

Transport Focus Board Meeting	
Date:	13 November 2018
Times:	1000-1230
Location	Piccadilly Gate, Manchester

Attended

Board members:

Jeff Halliwell	JH	Chair
Philip Mendelsohn	PM	Board member for Scotland
William Powell	WP	Board member for Wales
Isabel Liu	IL	Board member
Kate Denham	KD	Board member
Keith Richards	KR	Board member

Management in attendance:

Anthony Smith	AS	Chief executive
David Sidebottom	DS	Director
Mike Hewitson	MH	Head of policy
Guy Dangerfield	GD	Head of strategy
Jon Carter	JC	Head of Board and governance
Ian Wright	IW	Head of innovation and partnerships
Hannah Pearce	HP	Head of communications

Other attendees:

Michelle Jackson	MJ	Management assistant
Alan Shepherd	ASh	Regional Director, Highways England
David Brown	DB	Managing Director, Northern
Leo Goodwin	LG	Managing Director, TransPennine Express
Barry White	BW	Chief Executive, Transport for the North

Apologies:

Theo de Pencier	TdP	Board member
Arthur Leathley	AL	Board member
Rob Wilson	RW	Board member

Members of the public

Around 30 members of the public attended.

Private session (1) resolution

The Board resolved that, pursuant to the provisions of the Railways Act 2005, Schedule 5, Part 6, members of the public shall be excluded from the meeting for the discussion set out below having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted:

“The discussion is commercially confidential: the affairs of an individual or organisations will be disclosed, and such disclosure may ‘seriously and prejudicially’ affect their interests.”

Proposed by: Philip Mendlesohn

Seconded by: Keith Richards

The Chairman countersigned the resolution

The public were excluded from the discussion until the end of this part of the meeting.

Part A: Preliminary

1.0 Chairman’s opening remarks; apologies

JH welcomed everybody to the meeting in public of the Transport Focus Board. Those present marked 100 years and 47 hours since the armistice with a minute’s silence to remember members of the transport community who had died during the First World War.

The Chair noted apologies from Rob Wilson, Theo de Pencier, and William Powell

He commented on a very busy period for Transport Focus. In particular:

- The Strategic Road User Survey (SRUS) was now operational and delivering data
- Coach and logistics managers research had been published
- Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrian's research had been published
- Transport Focus had been well represented at both Highways UK and Bus and Coach Expo, and our new data hub had been launched
- The Fares and Rail Reviews were underway and absorbing much time
- The build up to the launch of the Rail Ombudsman on 26 November was also absorbing much time and effort across the organisation.

JH also noted that there was a lot happening in and around Greater Manchester and across the North, and he was pleased to be devoting time to user issues today; he also thanked all those who had attended the special board meeting and reception the previous day.

2.0 Minutes of the 17 July 2018 Board Meeting

Board members were happy that the minutes constituted an accurate record of the meeting. No amendments were suggested. The minutes were **approved**.

3.0 Board Action Matrix

Online training for the Board - JC noted that the joining instructions would be reissued.

Finance report GIA profile - this item had been covered the previous day.

Costs of governance - this item had been covered the previous day.

4.0 Chairman's Report

JH noted that Andrew Jones had re-joined the DfT as Minister for Transport. Transport Focus knew him well and he had been supportive of their work on buses and roads in his previous tenure.

5.0 Chief Executive's Report

AS added that the work going on 'behind the scenes' in respect of the fares and rail reviews, and the launch of the Rail Ombudsman, was truly great, and paid tribute to those colleagues who were leading and supporting this work. Transport Focus was also now preparing for the winter timetable change on 10 December and would be monitoring events carefully.

Part B: Public Affairs

1.0 Barry White, Chief Executive, Transport for the North

BW explained that there was a degree of perception that there was a very heavily stressed, underfunded railway system in the north of England. Transport for the North (TfN) were trying to increase the level of investment in infrastructure - and persuade the people arriving at Manchester Airport to take the high-speed train system into the city.

TfN were only around 7 months old in a formal sense. They were accountable to their board, which consisted of 19 constituent authorities, including the City of York Council and Cumbria County Council. Business people were involved, as were delivery partners. TfN had received devolved powers from the DfT to carry out their duties. They were not taking powers from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).

Current investment in pan-northern strategic infrastructure was between £1.5 billion to £1.6 billion. TfN wanted to see a higher sustained level of investment to better connect cities and regions.

TfN were in the process of completing the first pan-northern strategic transport plan with seven Strategic Development Corridors. Those strategic development corridors included connecting Cumbria across to Northumberland. TfN were also working on priorities across the North.

BW mentioned the A66. One of the large issues was the links from east to west. There was an unreliable link in terms of predictability of journey time. Making it much more predictable would help businesses greatly. TfN were working very closely with the DfT on this matter.

On rail, TfN's biggest project was Northern Powerhouse Rail. It would be submitted as a major business case to the DfT in December. It would help shorten northern travel distances and allow the economy to flourish by bringing cities together. At the moment, transport to northern city areas was holding the jobs market back. This was one of the three most important transport projects in the UK alongside Crossrail 2 and HS2. BW added that there should be a reemphasis on the need for investment from the mid-2020s through to the 2030s.

2.0 Alan Shepherd, Regional Director, Highways England

ASh introduced himself as the regional director for operations for Highways England in the Northwest. His team looked after operational matters.

Highways England split the Northwest region into two halves. The southern half, known as Area 10, was overwhelmingly a motorway area with large conurbations. Area 13 was a much more rural area. Area 10 was the second most-trafficked road network in England after the M25. Area 13 was a very seasonally used part of the region. A huge number of tourists visited the Lake District in the summer period particularly.

There were dedicated facilities for the regional control centre. Operations of traffic officers were directed. There was a government-inspired KPI to deliver 85% of incidents cleared within an hour, which Highways England were seeking to improve upon over time.

ASh mentioned preparations for winter in the North. There were 40,000 tonnes of salt in 19 storage locations and 270 trained drivers. Highways England's ability to cope with winter was well practiced with very strong delivery plans in place.

ASh's side was largely responsible for maintaining the network. Highways England had been formed in 2015. Since they had become Highways England, they had typically spent just over £100 million per annum in the Northwest on capital projects and had spent another

£30 million to £40 million for reactive maintenance. That was the biggest investment in Northwest roads since the late 1970s.

Highways England were in the penultimate year of a five-year road investment strategy. ASh showed the new A556 new link road. Highways England had recently opened the M60/M62 section of the smart motorway.

ASh also showed a schematic of Highways England's programme. The M6 in Cheshire was due to be completed by the spring. Three further schemes would start in the next 18 months. When Highways England had opened the section from Junction 10 on the M62, three sections would join up with what Highways England had done in Yorkshire and the Northeast to form an uninterrupted stretch.

ASh mentioned the next Road Investment Strategy (RIS). Highways England had been working for around two years on developing the next RIS period of 2020 to 2025. They had £25.3 billion of funding from the government and there had been an enormous amount of stakeholder consultation so far. ASh thanked Transport Focus for the role they had played. There was more to come.

A number of high-profile plans were currently underway. One was the Manchester northwest quadrant study. Highways England intended to start the construction in RIS 2 and continue in phases over subsequent RIS periods.

The trans-Pennine tunnel study was even more important. Highways England were continuing to work with the DfT and TfN. It was looking to be shorter than original proposals. Highways England were required to report to the secretary of state in early summer 2019.

Highways England had specific funds given by the government for specific areas, two of which were cycling and integration. The Northwest had taken the lead on this. They had delivered 29 cycling improvement schemes so far. Seven more were planned. There were 15 integration schemes with six more planned.

Challenges included a need to increase the programme of works. Coordinating that with other parties was a challenge for Highways England. Local authorities had received some increased funding - £420 million for potholes and a £1.1 billion congestion improvement fund. Coordinating HS2 was also very important.

Transport Focus had helped Highways England with their detailed research to inform local decision making. Working with Transport Focus, Highways England had fought to mitigate the impact of works along the A66 with seven full weekend closures. There had been many road signs as far south as Folkestone. There had been numerous compliments from local residents.

Q & A

WP asked about Brexit preparedness ahead of March and April. He also enquired about the charging infrastructure for electric battery vehicles. WP asked if BW and ASH were in touch with representatives of the Welsh government to ensure a joined-up approach to transport along the corridor between Merseyside, Cheshire West and North Wales.

ASh noted that on Brexit, Highways England were being asked by the DfT for projects around ports from early December to the end of May. There was clearly a Brexit view as to the impact of no deal on the road network, movements of freight and related issues.

In terms of charging infrastructure, Highways England were not specifically responsible. They awaited the signal from the central government and a sum of money to significantly increase electric vehicle charging points.

ASh reported meeting regularly with Transport Scotland and Welsh Government colleagues. Highways England had done a lot of work on the Posthouse Roundabout outside Chester, for example.

BW was worried about electric vehicle charging in the UK. BW suspected the market would overtake England's 2040 ambition. TfN would urge the DfT to consider carefully their plans around electric vehicle charging. There should be increased investment in decarbonising and helping electric vehicles to charge more quickly.

On air quality, the issue of electric buses was raised; a scheme in Harrogate changing all buses to electric vehicles was underway. BW noted that buses were more in the remit of TfN's members like TfGM. In the North, the interurban bus links were very important. One great example was the Transdev service from Harrogate to Leeds. ASH noted that some air quality issues were difficult to fix until there were a significant number of electric vehicles on the road.

A member of the public raised the issue of problems on the A65. ASH noted that there had been initial considerations of extending it all the way to the M1. ASH's understanding was that it had not been looked at for some years. Considering the investment in the M62, the planned investment in the A66 and some of the specific GM technical issues associated with the M65, it was not the best option for alleviating the cross-Pennine routes.

A Councillor in East Lancashire also commented on the M65 corridor. He pointed to the deprived communities along the corridor. A link there would potentially transform the whole textile industry. The M66 was heavily congested and there were bottlenecks on the A56. ASH noted that it was on the agenda. Highways England were looking at everything across England and the Northwest. He encouraged all interested parties in continually making the business case.

3.0 David Brown, Managing Director, Northern

DB noted that he had been at a Transport Focus meeting with colleagues from Network Rail at the height of the May timetable crisis. He understood that many measures put in place then for Northern and TransPennine would be in place for some time. The electrification of Manchester to Bolton and Preston to Blackpool had already been delayed. Northern had targeted the end of 2018.

DB reported that his team had had 16 weeks to produce a timetable that would normally take 40 to 100 weeks. The timetable in May had been rushed through; the consequences had not been understood until the last minute. There had been several weeks of poor performance. It would take until May 2019 to fully correct a number of performance issues.

DB admitted that the timetable had been awful for customers, who were still feeling the performance issues. Autumn conditions had meant that 18 trains had been taken out of service the previous day. Northern had therefore needed to short-form or cancel trains.

In terms of transforming services across the North until 2023, it was hard to concentrate on the endpoint. Investment was underway and 2019 would be a crucial year.

The 98 new trains being leased were being tested. Anyone that had seen them at the stakeholder and staff day would have seen that they were completely transformational. They would make Northern proud in 2019.

The residual fleet would be refurbished to look as new. Over 120 had been refurbished and were in the system. Northern were starting to see a critical mass of the residual fleet being refurbished. The stopgap introduced by British Rail in the 1990s for the short term would disappear. That whole fleet would be replaced by a whole fleet of trains provided by CAF.

Over £60 million would be invested across the piece on small-scale improvements to ticketing systems and information to help consumers purchase tickets before travel. It would reinforce penalty fares schemes.

Northern had many headwinds. Industrial action was due to continue every Saturday until Christmas. This was a dispute over the introduction of a new method of working and driver-controlled operation and the role of the second person. The intention was not to withdraw the second person but to change their role. There would be support on health and safety across the piece. This was very difficult, and DB had been talking to staff members on the picket lines. The trade union wanted no change to the system of operation.

The other issue was that the electrification of the Bolton corridor would be complete by the end of the year. However, Northern needed to pause before engaging in further disruptive

engineering work. They also required further significant changes to the capacity in and out of Leeds by December 19. There was a requirement to run longer trains into Leeds. Platforms also had to be longer.

Improving journey times between Leeds and Manchester would obviously cause significant upheaval to people's journeys. DB was very keen to learn the lessons from May 2018 and make sure infrastructure was provided well in advance of any timetable changes.

Northern had been through three reviews already, along with the Glaister report. It had supported Northern's view that their issue had been due to the infrastructure delay. Northern had had a difficult six months but aimed to deliver transformation based on future infrastructure schemes and new rolling stock.

4.0 Leo Goodwin, Managing Director, TransPennine Express

LG noted that there had been further challenges in the North since the new timetables had been introduced in May. The principle causes had been the delivery of important electrification processes around Preston.

The second factor affecting service performance had been around congestion on the railway network. Record numbers of services had been provided, with around 2,000 trains travelling every week. The balance between those service levels and the capability of the infrastructure in Central Manchester and Leeds had caused disruption.

Wires were almost up between Manchester and Preston. In May 2019, Northern and TransPennine could plan on that infrastructure being available.

Next month, TransPennine would deliver some changes to their timetable, which would mostly not affect customers. One change in customer offer affected the service every hour between Manchester and Leeds. It would split into two separate services. It would help stabilise and improve the service. Additional compensation schemes for regular customers would encourage them to take advantage. Many customers wrote to LG and he appreciated how difficult it had been. The industry collectively acknowledged that it had fallen short.

LG mentioned the upgrade programme for the existing fleet. TransPennine had had positive feedback from passengers about the changes. They had also been delivering investment in their stations. There were brand new customer information systems and upgrades to waiting rooms. Those programmes had been brought to a conclusion during the year.

There had also been investment in brand new trains. There would be three fleets, which would create twice as much capacity and better punctuality. A total of 220 carriages were being delivered and more than 200 were now fully built or at an advanced stage of manufacturing. The manufacturing processes were at an advanced stage for all three new fleets. The rollout to customers was expected to start in 2019, beating the 2020 target.

Q & A

KD noted that both speakers had mentioned many new trains. They had also mentioned congestion. KD wondered what the impact of increasing the number of trains would be. LG reported that on addition to the investment in trains, there would be a programme on investment in infrastructure to support more services, such as the extensive programme of platform lengthening across the network.

DB noted a conversation around what customers really wanted from the rail system. There had been a large amount of investment in improving people’s journey times. It was a live conversation. As Northern were about to embark upon big infrastructure schemes, it might be worth considering what further research may be required.

Action

BM 1819-308	Rail infrastructure in the north	Consider how current or additional research may inform investment priorities	DS	February 2019
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DB admitted that Northern had many stations that were not accessible. There would be many different vehicle types by the end of the following year, which would be accessible. There was an intention to review issues related to mobility scooters. In the background, a lot of awareness training was taking place.

AS noted that there were headline improvements in journey time, but all Transport Focus research showed that reliability drove the satisfaction of current users. He also asked when the timetable would stabilise. BW noted that on the TransPennine upgrade, a lot of the work had partly been about journey time improvement. It had also been about much more four-track running. A huge amount of the TransPennine investment had been related to better reliability. He agreed that both for road and rail, the predictability of journey time was very important.

LG added that in May 2019, TransPennine would put in place the timetable originally intended. There would be full stabilisation. Changes the following month would take them to where they wanted to be in May. Customers should start to expect a better service.

KR noted that most disability was not necessarily about physically getting on and off a train; it was about confidence to travel. He noted that driver-only operation had been a recurring theme - there was a sense that having more staff gave passengers greater confidence to travel. Around 10% of stations were currently staffed at all times and 44% were completely unstaffed. DB reported that the best place to give customer support was at the station before passengers boarded. The point of Northern's modernisation programme was to put more people in the right place at the right time.

JH noted that Transport Focus had contacted Northern and TransPennine passengers and received 123 responses. One comment had been that a lot had been heard from the RMT about removing guards - why there had been no details from Northern about what they were planning to do? A second comment asked what actions companies were taking to facilitate access for mobility scooters.

LG reported that TransPennine allowed mobility scooters on their train services. However, they needed to fit within a particular set of dimensions. The new trains being introduced next year would feature more space than existing trains. DB reported that the experience may have been down to 14 different sorts of trains. With the withdrawal of the Pacers, they were reviewing their policy for different sorts of mobility scooters.

DB added that Northern having a different policy had caused issues for some. However, there were central policies driven by the infrastructure. Northern would try to review their policy in 2019.

DB stated that he could not explain why the RMT had reported the issue in the way it had. For Northern, the desired changes were some time away. They required consultations with different grades of staff. The internal consultation was needed before external explanations could be made.

Action

BM 1819-309	Northern Rail industrial action	Provide clarity on Norther's position	David Brown (via DS)	February 2019
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It was reported that most people who used trains in the peak periods in Slaithwaite were commuting from home to employment centres. There were large timetable gaps, making commuting very difficult. People were no longer commuting and were changing their jobs. LG noted a change next month that would directly benefit those who came from Slaithwaite Station.

It was also reported that Chinley and Buxworth had lost their services via Stockport, which had been vital for many customers. They accepted the problems on the Hope Valley line. However, these services were important to a growing commuter hub.

A group had framed a response to the East Midlands franchise consultations that they would pass to the companies in 2020 when the TransPennine route was split. They were there to make a plea that whoever operated the route would not cut the remaining East Midlands Express services.

LG confirmed the large capacity constraints on the Hope Valley line. There was an opportunity for an infrastructure scheme to try to deal with the congestion. It had been in progress for a long time but would be brought to a conclusion in the next industry control period with money identified to complete the works required. That would allow for the franchise to be adjusted based on growth in patronage, which was around 10% year on year on that line.

In respect of the M65, four-tracking was needed at the Standedge Tunnels where nothing was getting through on time. LG agreed that the network was incredibly congested. A few years previously, it had carried 13 million; it now carried 30 million per year. There was pressure across the system to add capacity and deal with the growing volume. Network Rail had been looking at a TransPennine route upgrade to bring capacity onto the line. There was £3 billion of funding set aside.

Accessibility at Dewsbury station was raised as an issue by a member of the public. It was understood that not every station could be fully accessible, but a large amount of money had been spent on redeveloping the surrounding area. When the ticket office closed at 20.00 at Dewsbury, the lifts closed. Why should lifts close when the staff went home? LG stated that TransPennine were trying to amend the support arrangements to be made available for extended hours. JH asked that this issue be followed up.

Action

BM 1819-310	Dewsbury station lifts	Follow up on commitment to review lift operating hours	Leo Goodwin (via DS)	February 2019
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JH thanked the speakers for their time and the public for their participation.

Part C: Business Planning

1.0 Workplan Report 2018-19

AS noted that the report highlighted progress on six or seven specific activities for the current year. Transport Focus had just passed the midyear point and were in the process of looking at what they could still achieve in the rest of the year.

We were on track to deliver the bulk of the work plan. Some activities were quite flexible. Passenger satisfaction with the contact team had remained buoyant.

In respect of the Contact Team KPI's, DS noted glitches in the tracking system. However, he believed customer satisfaction Transport Focus to be in the high 60s. The team was trying to catch up with those numbers but he was reasonably confident they would reach around 70%. He would come back with an update in early January.

JC apologised for the poor KPI's in the CEO team over the last nine months or so. The Ombudsman project had absorbed so much of the team's time that meeting administration performance had slipped. He hopes it would see a marked improvement in the rest of the year.

2.0 Finance Report

The board **noted** the management accounts to 30 September 2018.

Part D: Corporate Affairs

1.0 To receive and endorse draft Version 3 minutes of meetings:

JC noted that it had not been able to finalise the recent subcommittee minutes. He explained that they were almost finished and would circulate as soon as possible.

1.1 Passenger Contact Group: oral update

WP reported that the Passenger Contact Group had last met on 15 October 2018. They had welcomed KR to his first meeting.

There had been a presentation from Heather Brunt and Judith Turner from the new Ombudsman's office. That had been a full opportunity to engage with them on points of detail. The agenda had moved on significantly. WP was conscious of the work of JC, and DS and KOR in preparation for launch at the end of the month.

The Group had also looked at potential long-term impacts and scenarios of the implementation of the ombudsman scheme. The group would next meet on 10 January 2019.

1.2 Statistics Governance Group: oral update

TdP was not present to deliver an update. The next meeting of the Group was scheduled for 14 January 2019.

1.3 Audit, Risk Assurance and Remuneration Committee: oral update

KD reported that the 16 October meeting had featured an improvement to the business planning process to allow for an additional Board session on strategic planning.

The internal audit July report had rated the business planning process as moderate and suggested some improvements including resource planning. The committee needed to stay on top of the business planning process because any delay could affect stakeholder engagement.

There had been an internal audit on Transport Focus's preparation for the Ombudsman's scheme, which had rated it as moderate. The risks had been around resource planning and the mismatch of IT systems.

The committee had looked at strategic risks, and also at transport team and CEO team risks. There were still red areas, but generally risks were being well managed and mitigating measures applied where possible.

There had been a discussion regarding thinking around catastrophic risk. The risk management strategy had recently been refreshed but KD would talk to MJ about what could be done. Organisational resilience should be covered as part of that work.

The committee had looked at the GDPR map and risk assessment, both of which had been excellent. There had been a discussion about how to bring that to life in staff behaviours and understanding.

Transport for Wales would be reviewed regularly by the committee as well as the Board for any reputational or financial exposure.

The pay remit of a 1.5% increase backdated had been implemented. Issues around the government pension valuations had been noted. They would significantly impact on payroll costs in the coming year.

JH thanked all board members for the excellent work they did in committee.

2.0 Any other business

There was no other public business.

Private session (2) resolution

The Board resolved that, pursuant to the provisions of the Railways Act 2005, Schedule 5, Part 6, members of the public shall be excluded from the meeting for the discussion set out below having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted:

“The discussion is commercially confidential: the affairs of an individual or organisations will be disclosed, and such disclosure may ‘seriously and prejudicially’ affect their interests.”

Proposed by: Kate Denham

Seconded by: William Powell

The Chairman countersigned the resolution

The public were excluded from the discussion.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Jeff Halliwell
Chair, Board member, Transport Focus

Date