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# Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority

## Annual Meeting

25 May 2006  
(10.30am – 12.45am)

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**Present:** Councillor D Wood (in the Chair)

**Councillors:** Bollands, Clare, Green, Hanson, Hodson, Keating, Lawson, McKeever, A Ord, D Ord, O'Shea, Sleightholme, Watson and P Wood

**In Attendance:** I Stratford, S Ovens, P Fenwick, P Hedley, P Bower, C Warren, J Curran

**Representing Nexus:** M Parker, S Atkinson, B Garner, K MacKay, L Robinson

### 1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor D Wood be appointed Chair for the ensuing municipal year.

### 2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor McGarr.

### 3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor P Wood declared a personal interest (in respect of his Chairmanship of Compus Community Transport).

### 4. **MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY**

Submitted: Report of the Clerk (copies attached to Official Minutes)

The Chairman welcomed Councillor McKeever to the Authority. He paid tribute to the contribution made by Councillor Shipley who was no longer a member of the Authority.

**RESOLVED** – That the information be received and noted.

### 5. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Lawson be appointed Statutory Vice Chairman and Councillors Bollands and Hanson be appointed as other Vice Chairman.

6. **APPOINTMENT OF LEAD MEMBERS PORTFOLIOS**

**RESOLVED** – That the following appointments be made in respect of Members Portfolios:-

Chairman – Regeneration and Communication

Councillor Lawson - Modal Shift

Councillor Hanson - Tyne Tunnel/New Tyne Crossing

Councillor Bolland - Social Inclusion

7 **APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION**

The Chairman paid tribute to Councillor Alan Ord's work during his time as leader of the opposition.

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Keating be appointed as leader of the opposition.

8 **APPOINTMENTS 2006/07**

**The following changes were made:-**

(a) **Delegated Committee**

Councillors D Wood, Lawson and **Keating (or their substitutes)**

(b) **Personnel Panel**

Councillors Hanson, Lawson and **Keating**

(c) **Tyne Tunnels Working Group**

Councillors Hanson (Chair), Clare, D Wood, O'Shea and Hodson.

(d) **Standards and Audit Committee**

Councillors **O'Shea**, Watson, Hanson, **D Ord** and P Woods.

(e) **Project Orpheus Sub Committee**

Councillors O'Shea, Lawson, Bolland, Sleightholme, Clare, A Ord, P Woods and Keating.

(f) **PTA Scrutiny Advisory Committee**

**Newcastle**

Councillor P Hillocks, Councillor J Appleby.

**Sunderland**

Councillor D Forbes, Councillor M Ambrose.

**Gateshead**

Councillor B Richmond, Councillor J McElroy.

**North Tyneside**

Councillor D Charlton, Councillor M Lindon.

**South Tyneside**

Councillor A Meeks, Councillor J Sewell.

(g) **Outside Bodies.**

(i) **District Transport Spokesman**

Councillor Bolland - Gateshead, Councillor Lawson - Sunderland, Councillor D Wood - Newcastle upon Tyne, Councillor Clare - South Tyneside, Councillor Hodson - North Tyneside.

(ii) **Local Government Association**

Councillors D Wood, Lawson, Bolland and A Ord.

(iii) **PTA Special Interest Group**

Councillors D Wood, Lawson and Keating.

(iv) **Joint Lead Members (Transportation)**

Councillors D Wood and Hanson.

**RESOLVED** – That the appointments and changes as noted above be approved.

9 **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2006/07**

Submitted: A report of the Clerk (copies attached to Official Minutes).

**RESOLVED** – That the dates and times as outlined in the report be approved, however meetings of the authority would in future, begin at 10.00 am and not 10.30 am.

10 **MINUTES**

(i) The minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 23 March 2006 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**Matters Arising -****(a) Progress With Implementing Service Cuts Required to meet 2006/07 Budget**

(Minute no 89 refers).

The Director General reported that sales of the new Metro Gold Card were now up to 83,000.

In response to a query, the Director General explained that discussions around concessionary travel were continuing with local MPs.

**(b) Local Transport Plan (LTP) for 2006 – 2011**

(Minute no. 92 refers).

B Garner reported that the plan had been submitted by the partners as required at the end of April. He agreed to circulate a copy to all Members of the authority.

**(c) Project Orpheus – Metro Reinvigoration Process Report on Developing the Procurement Strategy**

(Minute no 93 refers).

The Director General explained that the consultation process was beginning and a briefing session had been held with the Minister who had expressed satisfaction with progress so far. Following the notice in the European Journal, there had been a great deal of interest expressed by a range of companies.

- (i) The minutes of the delegated committee of 19 April were received for information.

There had been two delegated committees on the same subject. Members thanked S Atkinson for her hard work in negotiations with the DfT to produce an excellent Metro rail grant settlement.

- (ii) The minutes of the delegated committee of 15 May were received for information.

- (iii) The minutes of the Policy Seminar of 27 April 2006 were received for information.

**Matters Arising:-****(a) Naming of Metro Cars**

The Chair reported that the proposal to name one of the Metro cars after Michael Campbell, former Chairman of Tyne and Wear County Council had been agreed by his family and the ceremony was to take place on 16 June at 11.00 am. All Members were welcome to attend.

**(b) Bus Ridership**

This would be considered at a future Policy Seminar. It was important to have a seminar to discuss the issue of increasing ridership and marketing buses more forcefully.

**11 REVIEW OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENT**

Submitted: A joint report of the Clerk and Legal Advisor and Monitoring Officer (copies attached to Official Minutes)

A Member asked if all Members could receive a copy of the standing orders.

**RESOLVED** – That approval be given to amendments to standing orders referred to in paragraph 4 of the report.

**12 AFFILIATION FEES TO THE LGA**

Submitted: Report of the Director General Nexus and the Deputy Clerk and Treasurer to the PTA (copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Director General outlined the draft agreement which had been reached between the Chairs of the PTA and the Local Government Association regarding the level of affiliation fees from each PTA/E to the LGA. This had come as a result of protracted negotiations. There was still some concern and ongoing discussions about voting rights at the LGA. The matter would be discussed further at the Special Interest Group meeting on 7 June 2006.

**RESOLVED** – That

- (i) the direct agreement reached between the PTA Chairs and the Local Government Association whereby the level of affiliation fees from each PTA/PTE to the LGA remained the same as the previous year, but the LGA agreed to pay £100,000 in support of the PTEG support unit be endorsed;
- (ii) subject to the conclusion of this agreement, the PTA would withdraw its notice to terminate its membership of the LGA.

**13 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

Submitted: Report of the Director General (copy attached to Official Minutes).

In response to a query, the Director General explained that there was a separate category within the disability section which covered those with learning disability. A recent Government paper strongly urged public sector bodies taking separate account of people with learning disabilities.

**RESOLVED** – That

- (i) the PTA race equality scheme be approved;
- (ii) the equality standard for Local Government be adopted as

the PTAs committed appro  
equality and diversity agen

- (iii) the PTA comprehensive equality policy be approved;
- (iv) the PTA statement on access to services and employment be approved;
- (v) the best value review would address equality impact and needs assessment.

14 **DISTRICT TRANSPORT FORUMS/TYNE AND WEAR TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Submitted: Report of the Director General (copy attached to Official Minutes).

In response to a query, B Garner explained that there was an agreement with the operators regarding claw back arrangements for the recovery of payments paid to bus operators against the network not being operated or a decline in use of the service.

**RESOLVED** – That

- (i) the points arising out of the various presentations be noted;
- (ii) members should submit any items they wish to be placed on the agenda for the next round of meetings to be held on October 2006.

15 **MARKET CONSULTATION EXERCISE – DELIVERY THE BUS STRATEGY**

Submitted: Report of the Director General (copy attached to Official Minutes).

B Garner introduced the report which was an update on the options being considered to improve the quality of bus services. He summarised the key issues and the next steps.

**Questions/Comments**

- In response to a query, B Garner explained that the question of whether quality contracts were the only practical way forward, was the subject of an ongoing exercise at the moment. The options outlined in the report were being explored with the bus operators and it was hoped that more information could be obtained and the options could be developed fully so that a balanced judgement could be made. Discussions would take place at the June policy seminar with a report coming back to the authority in the Autumn.
- The options also needed to be discussed with Health Authorities.
- Not all local bus operators had expressed an interest and it was possible that there could be some legal difficulties.

- A member felt that further key issues to be explored and discussed should include the cost implications, particularly relating to the purchase of vehicles and depot facilities. Members needed clear financial information on the proposed contracts.
- In response to a query, B Garner explained that arising from the inability to carry advertising, although there would be a cost implication, this was not a major issue.

**RESOLVED** – That

- (i) the outcomes of the market consultation exercise be noted;
- (ii) Nexus be instructed to complete an evaluation of the strategic options to deliver the bus strategy and report on the outcome in the autumn.

16 **ACHIEVING THE SERVICE ECONOMIES REQUIRED TO MEET THE 2006/07 BUDGET**

Submitted: Report of the Director General (copy attached to Official Minutes).

In introducing the report, the Director General paid tribute to B Garner and his staff for the work undertaken in difficult circumstances in attempting to reduce the impact of the required service economies.

B Garner then outlined the current situation with regard to implementing the service economies required. He explained that the effected times relating to services was identified in appendix 1.

In response to a query on services 317 and 314, B Garner explained that this was operated by Go NorthEast. The service reflected the way they allocated vehicles across the total fleet. This had recently been changed to release resources to cover this route.

**RESOLVED** – That

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) the Nexus decision to withdraw services as identified in appendix 2 be endorsed.

17 **BUS PRIORITY LANES ACROSS TYNE AND WEAR**

Submitted: Report of the Director General (copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Director General introduced the report which explained to members some current inconsistencies in bus lane provision in Tyne and Wear. He expressed particular concern that the lack of consistency in signage and rules for bus lanes reduced the propensity of Northumbria Police to enforce them. A member commented that some thought should be given to giving some priority to cars that carried several passengers.

**RESOLVED – That**

- (i) the report be received and noted;
- (ii) discussions be initiated though the Superoute Board and LTP joint working arrangements be established to encourage greater consistency of approach across the five Tyne and Wear districts.

18 **REVISED ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR DOOR TO DOOR TRANSPORT**

Submitted: Report of Director General (copy attached to Official Minutes).

B Garner introduced the report explaining how the existing care service scheme had operated and outlining proposed changes.

A member welcomed the report, but stressed the need for more monitoring information particularly relating to links between districts. This was invaluable for Ward Councillors and he asked if it could be available as quickly as possible. He also expressed an interest in seeing the introduction of a smart card system. This had been discussed at the District Transport Forums and consultations would be held with local Councillors.

In response to a query, B Garner explained that 3,500 currently used the service in any one month. Consultation was ongoing with District Councils and with local Social Services Departments. The majority of users enjoyed the door to door care service and many had mobility problems. The revised eligibility criteria would meet most of their requirements.

In referring to community transport options, B Garner explained that a lot of work had been carried out with various community groups looking at how vehicles could be shared. A vehicle brokerage concept was being developed in a positive way.

**RESOLVED – That**

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) the eligibility criteria be established for membership of the replacement care service scheme whereby members of the new service would qualify by providing documentary evidence that they were in receipt of:-
  - the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance
  - attendance allowance
  - being registered as severely visually impaired or blind
  - or have a level of mobility impairment which make the member eligible for the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance be approved;

- (iii) Nexus would appoint a medical advisor to assess eligibility when documentary evidence could not be provided.

## 19 RAIL ISSUES UPDATE

Submitted: Report of the Director General (copy attached to Official Minutes).

B Garner introduced the report summarising the key issues.

### Questions/Comments

- There was particular concern about a recent report of Network Rail which suggested that biggest demand for a north/south route would be via the west coast, north from Manchester to Glasgow and Edinburgh. Officers were waiting for a briefing note to share with partners in the region to protect the interests of the North East.
- A member expressed disappointment with the reaction from GNER to the successful application by Grand Central Railways for track access rights to operate direct rail services between Sunderland and London.
- The application from Grand Central Railways had the support of the Association of North East Councils, Sunderland Council, Nexus and the PTA. The development had been hugely welcomed in Sunderland.
- A member endorsed these comments and went on to stress the need for close liaison with Nexus to ensure that additional services resulted in minimal impact on Metro operation.
- The North East generally would benefit from this new high speed rail link it would make a significant contribution to the development of the economy in the region, fostering links with Scotland and London.

### RESOLVED – That

- (i) the report be received and noted;
- (ii) the outcome of the Northern Rail review which would ensure some stability until at least 2010, be welcomed;
- (iii) Nexus be instructed to prepare a briefing note to facilitate widest possible involvement in the north/south high speed rail link development.

## 20 NEW TYNE CROSSING OUTCOME OF CHALLENGE

Submitted: Report of the Project Director, New Tyne Crossing (copy attached to Official Minutes).

P Fenwick outlined the arguments which had been put to the High Court by Mr Atkinson as to why he considered the Secretary of State for Transport to have erred in Law in confirming the River Tyne (Tunnels) order 2005. He also outlined the judgement which had been handed down on 5 May 2006 and the next stage if

the challenge was to be taken further.

A member queried whether if the appeal went to the Appeal Court, it could then go to the House of Lords or the European Court of Justice. P Fenwick confirmed that if leave was given to appeal to the Court of Appeal and a judgement was obtained, then It was possible that with leave there could be a further appeal to the House of Lords.

**RESOLVED** – That the judgement handed down at the High Court on 5 May 2006 be noted and the possibility of further developments as set out in paragraph 6.8 of the report be noted.

## 21 **RETIREMENT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL**

The Chairman explained that Mr Parker (Director General of Nexus) would be leaving Nexus in July 2006 and this would be his last formal meeting. The Chairman went on to pay tribute on behalf of all Authority members to Mr Parker's work as Director General. He thanked him for his invaluable assistance and outlined the significant improvements in transport within the region during his time as Director General. He referred particularly to the growth in the Metro system and the development of new stations on the system. His work was respected both locally and nationally. Councillors Keating, Lawson and P Wood endorsed these sentiments adding their own tributes.

Mr D Marshall (former Chair of the Passenger Transport Authority) was present and paid his own tribute to Mr Parker's work and achievement over recent years.

Mr Parker then addressed the Authority on his decision to leave and his plans for the future. He expressed his thanks to the Chairman and members for their support and co-operation and paid particular tribute to his staff at Nexus.

## 22 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the confidential items on the grounds indicated:-

### **Business**

### **Paragraph of Schedule 12a to the Local Government Act 1972**

Appointment of Director General of Nexus  
Tyne Tunnel Pay and Grading Review  
Process for Determining the Director  
General's Performance Bonus