

LCR TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the LCR Transport Committee held in the Authority Chamber - No.1 Mann Island, Liverpool, L3 1BP on Thursday, 11th November, 2021 the following Members were

P r e s e n t:

Councillor L Robinson
Chairperson of the Transport Committee
(in the Chair)

Councillors J Banks, J Burke, C Cooke, S Foulkes, G Friel, S Halsall, N Killen, K McGlashan, L Melia, N Nicholas, D O'Connor, G Philbin, T Rowe and J Williams.

Attending remotely: Councillors A Brough and A Jones.

30. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairperson, Councillor Liam Robinson welcomed everyone to the meeting which was taking place in the home location at Mann Island. He talked through the usual housekeeping arrangements.

He welcomed Councillors Tony Brough and Allan Jones who were participating in the meeting remotely.

Armistice Day

The Chairperson stated that it was only right that a two-minute silence be observed to remember the service and sacrifice of all those who had defended our freedom and protected our way of life.

The Committee stood in silence.

Recent Road Traffic Collision in the Queensway Tunnel

The Chairperson recalled that on 17 October 2021 there had been a road traffic collision in the Queensway Tunnel involving two vehicles. Sadly, the driver and passenger of one of the vehicles lost their lives and the driver of the other vehicle was seriously injured. He indicated that the thoughts of the Committee went out to the bereaved families of the two young people and best wishes for the ongoing recovery of the driver of the other vehicle.

He also put on record his thanks to all staff who responded to the incident. The Mersey Tunnels Police team were first on scene and their bravery and swift actions made us realise the service we provide in such tragic circumstances.

Salisbury Train Crash

The Chairperson also referred to the recent Salisbury train crash on 31 October 2021 where a South Western Railway passenger service from London Waterloo to Honiton, collided with the side of the 17:08 hours Great Western Railway passenger service from Portsmouth Harbour to Bristol Temple Meads.

He advised that the Combined Authority had raised this tragic accident with Network Rail to understand whether the underlying conditions that led to this accident featured in the City Region's rail network.

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Hayes, Anthony Lavelle, Joe Pearson, Gareth Stockton and John Stockton.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

33. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

The Chairperson, Councillor Liam Robinson asked if reference to the following could be made in the minutes as it was an important point which should have been included:

Page 8, 7th paragraph – where Councillor Robinson had made the point about tap-on-tap-off smart ticketing approach he had also mentioned the failure of the operators to appropriately work with Transport for the North's 'Smart in the North' smart ticketing programme.

34. CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENTS

The Chairperson, Councillor Liam Robinson reported that there had been some positive news in relation to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). The City Region had secured a sum of £710m which was testament to the whole team and the six districts. This settlement was better than the vast majority of other city regions across the country.

Paul Buntin, Lead Officer for Transport Development updated the Committee on the CRSTS. In July the Combined Authority (CA) was asked to make a bid for levelling up funds and also to produce a short prospectus in response to Government guidance. The prospectus had to include a mini appraisal of the transport schemes which listed the projects within that programme, and they gave us a low and high scenario funding range to work within. The funding period covered April 2023 to March 2027 and allocations would be determined on the quality of the submission. The allocation that we could expect was a range between £480m-£790m and this range had been secured based on negotiations with the Department for Transport. The CA had to demonstrate 15% local contribution and integrated transport block and highways maintenance had to be consolidated within that fund. The prospectus had to be submitted by the end of August and therefore timescales had been tight.

There were a number of risks which included the 15% local contribution, but this was felt to be manageable given some of the projects currently undertaken as a partnership, in particular the rolling stock programme which was local money that could be matched with Central Government funding. It had also been necessary to demonstrate a roadmap for the Local Transport Plan and maximise our local revenues. The funding range of £480m-£790m was welcomed but it also presented a challenge in terms of the ability to develop all of those projects and the resources to

deliver them. The timescales to turn around the prospectus had been tight and had been a challenge for the team. It had been necessary to include the Integrated Transport Block and Highways Maintenance which was something that had not been anticipated.

An approved transport pipeline was in place so as a partnership this work had been ongoing for the past 18 months. A number of projects had already been identified such as green bus routes. It was proposed that some projects could be accelerated with the levelling-up funding to maximise this work.

The Liverpool City Region had secured £710m of funding from the STS and £40m for the Levelling-Up fund. The authority therefore had £750m to deliver the transport pipeline. There was still an element of over programming which would need to progress to the next funding envelope. However, it was good to note that the Region had been the only Combined Authority to receive levelling up funding. The next step would be to put together a programme-wide business case to unlock the funding following which it would be necessary to look at resource allocation.

Paul Buntin summarised the big challenge the bid had posed and that the outcome had been successful as a result of partnership working. He thanked all of the City Region Local Authorities and modal leads for their help in putting the bid together. Councillor Ken McGlashan said that this was excellent news and it demonstrated how hard Officers had worked over many years. To have projects in the pipeline and for Officers to respond quickly to secure this funding was something that should be commended. This was a huge amount of money and he hoped it would be well spent. He also hoped that there were more projects in the pipeline which could be allocated to any further funding the authority might bid for and receive. This was an extremely deprived area – one of the only major cities which did not have a tram system.

Councillor Gordon Friel endorsed what Councillor McGlashan had said. He queried that with so many schemes in place which would need to go out to tender, were we ensuring that we were complying with all requirements, for example, training and the living wage. He also questioned how much of a problem it would be to get these schemes delivered with so many coming on tap at once and the fact that there was a lack of resources available outside of the organisation to be able to undertake the jobs. Even if the funding was in place people would still be required to physically do the work.

Councillor Allan Jones referred to the levelling up fund and asked why it was separate from the other fund, what was it for, and why had the LCRCA got it and other places had not.

Paul Buntin replied that the levelling up fund had been released prior to the transport settlement so was a separate bid. The reason that the Region had received the funding was because its appraisal had been robust and of a high quality.

Councillor Liam Robinson summarised that this was good news for the region, and he was particularly delighted with the hard work put in by the team as they had had only six weeks to pull the bid together. There had been a sense that the authority was being set up to fail but the team had all worked hard to submit such a high-quality bid which had been successful. It was now time to move to the delivery side of the schemes which it was hoped would significantly change the way people travelled around the region by putting in place a high-quality transport network.

Councillor Robinson acknowledged that whilst the Combined Authority had done well in securing this funding, this was just the first step of many. In the coming weeks he would like to see a really transformational announcement from Government around the Integrated Rail Plan, focussing on the right rail infrastructure which would include a new twin track line from Liverpool linking onto the Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2 network. Equally, it would be good to see a significant response to the Bus Service Improvement Plan to ensure revenue funding was available to support a really improved bus network that some of this capital funding would allow.

This was a settlement for the next five years, but it was necessary to think about what would happen in the years beyond that and to make sure that similar significant allocations were secured from Government in the same way that had been so successful for London in the past, which was exactly what all residents deserved. This was something that the Authority would continue to fight hard for. Councillor Robinson reiterated his thanks to Paul Buntin and the team and he asked Paul to take his personal thanks back to every individual who had worked on this.

RESOLVED - that the presentation be noted.

35. COVID RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

The Committee considered a presentation from Gary Evans, Assistant Director for Customer Delivery on the transport related response and impact as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

There had been a lot of national Government changes since March 2020 with a range of restrictions being put in place and then lifted at various stages. September 2020 had been particularly challenging from a transport perspective when children returned to school.

In respect of governance this had been covered by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 which structure ranged from COBRA nationally to Local Resilience Forums (LRF) on a local level and these broadly followed the Police boundaries. However, it had been complicated further in this area as the Combined Authority boundaries crossed over two Local Resilience Forums (Cheshire and Merseyside). The Transport Cell sat within that structure and the cell had been set up by colleagues on the Merseyside LRF who were operating at a multi-agency level around the response to the pandemic.

There had been challenges on the transport network. Although the authority had exercised for such a global pandemic within the LRF structures no-one could have foreseen the impact of what happened in March 2020. It moved with such fluidity and speed it was a real challenge to manage within it. Officers had worked long and hard to implement restrictions often within a 24-hour period. Specific challenges had included the safety of customers and staff which was paramount, but transport had been designed to carry lots of people in small spaces and that brought an interesting challenge in itself. Social distancing and capacity issues was one of the greatest challenges. Also, people tended to react in different ways and therefore human behaviour was a relevance as some were blasé and others were really scared, and it was necessary to take into account all of those views and how that translated into service delivery. It was also important to understand the impacts on the longer terms trends as the world of transport had changed significantly and it had been necessary to react to that.

In respect of active travel there had been a range of funding made available from central government but locally it was utilising the opportunity the pandemic brought us to accelerate some of the programmes such as pop-up cycle lanes and reallocation of road space and some local authority partners had brought in initiatives. There had been an increase in people taking up walking and cycling as a mode of transport partly due to the capacity restrictions on public transport. As the pandemic developed, particularly around the reopening of retail and hospitality sectors, the reallocation of road space could be seen e.g. the closure of Castle Street in Liverpool and the repurposing to aid economic recovery.

On the bus network the three main Companies had worked closely together and at different times throughout the pandemic different capacity levels and demand could be seen. At times it had been really challenging trying to carry 80% of passengers with only 50% capacity and operators had helped and collaborated over that period to maintain services. Although there had been a reduction in service levels the first and last bus services had been maintained right throughout the pandemic as it had been recognised that a lot of essential workers still needed to travel to and from hospitals. He highlighted the vaccination bus which had been provided by Arriva and supported by Stagecoach and in the first six weeks of operation more than 5,000 people had been vaccinated on that bus. This was a good example of co-ordination through the LRF which had made a real difference to communities on the ground.

Concessionary travel on the bus network – Gary Evans presented a graph which showed that at the start of the pandemic there had been a dramatic fall in numbers and the implications of that in the longer term. It could be seen that there had been various peaks and troughs over the past 18 months when restrictions were put in place and then lifted at various times. It had been a very changing picture and even now the bus network was not seeing a full return to pre-pandemic numbers. Patronage levels were around 75-80% dependant on the route but throughout the pandemic it had been noticeable that when compared with the national picture bus patronage had been higher in this region and that was a big indicator about the reliance on the bus network.

Rail network – the majority of services had been maintained throughout and where there had been a loss of service this had been carefully chosen with minimal impact on the customer. Where a loss of service was seen that had been compensated through a ticket acceptance arrangement with Arriva. All stations had remained open but again this had been a challenging area due to the social distancing restrictions which had to be managed. Staff had been brought in from outlying stations to help in the city centre locations. Great examples of collaboration could be seen in this area and in particular the co-ordination through the LRF to increase testing in the late part of 2020. Work was undertaken in collaboration with Sefton Council to roll out testing at local stations to make it convenient for the travelling public. Again, there had been peaks and troughs in passenger numbers across the pandemic period in respect of concession usage. Currently, Merseyrail was reporting around 75% patronage levels on that service but there was a very differing demand where much more of a leisure focus could be seen with less demand on intercity routes.

Mersey Ferries – there had been an initial loss of service but when restrictions were lifted in May 2020 the focus had been on providing a cross river resilience transport service to support other modes of transport. From May 2020 it could be seen that demand to the leisure services had started to return. On 19 July 2021 all restrictions had been eased and the country had returned to normality. Mersey Ferries had always maintained a mandatory face covering approach but the key message was that whilst there had been a reduction in patronage, financially over the summer

period there had been very little drop in numbers when compared with the summer of 2019.

Highway Network – Mersey Tunnels electronic payments had been promoted and some active travel and local authority initiatives had also been put in place. In respect of the work of the Cell the aim had been to try and pull all network decisions together so that they were co-ordinated and would have limited impact for the customer. An initial drop in levels had been seen at the start of the pandemic through Mersey Tunnels. Covid had brought about a change in payment methods whereby payment by cash had seen a downward trend and an upwards trend for payment by card and contactless and it was therefore important to grasp those opportunities to revolutionise and transform transport services to hold on to those advantages moving forward.

Messages – Officers had looked at how messages could be disseminated and consequently Communications colleagues had been seconded into the Cell to help with getting critical transport demand messages out to the public. He gave examples of some of the campaigns such as ‘Retime, Reschedule and Repair’ and also the ‘Re-Think Travel’ campaign which had underpinned all of the responses to Covid 19 on the transport network. Messages within the campaign had been tailored as each of the restrictions had been introduced or eased and had been around encouraging customers to do the right things and thanking them for conforming throughout the pandemic.

Recovery of Transport – Gary Evans confirmed that the authority was still in a learning stage. Even though restrictions had eased it was still necessary to promote safety guidance as Covid was still a real risk. It was important to reassure people that public transport was safe to use and the fact that there was little evidence that transmissions were rising as a result of using public transport services. The Transport Cell was not meeting at present and was in standby mode but it was still necessary to respond and manage risk if necessary. There was uncertainty around what the new normal looked like as it could be seen that people’s travel patterns had changed due to working from home etc. and that needed to be taken into account in the recovery phase.

Gary Evans stated that this had been very much a team and collaborative approach, and everyone had made a difference to the public throughout the pandemic.

Councillor Sean Halsall also asked if thanks could be put on record to all the transport workers who had worked throughout the pandemic and had put themselves at risk with some actually losing their lives. Councillor Liam Robinson agreed and stated that he had committed to looking at a transport worker memorial at an appropriate time as it was important to recognise the sacrifice that had been made by many who worked on our network. For everyone who worked on the transport network the last 18 months had been difficult and very stressful, so it was right that every opportunity was taken to thank them for their efforts.

Councillor Ken McGlashan fully endorsed what had been said but felt that also taxi drivers should be included as quite a few of them had suffered the same. He noted that at the start of the pandemic the Government had admitted that they had not had a plan or anything in place to manage the pandemic. Gary Evans in his presentation had mentioned that we had had a plan which was workable. It might not have been specifically set up for Covid, but it had been adjustable to deal with it and that demonstrated the quality and expertise of the Officers within the organisation.

Councillor Gordon Friel also thanked staff on the frontline in the organisation. He had been fortunate to be able to work virtually but some people on the front line had not been able to do that. However, he was confused about the messaging and what people should do because there was so much uncertainty across the country. The Winter season was coming upon us with flu, colds and Covid all about and people's jobs depended on public transport, but he felt that the Government message had not been right and therefore it was essential to reinforce the message around the cleansing regime as people in Merseyside seemed to be oblivious of Covid which was not the same in other areas.

Gary Evans responded that the approach had always been that it was a national pandemic so the national restrictions had been adopted locally otherwise the messaging could be confusing. For example, when face coverings became mandatory on public transport from 15 June 2020 the local messaging responded and reacted to that very forcefully and that message was consistently maintained. Surveys had been undertaken which showed that when face coverings were mandatory there was 95-96% compliance in this region. From that feedback it could be seen that this was consistently one of the higher performing regions in terms of compliance. The challenges came about when the national position changed, so no matter what was said locally if the national position was that face coverings were no longer mandatory and there was no enforcement around that then, so no matter what was said to encourage people, they would always do different things. Our messaging had always been consistent in that it was safe to use public transport as there were measures in place such as enhanced cleaning regimes and social distancing arrangements etc. So, in summary there had been some different messaging locally, but it was essential in the main to comply with the national position otherwise it could be confusing.

Councillor Gordon Friel agreed that the messaging had been good and consistent but the environment was changing so if cases increased to the point that there were real concerns about our message could it be adjusted.

Gary Evans replied that he had talked previously about the LRF and the Transport Cell was linked in there along with both a Health and Comms Cell. Therefore, the message and the issues that the region faced would be tailored appropriately through that Comms Cell and thus he could give an assurance it was all joined up.

Councillor Nathalie Nicholas said that it was always helpful to take people back to where we were in 2020 and where we were now. She echoed comments from colleagues in terms of thanks because at the frontline of the NHS if it was not for the buses or the teachers, she and other NHS staff would not have been able to work. In terms of recovery there would be challenges as a lot of people were not wearing masks. She appreciated the Government message but she was mindful that there had been early warnings in September 2019 about the pandemic, but nothing had been done at that point and so many lives had therefore been put at risk during the first lockdown. She referred to the fact that there had been a recovery in the bus network in respect of the number of passengers, however, she did not drive and the buses were absolutely packed. Often, she would be the only person wearing a mask in a packed condensed bus and she felt that whilst Covid case numbers were still quite high then the Combined Authority should be liaising with Public Health and the LRF to get a stronger joined up message out around the wearing of masks and adhering to social distancing. Looking forward at recovery it was essential to learn from what had happened previously as we did not want to go back to a position where numbers rose that high again.

Councillor Ged Philbin referred to face coverings and the inconsistency of the rules from Government especially around Transport for London who seemed to have different rules than the rest of the country and this should be highlighted. Face coverings were mandatory on Transport for London but that did not seem to be the case elsewhere.

Councillor Liam Robinson felt that this was a good point and highlighted how the control of the public transport network in London was exactly the same approach we needed to have. Liverpool City Region needed to have the same control in order to protect travellers here. It was not acceptable that different bus and train companies could choose to opt out.

One of the key points from the presentation was around the focus on the future to give people the confidence that they could travel on the public transport network. It would be necessary to push the message about the guarantee of enhanced cleaning regimes that were in place. He stated that the cleanliness was of a much higher standard today than it had been three or four years ago and that would continue to be the case. Another point that he made was around ensuring that the right ticketing fares approach was in place to ensure that it was good value and as cheap as possible. The Combined Authority did not have complete control of the ticketing fares structure at present – it could influence and there were elements where changes could be made but there was a need to get to a stage where the system was financially sustainable. This was an issue that would come back for discussion in future meetings.

Councillor Robinson thanked Gary Evans for the presentation and looked forward to further updates as the pandemic developed.

RESOLVED - That the presentation be noted.

36. THE TRANSPORT ASPECTS OF THE CORPORATE PLAN

The Committee considered the report of Merseytravel which set out the transport deliverables required from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Corporate Plan which would be considered and monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and/or the Transport Committee of the Combined Authority.

In this respect, John Fogarty, Executive Director for Corporate Services informed the Committee that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority approved the Corporate Plan on 23 July 2021. The information within the Corporate Plan which defined what to do and why we do it and allowed that information to be cascaded through a multifunctional and large organisation that had many facets, of which transport was one. The devolved powers that the City Region Mayor had was not restricted to transport and this plan sought to make sure that all those different facets were moving in the right direction.

The purpose of the Combined Authority was to improve the lives of the £1.6m people that it served, but also in the transport context the millions of people who were within the region's travel to work area. Again, it was about a fairer, cleaner and stronger City Region but equally one where no-one was left behind. It also reflected the vibrancy of the City Region and how well connected it was. The Combined Authority had responsibility for areas such as regeneration, housing, spatial planning, culture, employment and skills and the plan also referred to ambition such as the LCR connectivity project, ultra-high speed broadband links and tidal energy ambitions together with the overarching ambitions around net zero. Transport played a massive

part in all of those, but it could not be achieved in isolation. The Corporate Plan had been developed in collaboration with local authority partners and by political leaders and was informed by the Mayor's manifesto.

The Corporate Plan was delivered and enforced through a solid performance management framework and underpinned by a Medium Term Financial Plan and also the work programme of Portfolio Holders of which Councillor Robinson was the Portfolio Holder for transport. John Fogarty referred to the slide which set out the Transport Portfolio deliverables such as electric vehicle charging points, highways infrastructure and the appendix to report gave an update on all of those.

Councillor Liam Robinson thanked John Fogarty and all of the team for bringing the report forward. It was important to show how we fitted into the wider organisation and what it delivered. It also demonstrated how the Metro Mayor's manifesto and pledges made in his election campaign were then pulled through into practical delivery, not from a political point of view, but how the pledges made to the public could get incorporated by the organisation and delivered and this report showed that.

Councillor Jeanette Banks thanked John Fogarty for his presentation. She noted that there were a large number of projects which was good but she would like to see more detail and next steps if possible because it would be good to be able to fit these into local plans as well so that it could be seen when these projects were going to come on board and when they would be delivered.

John Fogarty confirmed that the Boroughs had been involved in the completion of this document and there was a constant dialogue with each of them, but it was also something that could be reflected in a report for the next meeting which could include a look ahead. Councillor Liam Robinson agreed and asked if the Portfolio update could be shared with everyone because they should be entitled to the same information.

Councillor Nathalie Nicholas said that it was really exciting and good to see the delivery of the pledges made by the Metro Mayor. In respect of the report the only concern she had was around point 6 equality and diversity implications. There were so many good projects listed but she felt that the report missed highlighting some of the benefits in terms of reducing inequality and addressing some of those implications. John Fogarty noted the point that Councillor Nicholas had raised and confirmed that he would develop that section further in the next report. He advised that work was ongoing with Liverpool on this issue with the aim of improving consideration of equality in reporting in general.

RESOLVED – That the content of the report and the update at Appendix 1, be noted.

37. DEVELOPING THE NEXT STATUTORY LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP) FIRST STAGE: AGREEING AND ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS ON A DRAFT VISION FOR TRANSPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Policy, Strategy and Government Relations which provided an update on the process for developing a new Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the Liverpool City Region.

Huw Jenkins, Lead for Transport Policy, gave a presentation on the growing importance of up-to-date LTPs from the Department for Transport's perspective, and in parallel as a means of delivering the decarbonisation of transport.

Huw Jenkins also referred to Appendix Two to the report which detailed a draft “issues, challenges and vision” document as a first stage in the development of the new plan. This was intended as a basis of further engagement with stakeholders. Delegated authority was sought to allow the draft document to be refined and for a structured on-line consultation response form to be developed to gauge perspectives on the issues raised.

Huw Jenkins advised that regular updates would be presented to Members of the Transport Committee on this issue to maintain full oversight of, and input into the developing LTP.

Huw Jenkins stated that it was a statutory requirement to produce a transport plan which sat with the Combined Authority as it was the Transport Authority for the Liverpool City Region. An LTP was a series of transport policies and programmes which were very often linked to how the funding would be delivered, the metrics used to monitor progress and guiding how transport would be delivered across the City Region. There were, for historic reasons, two LTPs covering the City Region at present - one for Merseyside and a separate plan for Halton. However, they were now over a decade old and predated the Combined Authority and it was felt that this was the right time to consolidate and review those statutory plans.

LTPs had become a little dormant over the last decade. Government took a lighter touch approach and there had been no rigid guidelines. However, what was now being seen was a much clearer indication that up to date LTPs were needed and linked into the transport settlement. They needed to set how local areas would set out their ambitions to deliver net zero carbon and which came out of the Decarbonisation Plan.

There was a very clear statement in the Metro Mayor’s manifesto in relation to taking forward the ambitions for a ‘London-style transport system’ and the LTP also had links into and were referenced in two sections in the Corporate Plan. The development process for the plan was a structured process and it was about understanding what transport needed to do. It was not a series of schemes for arbitrary reasons, but it needed to respond to all transport needs. The LTP set out how transport linked to our bigger ambitions and policies e.g. being net zero carbon by 2040 and that would be taken through a Climate Action Plan coming to the Combined Authority later this month. It would also consider the scenarios of what a post-Covid world might look like, where the gaps were etc. and what that meant in terms of transport. A series of tools would be used to answer those questions such as a strategic transport model and some carbon modelling tools as well.

The Project Plan was set out in Appendix 1 and it had been agreed that the process would be started by setting out the long term vision and goals for transport. This would involve looking at the challenges and opportunities, a series of goals to focus activities around, validating the ambitions and the first stage in the consultation process. Consideration would also need to be given to the scale and pace of change that was needed to take this forward in order to get from where we were now to a net zero carbon economy in just 19 years’ time. That had to happen now and could not wait until 2039. Therefore, part of the consultation was around validating that vision to make sure people were on board and understood the challenges.

Following on from the consultation a strategy would be developed with a delivery and investment programme which would also include an integrated assessment which

was a requirement and an Equality Impact Assessment and an Environment Impact Assessment. The aim was to finalise the plan by the Spring of 2023.

Huw Jenkins advised that the document in Appendix 2 was still in draft form and there were still a number of gaps and some sections needed to be updated as a result of the spending review. Comments would be welcomed from members of the Committee. Therefore, delegated authority was being sought for the Executive Director of Policy, Strategy and Government Relations, in consultation with the Chair of the Transport Committee, to oversee the refinement of the document prior to commencing the consultation process early in the New Year. Officers would continue working on the background and economic forecasts and a series of transport scenarios to understand the implications of growth, change and uncertainty.

The document could be broken down into three core challenges and opportunities:

- Recovery from the pandemic and building an inclusive economy - the economy was unbalanced at present, and transport could lead to inequality if people did not have access to transport or could not afford transport and that was an immediate priority post Covid;
- Decarbonising the economy and transport – this was a second core challenge. The level of carbon emissions had not changed in past decade. Huge strides had been made in decarbonising how electricity was produced but transport was still producing and burning a lot of fossil fuels and producing a lot of carbon emissions. It would be a huge challenge to get to zero by 2040; and
- Responding positively to the new funding – it was excellent news that a sum of £750m had been secured for the first five years. However, the focus of that funding would be different to previous funds – this would not be a fund for road building schemes or dealing with pinch points in the highway network etc. this was around putting bus, active travel and cycling right at the heart of what we did and giving priority to sustainable travel that would decarbonise.

In order to take the process forward the draft vision set a very high level strap line and included five goals which included decarbonisation and improving health. Goal five was an important one – ensuring that we respond to uncertainty and change but also innovation and new technologies. New technology offered opportunities to do things differently and there was uncertainty around the impact of Covid and home working in travel terms. It would be necessary to keep options open and to be responsive to change.

Huw Jenkins confirmed that he would report back to the Committee with feedback and the preferred strategy following the consultation. However, Members were keen to see this at future Transport Committee meetings. The first stage was the vision document and thoughts and comments from Members were welcomed prior to going live with the consultation process in the new year.

Councillor Ken McGlashan stated that the phrase ‘Local Transport Plan’ did not tell the full story as it also covered things like decarbonisation and health. The LTP set out where we were and where we wanted to be in terms of transport, but it was also relevant to all the districts so that they could link that to their local transport plans. It also had relevance to the national programme as well as there was a huge amount of freight which came in through the docks, but the road structure was not there to complement that. Once the LTP was in place it would then be possible to lobby

Government about where the City Region fitted in with national picture, for example HS2. He felt that this was a superb piece of work and thanked Officers. In terms of delegated authority he was happy to leave it provided that Members were kept up to date at all times. Councillor Liam Robinson confirmed that this would be a standing item in future and assured him that Members would be able to keep a close eye on progress.

Councillor Gordon Friel queried the start and finish dates as it seemed to extend longer than previous plans. He also referred to rail freight as his understanding was that there would be a further study at the beginning of the year around that and whether it would present any difficulties in formalising this on a delegated decision. He noted the comments made about not leaving everything to the back end of the plan, but transport was only one element in reducing carbon. He had learnt that throughout the pandemic where people had been working from home and switched the heating on in the winter the actual pollution levels had risen substantially. It would therefore be important to ensure that people were encouraged to use the transport network.

Huw Jenkins replied that the suggested end date of 2040 was considered to be a logical one to tie in with the Metro Mayor's vision for net zero carbon. There was also a synergy with the Spatial Development Strategy that was being taken forward and which would also have a similar horizon. The plan would go live from the Spring of 2023, so a 17 year period, but in all probability there would be short term delivery plans which would be reviewed at regular periods to reflect new funding and new certainty. In respect of the comments made on challenges around influencing national policy, hopefully this message was coming out in the draft vision documents. Some projects could be delivered by ourselves, such as hydrogen batteries on trains and active travel, but other areas around freight would need national support for additional rail capacity in order to get more freight onto the rail network to decarbonise. It was hoped that the LTP would act as a lobbying and positioning document when it came to making the authority's case to secure Government funds as well as allocating and guiding our funds.

The Chairperson, Councillor Liam Robinson requested that as part of the LTP Officers went through the Metro Mayor's manifesto to pull through all of the pledges. He also asked if Officers could ensure that the consultation mechanisms were in place to bring forward thoughts and views because there was a wealth of experience and some superb ideas in this organisation as well as from local businesses and residents. This was a good start and he looked forward to further updates at future meetings.

RESOLVED That:-

- (i) the details set out in the report in relation to the process of developing a new Local Transport Plan for the city region to clearly articulate the new vision for transport, be endorsed;
- (ii) the draft "issues, challenges and vision" document set out within Appendix Two to this report as a first stage in the development of the LTP, be endorsed and it be agreed that this will form the basis of consultation with stakeholders across the city region and into 2022;
- (iii) delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director of Policy, Strategy and Government Relations, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Transport Committee to oversee the refinement of the above document

and to develop a structured on-line consultation and feedback form, to gauge feedback on, and validate the issues set out within it; and

- (iv) updates be received on the development of the LTP and on issues and challenges arising and it be a standing item on future Transport Committee agendas and at informal briefing sessions.

38. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director for Policy, Strategy and Government Relations which set out the new Road Safety Strategy for the Liverpool City Region for comments, ahead of its approval by the Combined Authority.

Suzanne Cain, Transport Policy Co-ordinator advised that the aim was to support the Government's Road Safety Statement of 2019 which set out an aspiration for a shift to a vision zero approach to road safety where avoidable road deaths and injuries should be reduced to an absolute minimum. The strategy had been developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders but it had been Merseyside Police who had had a significant input into the drafting of the document and it was the Safer Roads Unit who had undertaken a lot of the data analysis. The new Road Safety Strategy was built on the safe systems approach which recognised the need for shared responsibility of reducing risk on the roads. It recognised that people would make mistakes but also it was about making sure that there was a greater allowance for human error and that planning and designing neighbourhoods, roads and transport systems for all road users was the starting point when designing networks and transport systems.

Safe systems was built around five core themes or pillars which were at the heart of the strategy. The first was safe speeds exemplified, but not limited to, the move to 20mph zones. Where it was appropriate the speed limit should be built around the geography of the residential make up of an area to make sure that speeds were safe for the people who lived there. The safe street meant that roads were designed to reduce the risk of collision and to mitigate the severity of injury. It was noted that a lot of the roads in the area were old and narrow and it was therefore not possible to redesign every single road but when building a new housing estate it was about making sure that the risk of collision was minimised and making sure that they were as safe as possible.

The safe vehicles pillar looked at vehicles which presented the greatest risk on the roads and looking at the data analysis a lot of road safety collisions were people driving for work and it was necessary to look at where those accidents were happening. Safe behaviour related to shared responsibility and it was about tackling risky behaviours which were attributable to road danger and trying to minimise avoidable deaths to make sure people recognised that it was up to them to use road safety as well as roads being designed safely in the first place. Suzanne Cain also referred to the post-crash response which included working with the emergency services to provide the best possible response to those incidents in order to minimise the after-effects and costs involved with people being killed or seriously injured.

In delivering the strategy there would be a step change in the approach to safer roads with a clearer recognition that deaths and serious injuries on the roads were preventable and not acceptable. The ambition was to reduce the number and severity of road traffic collisions working to an overall vision zero target. There would be no avoidable deaths or serious injuries on the roads of the City Region by 2040

and this tied in with many other initiatives that had the 2040 horizon. Once adopted the immediate action would be to draw up an action plan to start to drill down on how the local authorities, police and other agencies could start to deliver on the new strategy. The strategy included a commitment to produce an annual activity report to look at what had been delivered and progress towards the target of vision zero by 2040.

Councillor Steve Foulkes referred to a recent situation in the Wirral whereby the Road Safety Policy had been challenged in order to enshrine the issues of vision zero which was a newer initiative. He queried whether the other local authorities or agencies had updated their local safety plans or road safety schemes as it seemed odd if that rigor was not being applied at a local level when that was the regional position – he felt that the two should marry up. Secondly, he stated that 20mph zones should not only be the norm in residential areas it should be the norm in people's minds as there were decarbonisation benefits when travelling at slower speeds. The aspiration for vision zero should be a driving force across the board in the City Region. Finally, he suggested that manufacturers should be pressed to introduce a warning sign in vehicles which would indicate that a person was travelling at the wrong speed in an area. This seemed like it would be a technical solution to a big problem.

Suzanne Cain responded that she was not aware of what the plans were for each local authority for taking this forward. One of the problems that had been experienced in the past was that there had never been an overseeing authority approach which it had been possible to bring forward following the creation of the Combined Authority and which did cover a lot more ground than the former Integrated Transport Authority. The Road Safety Strategy which had been drafted in 2017 had started to harmonise that approach. When work started in March last year to redraft the strategy the aim was to think about what local authorities were doing and it had only been in the last 18 months that this visionary Combined Authority approach had been taken in order to have top down buy in. She therefore hoped that that message would trickle down to a local authority level. It was now for each of the local authorities and agencies to really adopt this and start to take it forward. However, she felt that it was too early at this stage to say whether that was the case. In terms of lobbying car manufacturers she confirmed that she would pass that through to the team when they started to draw up the various delivery plans as this was something that should be taken forward.

Councillor Chris Cooke confirmed that a lot of work had been undertaken in the Wirral around road safety and whose findings were very much in favour of the 20mph speed limit universally in all residential, school and shopping areas. He could not see any reference in the report to the 20mph limit, but the fact was that vision zero would not be realistic without the 20mph speed limit. He therefore questioned why the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority was not adopting a policy of 20mph speed limits in all residential, school and shopping areas where pedestrians congregated, as this was in line with the United Nation's recommendations.

Suzanne Cain replied that the legal duty to deliver on road safety rested with each of the local authorities and it was therefore not something that the Combined Authority could dictate. She hoped that by having such an ambitious, high level strategy the delivery of that strategy would cascade down. Because those messages were so strong at the top level then local authorities should not have an argument against implementing the strategy. There had been strong buy in from the local authorities and various agencies and therefore she was confident that those messages would be cascaded down.

Councillor Lindsay Melia agreed that it was a great ambition to get to vision zero. However, a lot of this seemed to be about identifying the issues and the potential solutions rather than clear actions and outcomes. She felt that it was key that the local authorities and the Combined Authority were all working together with clear measurable outcomes. She recognised that there were some elements which could not be controlled and noted that a report would be brought forward within a year. However, she asked if progress would be reviewed on a regular basis.

Suzanne Cain responded that the Road Safety Partnership was currently in place and had been in around since the mid-noughties and it was growing in its strength and ability to analyse data. Every iteration in effect was that much stronger in terms of the way that it was established, governed and managed. The police were now taking a much stronger role in leading on that and a senior Police Officer was in place to manage the Road Safety Partnership. The analysts and support staff behind that were therefore in a stronger position than they were 10 years ago so she was hopeful that as time went on and the visionary document was in place that would give them the mandate to start to dictate what should be done.

Councillor Ged Philbin stated that in his ward he had a lot of schools and day nurseries. He had been out with the Road Safety Team and had witnessed hostile responses to staff who had picked people up on parking in places where they should not be. It was great putting all these things in place, but enforcement should be dealt with in a different way by PCSO's and not staff. Anything that could be done to ease congestion around schools would help.

Councillor Nathalie Nicholas said in terms of safe streets her wish would be that there should be no cars during school peak times as there had been so many collisions around schools. If we were looking at being truly ambitious, then that could be something that was looked at across the city region.

Suzanne Cain replied that these were the sort of initiatives that it was proposed to build into the school streets and low traffic neighbourhood initiatives, and these were the messages that needed to be taken back to the partnership when they started to draw up the action plan. That was why the evaluation of those kind of initiatives was important and should be fed back into the wider picture so it could inform on the delivery of projects. It was about making those connections and the more frequently that happened then the more it would become second nature.

Councillor Jerry Williams made the point that when planning permissions were given then highway safety should be fully taken into consideration as he knew, with his experience of being a Councillor, of numerous circumstances where that had not been the case.

The Chairperson, Councillor Liam Robinson agreed with all the comments which had been made and he thanked the new Police and Crime Commissioner who had shown a lot of interest in this issue. He felt that it was important that this should be closely monitored, and he looked forward to the annual reporting process. One of the key missions was to get as many people as possible onto public transport or active in a sustainable means in order to reduce traffic collisions. He thanked Suzanne Cain and the team for all their hard work on the production of the Road Safety Strategy.

Councillor Steve Foulkes referred to the 20mph zone issue and pointed Members of the Committee to page 97, section 5.1 of the agenda pack where there was a whole page on 20mph zones and the advantages of them. He wanted to ensure that

members of the public were aware that this had been covered. The Chairperson, Councillor Liam Robinson added that Liverpool City Council was one of the pioneers of that as a city-wide approach and which lots of other districts in the City Region were equally following on as well.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) Members comment on the proposed Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy as set out in Appendix 1; and
- (ii) the Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy be noted following which it would be presented to the Combined Authority for agreement at its meeting on 26 November 2021.

39. RAIL UPDATE

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director for Rail which provided an update on a number of workstreams being delivered by the Rail Division. The report summarised the work currently being undertaken within the Rail Division highlighting the projects being taken forward by the Combined Authority to improve the railway as well as the continued operation of the railway.

In this respect updates were provided in turn by David Jones, Rail Development Manager, Phil Saunders, Rail Contract and Concession Manager and Mal Drury-Rose, Assistant Director for Rail.

David Jones updated the Committee on rail project and updated on the following:-

Liverpool Central - Liverpool Central was a key element within the Long-term Rail Strategy. All Merseyrail trains called at Liverpool Central which was at capacity and it was expected that numbers would return in the future as people came back to the rail network. The extensions of the network would bring more people to the station and the city centre which was one of the key reasons why it was necessary to do something about the station.

The GRIP3 design was currently underway and that took into account the basic option selection and what was happening with AUGUR, the development site alongside Liverpool Central as they owned much of the land, and we were in discussion with the Department for Transport regarding the GRIP4 funding which would be the single option development.

Headbolt Lane – This was an extension of the Kirkby line to a new station just beyond Headbolt Lane. It used battery technology which was the first time this had been used in the country. It was proposed that the works would be substantially complete by March 2023 with the new service coming in in May 2023 at the timetable change. Work was being undertaken with Network Rail and Knowsley to deliver that project.

Baltic/St James New Station – This was a new station to the south of Liverpool at the old St James station, but it was unlikely that the new station would be called St James as everyone confused it with James Street. A process was currently being undertaken to identify a more acceptable name for the station. The GRIP3 work was completed and GRIP4 work would commence early in the New Year with a possible

delivery date of around 2025 and therefore we would look to use some of the transport settlement money to fund that.

Access Improvement – The key issue was that there were 21 stations in the City Region which were not step-free and it generally cost around £5m to make a station fully accessible. Currently money was available from the City Region and from Access for All funds to deliver five stations by March 2023 – these were Hunts Cross, St Michaels, Hillside and Birkenhead Park on the Merseyrail network and Broad Green on the Northern rail network. The Merseyrail ones were expected to be completed in mid-2022 and the Northern Rail one slightly later, not as a result of slippage, but because of the way the works had been programmed. Funding had also recently been approved to design three more stations – Bromborough, Aigburth and Rock Ferry. They had been part of the submission to the Access for All fund initially but had not been successful. Funding had been obtained from the City Region to design them up and then if there was any TCF funding or Access for All funding available before March 2023 then they would be ready to go. He admitted that that did not deal with every station, but it was proposed to hold a workshop in the New Year to look at the remaining stations and how prioritise which ones should be made accessible.

Sandhills Capacity – this was associated with the Everton FC bid for a new ground at Bramley Moore Dock which was going ahead and effectively there were two parts to this. One was putting in a fan management zone, which Everton were actually funding, and we would deliver those works on their behalf. In terms of the second part was to put an extra access into the station. However, there was uncertainty around how that would be fully funded and consequently only the design element had been done. In terms of the numbers of people who would come from Everton to the station, there was no issue with the number of trains or train capacity, the problem was that it was only possible to get 3,000 people an hour onto Sandhill station and if 9,000 to 10,000 people an hour turned up that would cause a problem. If another access was provided, then the station capacity would be around 6,000 people an hour. The ideal position would be to get Everton to fund that but that would be subject to further discussions.

Lea Green Park and Ride – This was being delivered on behalf of St Helens as part of the Southern Corridor Scheme development and the Combined Authority would deliver a major upgrade to the park and ride facility at Lea Green. There had been problems at Lea Green car park for some years now and the funding they had got would help to resolve that problem.

Liverpool South Parkway (LSP) Platform Extension – This tied in with the potential extension to the Avanti services going to two trains per hour between Liverpool and London on the west coast main line and ideally longer platforms were needed to cope with a potential west coast train stopping at that station. The design work was expected to be complete by March 2022.

David Jones highlighted the following four key studies which related to the future use of the Transport Settlement:

City Centre Commission – this related to the extension of the Northern Powerhouse rail services into the city centre and a potential new station in the city centre. A refresh of a study which was undertaken in 2017 was currently under way and output from that was expected soon.

New Stations Study – this built on work done in 2014 on the Long-term Rail Strategy. A series of stations had been identified and it would be necessary to review that to see if they were still relevant. There was also an operational issue – if a new station was put in was there an assurance that the trains could stop. Potentially there were timetabling issues in terms of the capacity onto the rail network. If changes were made to train stops then its profile and arrival time at other stations would be affected and that might impact on other services around the network.

IPEMU Extension Study – this looked at all the possible extensions of the Merseyrail network and which ones we should be concentrating on and taking forward into the future.

Port of Liverpool Freight Data Study – There was a high-level Freight Study currently under way to identify freight movements within the City Region and what could be shipped across to rail.

Phil Saunders updated the Committee on Merseyrail Concessions:-

In terms of performance and patronage over the pandemic Merseyrail had maintained the high level of performance which had been experienced before the pandemic. It was still rare if the PPM, which measured how late trains were arriving at the stations, fell below 96% and in fact there had been several 100% days over this period. This had been possible due to the agile approach which we have had with the operator and Network Rail – by changing timetables and changing levels and capacity of trains - and also by taking into account Merseyrail's ability to deliver it in a reliable and robust way. There had been real challenges around the availability of staff to actually drive the trains or be the guards on the trains and that had affected the number of circuits that could be made on the services.

Passenger numbers were on the increase – around about 75% total recovery for Merseyrail and that could be broken down into leisure and commuters. Commuter numbers were in the region of 60-65% but that was not every single day. Leisure had been the real success story and over the last month or so it had been noticed that on weekends the numbers for leisure travel were over 100% of 2019 figures so there was a massive recovery in leisure usage. It was really important to understand when looking at future timetables, capacities and where our services should be delivered, that there was a slight change in the way people were behaving and that was being monitored and would be used to drive service delivery going forward.

Over the next couple of week and months the biggest challenge would be the weather as frost etc could be a real enemy of railways with the result that there would be delays and trains breaking down. A successful approach had been in place over the years as a result of the work with Network Rail. He referred to timetables whereby the approach in previous years was to have a winter timetable but that did not need to be approached this year as a pulled back timetable was in place with 20 minutes on most routes which gave a level of robustness and which meant that there was no need to cancel if a train was slightly delayed. However, there were more and more extreme weather situations affecting the network and last year had seen flooding and frost which had caused havoc to the infrastructure. Work had been undertaken to look at that and some actions and plans had been implemented to avoid the same situation occurring again.

In regard to the timetable and capacity he had touched on the fact that there would not be a return to 15 minute services and the main reason for that was staff capacity. Unless there were enough drivers it was not possible to have enough circuits – it was

possible to push Merseyrail on this, but it would mean that services would not be reliable or robust. Small levels of sickness could equate to short term cancellations and it was important to ensure that the customer could rely on a timetable and make sure that the trains were running as scheduled and therefore it was proposed to stick to the 20 minute service for most of the services. 15 minute services would still run in a few areas, but where possible, and where there was demand and staff availability, extra services would be put in at peak times. Availability of staff was constantly being monitored with Merseyrail and there would be a push over the next week or so to ensure that the Christmas period was supported in the best way possible.

The industry was moving to a SMART focussed ticketing offer. Platform validators were available on all Merseyrail stations that were not gated and were essential to plans for account based ticketing in the future. The next stage would be to get the infrastructure ready for the products and also to look at zones and schemes to ensure they were fit for the future.

Lastly, Mal Drury-Rose gave a presentation on the issue of devolution. He stated that the Merseyrail concession was the Combined Authority's concession to 2028. There was a great deal going on in the rail industry at present and the Combined Authority were heavily involved to ensure that the right outcomes for the region were achieved. Recent discussions had now been undertaken with Department of Transport (DfT) officials to review the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to consider how best the Combined Authority could take forward devolution proposals. The Combined Authority was working with the DfT and the Great British Railways Transition Team on a revised and updated MoU which would form the basis for these on-going discussions and would also consider a range of options as to how the Combined Authority could best influence future rail investment and train operations within the proposed new rail industry structure.

More recently had been the announcement by Grant Shapps of the future restructuring of the rail industry and the proposal to bring both rail infrastructure and rail operation under the control of a new single body to be called Great British Railways. This was a merger of the train companies and British Rail to provide a quicker seamless type of operation. A transition team had been put in place; however, it would still be private contractors operating trains under a management contract. From the Combined Authority's point of view it was actively involved with Great British Railway, the transition team and the DfT as an opportunity to have more influence in the wider network which provided critical services to residents in the region. The Metro Mayor was keen to improve the influence that the Combined Authority had. One of the recommendations of the earlier workshop had been to put in place co-working office arrangements with Network Rail and Merseyrail Electrics, and the new "rail hub" located on the 8th floor of Mann Island came live as from the beginning of October. This provided, for the first time, a strategic sub-regional rail hub based at the Combined Authority Headquarters which would have a key role in progressing how future rail interventions within Liverpool City Region were effectively developed, managed and implemented going forward.

In terms of rolling stock Mal Drury-Rose confirmed that weekly meetings were held with the Metro Mayor. The good news was that most of the new trains had now been produced and the 53rd unit had now been assembled in Poland. A number of units now been accepted which meant they were fit to run in passenger service.

The Headbolt Lane extension was an ongoing project and would introduce the first battery power technology which meant that the third rail system would no longer be

required which would provide potential saving costs and would also assist with the decarbonisation agenda. It would also improve safety because there would not be a third live railway running into that part of the network.

He confirmed that the power supply upgrade would be completed by the end of this year.

Enabling works was underway at Network Rail for the eight car trains. The new trains were four carriages in length and would combine together to form an eight car unit. Some of the platforms would not be complete until the trains had been introduced so there would be a number of lines with four car operation for a short period of time, but the Combined Authority would be working with Merseyrail to mitigate that once the implementation plan was up and running. In general terms we were working really hard to get some of these issues resolved to introduce the new fleet next year.

Phil Saunders added that the battery technology testing that had been undertaken live on the network had been very successful and some of the assumptions made on the battery levels had been very conservative which would put us in really good standing going forward. Also, the Combined Authority was working alongside Network 4 to look at the line speeds along different routes. Work had also been done on the Merseyrail network to see what benefits 777 might have on that. Several open days had been held for the trade and members of the public and they had been very successful as thousands of people had come along to look at the trains and positive comments had been received.

The Chairperson, Councillor Liam Robinson referred to the battery trial and the fact that it would be better to say that our initial assessments were less ambitious. There was nothing conservative about our publicly owned trains.

Councillor Allan Jones referred to pages 109 and 110 of the report in relation to the possibility of the new station at Carr Mill being shelved. The line ran from Liverpool to Wigan, and north of St. Helens the only station in the Merseyside area was Garswood. Garswood was a nice little station but it lacked car parking. If the aim was to encourage people to leave their cars and use public transport, then a station would be required which had a large car park such as was the plan for Carr Mill. This was something that had been talked about for a very long time and a station with a large car park north of the town centre would be essential.

Councillor Robinson reassured Councillor Jones that it was not proposed to shelve the plans for a new station at Carr Mill. However, this was a complex railway project and further detailed feasibility work was required. It was noted that Carr Mill had actually been specifically mentioned in the Metro Mayor's manifesto as he felt that this was something that needed investigating.

Councillor Lindsay Melia asked for details on the process for the naming of the Baltic/St James station for the benefit of Members and the public. She also referred to the public viewing of the new trains and she wanted to take the opportunity to thank all of the staff. In respect of the new station review she asked how local stakeholders were being engaged and how the viability and the local need or demand for each new station would be assessed. Also wanted to know what the criteria was that we were measuring against and how Members could feed into that. In relation to the battery trains she agreed with the comments made by Officers in that it was exciting to be pioneering this new technology and it was great that funding had been secured as there was potential for expansion and an opportunity to reduce carbon emissions.

Mal Drury-Rose replied that there was a proper process in place for the naming of the new station which had involved local Councillors in the area. A number of names had been shortlisted and that would be for the Metro Mayor and Councillor Robinson to consider a shortlist of three which would go out to the public for endorsement and hopefully a decision would be made by the Metro Mayor on the basis of that public vote. David Jones referred to the point made about the new station review and confirmed that it was about taking the work which had been undertaken the last time and looking at what things had changed around the possible location e.g. housing developments. It was hoped that the same consultants could be used as previously in order that the same process could be followed. Members had been involved the last time and he felt that there would be a Member workshop in which the operators would also be involved. The review would be expanded slightly to take into account the operational issues which needed to be looked at.

Councillor Gordon Friel thanked everyone on the team for their hard work. What had been outlined was a resilience in the systems in our network which he was pleased about. He referred to leaf fall and asked if there was anything that could be done, like Northern Rail, whereby a piece of kit could be installed to keep that reliability. He did not want to get to December and see the good record we held go under as it was so important to people and their livelihoods. It was important to make sure that services were running smoothly and consistently.

Mal Drury-Rose responded that he had extensive experience which gave him insight into colleagues in Merseyrail and Network Rail and he had already asked those questions around resilience. He referred to the tragic incident at Salisbury and he had already asked for an understanding of where we were with that in this region. Resilience was a real challenge in the industry particularly in relation to flooding. Phil Saunders added that the Officers monitored Merseyrail to ensure that they were doing these activities as an operator. There was a seasonal working group which met formally every two weeks, but there was also a daily update on the activities regarding the Multi-Purpose Vehicle (MPV) which treated the rail head. Minute by minute reports were received around performance on the rail to see if there were any incidents. Merseyrail had a good record when it came to performance as they wanted to go ahead of what the national areas were. The way that national looked at problems was sometimes by incidents and therefore Merseyrail might not get some information because their incidents were so low. The money tended to go where the problems were. However, it was noted that Merseyrail "punched well above their weight" when it came down to interventions from Network Rail.

All of the directors and Network Rail directors had been challenged to give a view on the position around particular infrastructure issues. Northern Rail was different to this area where our problems were mostly related to the actual third rail and trains breaking down. The challenge around frost was usually manageable but the problems which had been seen last year with the weather had been unique and were few and far between and it was also difficult to pinpoint when and where problems would arise. It was about making sure there was proper proactive work in place and that the MPV train was doing its work. It was also important to ensure that the driver technique could recognise these problems earlier and to stop and examine the rail. He had asked for assurance from Merseyrail to make sure that the train drivers were trained appropriately in this area.

Councillor Jeanette Banks referred to page 110 of the agenda where it talked about the Liverpool Freight Data Study. She confirmed that Parkside Phase 1 had been approved in the borough of St. Helens and she knew that her MP and the Metro

Mayor had supported them massively in this and it would give 93,000sq.m. of new employment space which was wonderful, a new park side link road was in phase 1 and she wondered how pivotal this would be for the free port plans for the Liverpool City Region freight.

David Jones said his understanding was that the Parkside work had been completed and effectively passed to St Helens Council and it was their decision on how to go forward with it. It was slightly separate from the port of Liverpool but linked because of freight and how much freight could be diverted to the railway. He confirmed that the Combined Authority would support and work closely with St. Helens on that.

Councillor Nathalie Nicholas referred to the new station study and once completed she asked if local schools could be engaged in this as it was an educational opportunity to get children engaged in the long term appreciation of the rail service in their area. David Jones confirmed that he would ensure that was picked up.

Councillor Damien O'Connor thanked Officers for the answer given to in respect of the new station at Carr Mill as St. Helens was pushing for this. In regard to the non-step free stations which St. Helens had a number of, he asked whether there was a timescale when that work would be done.

The Chairperson, Councillor Liam Robinson said at present this was at the investigatory stage of what might be possible and a workshop session with Members would take place in January 2022 to go through that work. It would involve significant infrastructure work and therefore we were not in a position to give timescales on individual stations at present. However, once that stage was complete a plan for the whole network could be put in place.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

40. MULTI-OPERATOR AND MULTI-MODAL TICKETING SCHEME - PRODUCT AND PRICING UPDATE AND PROPOSALS

The Committee considered the report of Merseytravel which sought approval of the ticketing recommendations relating to specific scheme arrangements, product and price changes for all Merseytravel multi-operator and multi-modal pre-paid tickets for 2022.

Gary Evans, Assistant Director for Customer Delivery advised that part of the annual price setting process was to set the prices for the multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing suite which consisted of Trio, Solo, Saveaway and Rail Pass tickets. The same process was followed last year and generally would involve picking up the RPI levels as at July each year and also take a range of other factors into play. That same process had been adopted this year. Some key points to highlight was that for the bus and multi-modal products – Solo, Trio and Saveaway – there had been no price increase last year due to Covid and the use of funding which had been received from Central Government. Therefore, the last increase had been in 2019 which was something to be mindful of.

In setting the rates the 3.8% was obviously the rate of inflation as at July 2021 but since that date lots of organisations had faced increasing costs across a range of different settings. Increased costs had been seen in energy and that would have a significant impact for businesses as there was no price cap for energy. There had also been significant increases in fuel costs which would impact the bus services.

In bringing a recommendation forward it had been challenging but there was a need to set a balance. The danger of not increasing prices annually was that you would reach a position where that would not be sustainable. The recommendation was for a 2% increase across ticket prices (Trio, Solo and Saveaway) apart from the Rail Pass product where the recommendation was that this would follow the National position, which was unknown as yet, up to a limit of 3.8% which was the rate of inflation. Nationally they usually followed the rate of inflation plus 1%, but the highest increase here would be 3.8%. There would be no ticket increases above the rate of inflation in this area which was the key message to get across. Ticket prices would usually be rounded to the nearest 10p and the child price would be half the fare of the adult price.

Councillor Gordon Friel felt that the report had been realistic. Ideally the authority would like to keep prices the same as he was aware what was happening in respect of the cost of living. He felt that the recommendation in the report was sound.

Councillor Nathalie Nicholas stated that ideally she would not like to see any increase in terms of tickets as the cost of living was going up significantly across the country. For many frontline staff bills were going up and for larger families sometimes it would be cheaper to take a taxi than to go by bus. She recognised the fact that it was not possible to go year on year without increasing fares. In terms of the equality and diversity implications it was good to see that these had been taken that into consideration and that that aspect had been highlighted.

The Chairperson, Councillor Liam Robinson thanked Officers for the report and agreed with the comments made. He said that it was important to bear in mind the practical realities of the situation we were in. The City Region was lucky in that it was one of the only regions outside of London which controlled the price setting of the multi-modal and multi-operator ticketing schemes. Other areas were controlled by ticketing companies. The comparable prices set here were cheaper than the comparable tickets in Greater Manchester or West Yorkshire, so the City Region did start from a better place, but it did not have a totally free hand on this. He referred to the Government's National Fares Policy on the rail network and because Northern Rail was half of our local rail network, we had to follow that because otherwise they would disengage from the scheme. There was also the element that legally a multi-modal ticketing scheme was not allowed to compete directly with operator-owned products and that therefore limited the scope to cut fares.

He referred to the work going on in relation to the devolved powers of buses that might well change and depending on whatever model was chosen we will probably move into a situation where the Combined Authority would have much more say on all bus tickets and fares in the future depending on the devolved work and that opened up a whole host of opportunities to put in place much more affordable fares across the network. The fact that the report was recommending a 2% increase, which was less than inflation, and was protecting My Ticket which was so vital for so many of the young people getting around the region, in the circumstances this was the best deal that could be achieved and he was therefore happy to endorse this increase and to move the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED - That approval be given for :

- (i) annual price recommendations for the Merseytravel Multi-Operator Ticketing Scheme products, to be fully implemented by the 4 January 2022 (or August 2022 for Term time tickets) for Trio, Solo, My Ticket and Saveaway tickets as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report; and

- (ii) annual price recommendations for the Merseytravel Railpass Multi-Operator Rail Ticketing Scheme products, to be fully implemented in line with national increase in 2022 (or August 2022 for Term time tickets) as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

41. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT - 1 APRIL 2021 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Committee considered the report of Merseytravel which provided details of Merseytravel's financial performance for the period through to 30 September 2021.

Sarah Johnston , Assistant Director, Finance highlighted the following key points:-

- The first part of the report dealt with revenue performance and it was noted that there was an underspend of £6m on operational expenditure. The reasons for this were detailed however the two main areas were in respect of concessionary travel payments and rolling stock. Concession payments had been lower because operators were paid based on mileage. However, this was subject to a reconciliation process and would be likely to increase such that it was not expected that such a significant underspend would be seen at the end of the year. Rolling stock would be fully funded by way of reserves and that would lead to a reprofiling of expenditure.
- The next part of the report was around capital and it was noted that a sum of £63.6m had been spent against a budget of £149m. Further details on variances and scheme costs were set out in the report.
- The final part of the report related to the projected use of reserves and financial risk. This part of the report had been drafted on the assumption that spend would be in line with the budget and on that basis, it was assumed that £6.8m would be applied to Merseytravel reserves. Given where we are now the probability was that there would be a lower use of reserves as some of the risks identified through the budget setting process had reduced or changed. Members should note that at paragraph 3.8 there was a detailed explanation around risk and therefore whilst it was noted that it was possible to live within the budget in the current year there were risks that might manifest in the following year and it would be necessary to bear that in mind for the next budget setting process.

Councillor Steve Foulkes noted that this budget had been set in a period when there had been a great deal of uncertainty around Covid and in terms of being able to predict the unpredictable it was felt that a good job had been done to come in with a balanced budget at the end of the year with some to be put into reserves. He felt that there would be a challenge next year and that was what had been intimated in the report. Members were kept well informed and fully aware of the risks in the future.

RESOLVED - that the contents of the report be noted.

42. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions had been received.

43. PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS

No petitions or statements were submitted for this meeting.

44. CHAIRPERSON'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairperson, Councillor Liam Robinson announced that Shauna Healey from Democratic Services was attending her last meeting of the Transport Committee prior to her departure from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. He thanked her for all her hard work over the years and he wished her all the best for her new role in the Fire Authority. The Committee gave a round of applause.

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed.

Minutes 30 to 44 received as a correct record on the 13 day of January 2022.

Chairperson of the Transport Committee

(The meeting closed at 4.45 pm)

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