local identity adopted, resulting in rebranding from April. This rebranding and new livery will be a new identity for the north. This will be communicated using £20m in funds for marketing and communication strategy. There have also been two new director's appointment; the Director of Strategy and Planning and the Director of Service Improvement.

Plans will improve both seat miles and the passenger experience. The number of passengers per year has risen from 13million to 30million and so meeting expected demand growth for seats over the next 7 to 9 years will be essential. In addition, the new trains will look more like intercity trains, rather than local trains; they are currently working on the contracts, and are anticipating a complete transformation to the look and feel of the fleet.

In planning for the new franchise, FTPE has engaged with focus groups, used surveys and communicated with online communities. There is currently a design review in progress and there will be more discussion before the specifications are finalised. In respect of improvements to journey times, more capable trains will help deliver this. For example, at present the York to Newcastle trains travel at 100mph, but in the future, this will be increased to 125mph, also releasing capacity for additional services.

The Chair thanked Roger Cobbe and Leo Goodwin for their presentations and answers to questions, and wished them good luck with their new franchises. Transport Focus stood ready to help to ensure passenger views were at the heart of their planning and service delivery.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.40pm.

