

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....24th April 2014

1. Title of Item/Report

Rail Devolution and Local Rail Update

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that updated Members on the situation regarding Rail Devolution following a report to Cabinet in March 2013 and informed Members of the on-going investment programme at the local level. In March 2012 the Government published a consultation document on potential options for devolving decision-making on passenger rail services in England. In response to the consultation, the concept of devolution was broadly welcomed by the Tees Valley authorities and their partners across the North East, who recognised the potential benefits it could deliver.

The Northern Rail and Transpennine franchises, both of particular interest to the Tees Valley, were identified as two of the franchises that the Government may look to devolve. A consortium of Northern PTEs/ITAs known collectively as Rail North had emerged to develop proposals for greater involvement in the management of these franchises. Rail North submitted a business case to Government in late 2013 outlining these proposals that recognised the formation of a North East Business Unit (NEBU) which authorities in the North East feel would ensure a more focussed provision of rail services and investment for the region.

Since then the Government had formally reiterated support for the principle of devolution; however, there was a clear desire to move towards an arrangement whereby there was a more 'evolutionary' approach to devolution, with DfT taking a significant role within an initial partnership structure. Whilst details on the exact structure and governance were awaited, there was a clear need to ensure that the Tees Valley objectives were reflected in key Rail North workstreams such as their Long Term Rail Strategy and on-going Electrification of the National network. In order to ensure the North East's position was clear, a North East Rail Strategy was being developed and it was hoped that this would help to support some of the Tees Valley's priorities for rail in the on-going higher level discussions.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The on-going investment programme at the Borough's Rail Stations and the proposed masterplanning at Billingham Station be noted.
2. The current proposal of a partnership approach to Rail Devolution proposed by the Department for Transport and Rail North be noted.
3. The progress of the Long Term Rail Strategy for the North of England be noted.
4. The progress of the North East Rail Strategy and the Tees Valley position on Electrification be noted.
5. The Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport, will continue to work with other north east authorities through the LEP and ANEC structures to ensure that the north east interests are adequately considered within any proposed devolution mechanism.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The programme of rail devolution affects all Local Authorities across the north of England and engagement in the North East is under the ANEC architecture. The purpose of the recommendations is to provide awareness to Cabinet of progress made to date the likely decision making process that will be required through the LEP leadership Board.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday, 2nd May 2014

Proper Officer  
28 April 2014