



Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority

DELEGATED COMMITTEE
15TH DECEMBER 1999
(11.15 a.m. – 11.40 a.m.)

3

PRESENT:

Councillor T.D. Marshall (in the Chair)
Councillors Holt, Ord and Spring.

ALSO PRESENT

Councillors Galbraith, L. Green, D.L. Wood and P. Wood.

IN ATTENDANCE

D. Johnson and S. Wilson.

Representing Nexus

M.J. Parker, T. McCrady, B.G. Garner, K.R. Mackay, L. Robinson and C. Darling.

Representing the Sunderland Metro Project Team

K. Atkinson, R. Arkell, J. Harding, H. Linsley-Mitchinson, G. Pearson, R. Patterson and W. Scott,

Representing Railtrack

N. Pollard and W. Sim.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Boyack and M.A. Green.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Authority held on 22nd November 1999 be noted, the Director General having confirmed under Min.No.52 that, while there were no foreseeable problems regarding the so-called Millennium bug, Metro trains in service would nonetheless halt in stations between 2355 on 31st December 1999 and 0003 on 1st January 2000 in the interests of caution.

3. TRANSPORT BILL

Submitted: Report of the Clerk and the Director General summarising the main provisions of the recently published Transport Bill.

The Director General explained that the Report provided a brief overview of the main points that would need to be considered in detail by the Authority. It was currently understood that the Bill was to receive its second reading next Monday and would then proceed to committee stage. A key issue for PTAs was the proposal that the Strategic Rail Authority should be empowered to provide grants in support of rail services provided or funded by them or through franchise arrangements to which PTEs were parties. This could have a marked effect on expenditure and possibly services in metropolitan areas and it was felt that such funding decisions should be taken locally. Asked about the local implications of the national half fare travel concession he said this would need careful consideration and that arrangements were in hand for this to be dealt with in detail at the February Policy Seminar. He agreed that the proposals for integrated ticketing would be of considerable benefit to the travelling public.

RESOLVED – That the Report be noted.

4. **SUNDERLAND METRO**

Submitted: Report of the Director General seeking the approval of the Authority to enter into the Track Access Agreement and the Project Agreement with Railtrack.

Prefacing discussion on the proposals, the Chairman referred to the friendly rivalry between the Cities of Newcastle and Sunderland and remarked on the rarity of a representative of one being the bearer of good news for the other. The persistent lobbying of the Secretary of State had now borne fruit and the project approval could mean the creation of up to 1000 jobs in the construction industry. Ken Mackay as Project Director said a lot of hard work had been necessary to reach the present position and recorded his thanks to all those involved.

The Director General said it was significant that the Sunderland Metro was the only specific project mentioned in the Secretary of State's ten-year plan for transport that had been announced earlier in the week. He supported the Project Director's remarks regarding the work done to date and, in addition to those present, noted also the contribution of Geoff Brindle, former Secretary and Solicitor to Nexus, who was continuing to provide legal advice on the requirements of the project. Nick Pollard, Railtrack's Director, said he and his team were pleased to be working in partnership with Nexus and the PTA in bringing improvements to public transport in the area. The project would provide major opportunities for transport interchange between modes as well as assisting in the regeneration and redevelopment of the area. He looked forward to being associated with any similar joint initiatives that might present themselves in the future. Contracts worth some £80m had now been let.

Councillor Holt, as Vice Chairman of the Authority and its spokesman on public transport matters affecting Sunderland, associated himself and his colleagues with the previous remarks. In so doing he referred to the support that the project had received from former members of the PTA, in particular Pat Conaty of Gateshead, Roy Burgess of Newcastle, Ned Murray of North Tyneside, Joan Eales of South Tyneside and Malcolm Qualie of Sunderland. Councillor Qualie, with the support of his ward colleagues and his family, had worked tirelessly to ensure that the Metro was extended through the centre of Sunderland and on to South Hylton.

RESOLVED – That:

- (i) following confirmation from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions and the Government Office for the North East as to the availability of the necessary grant and/or funding arrangements, Nexus be authorised to:
 - (a) enter into a Track Access Agreement with Railtrack plc to operate Metro services on the route between Pelaw and South Hylton in accordance with the directions of the Office of the Rail Regulator;
 - (b) enter into a Project Agreement with Railtrack plc for the design, construction, testing, completion and part funding of the Sunderland Metro;and
- (ii) approval be given to the capital funding of the project and associated financing costs as detailed in Section 6 of the circulated Report of the Director General.