



Tyne & Wear Passenger Transport Authority

Minutes of the 153rd meeting of the PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY
17TH DECEMBER 1997
(10.30 a.m. – 10.55 a.m.)

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PRESENT:

Councillor T.D. Marshall (in the Chair)
Councillors Bate, Conaty, Hanson, Holt, Keating, Lennox, Moore, Murray, Nugent, Ord, Russell, Spring and Wood.

IN ATTENDANCE

K.G. Lavery, R.H. Warne, D. Johnson, J.F. Miller, B. Middleton, K.R. Mackay, A. Fletcher, E. Pearson and S. Wilson.

Representing Nexus

M.J. Parker, G. Brindle, T. McCrady, B.G. Garner, J.W.R. Graham and G. Jewitt.

83. APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Young.

84. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th November 1997 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

85. PASSENGER SERVICES COMMITTEE

Members having been afforded the opportunity to inspect the imaging equipment now being used by Nexus in connection with the issue of Concessionary Travel Permits, it was:

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Passenger Services Committee held on 2nd December 1997 be received and, arising therefrom, that, as proposed in the accompanying Report of the Director General, approval be given to the disposal of 0.78 hectare of surplus land at St. James Metro Station, Newcastle upon Tyne as shown on the submitted Plan and that the results of any tendering exercise be reported in due course.

86. TYNE TUNNEL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Tyne Tunnel Operations Committee held on 4th December 1997 be received.

87. TELEMATICS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED – That the tabled Minutes of the meeting of the Telematics Committee held on 11th December 1997 be received and, arising therefrom, that a positive commitment be given to the application of a viable Smartcard system to all aspects of public transport operation in Tyne and Wear and its environs as soon as possible and in particular to the Concessionary Travel Scheme at the earliest opportunity.

88. CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

RESOLVED – That the Reports of Delegates to the Conferences and Seminars listed in the circulated Report of the Clerk and as tabled be received, reference having been made to the modal shift experiment in the Bristol area involving the use of free and secure park and ride, the results of which might prove of interest to the Authority.

89. NEW TYNE CROSSING: PROMOTION OF PARLIAMENTARY BILL

Following consideration of a circulated Report of the Deputy Clerk and Legal Adviser, it was unanimously:

RESOLVED – That the resolution for the promotion of the Bill intituled the Tyne Tunnels Act 1998 which has been deposited in Parliament pursuant to the resolution of this Authority passed at a meeting held on 23rd October 1997 be and is by this resolution confirmed.

90. BUDGET PROPOSALS 1998/99-2001/02

Submitted: Report of the Treasurer to the Authority and the Director of Finance of Nexus reviewing the likely budget situation for the next four years and proposing measures to reduce the potential funding shortfall.

Following a brief presentation on the issues involved, it was **MOVED** by the Chairman and **SECONDED** by Councillor Murray that, with effect from Sunday, 1st February 1998:

- (i) the boarding charge payable under the Authority's Travel Concession Scheme be increased to 25p per single journey (30p Transfare where available);
- (ii) a new charge of 45p per same day return journey be introduced from that date for persons over sixteen years of age;
- (iii) the above charges be also applied to users of the Care Services Scheme with the exception of the first accompanying carer of any user; and
- (iv) Nexus be required to seek to maintain the above charges until 2002 and to review the position on an annual basis.

In debating the Motion it was suggested that while no one wished to endorse the proposal willingly, there was in reality no sensible alternative despite the potential impact on the health service and social services should there be a reduction in people's mobility. A proper funding mechanism should be put in place to avoid this. Such a mechanism would be aided by the move towards Smartcards which would provide more accurate data and therefore the opportunity for improving the targeting of resources.

For the Opposition, the view was taken that the District Councils' insistence on the PTA continuing to keep its levy for 1998/99 at the same level as that for the previous year represented a cut in real terms whereas none of the districts appeared to have suffered any significant reduction in the amount of grant they received from the Government. However, it was recognised that if a rise in the concessionary travel charge were not addressed now there would have to be a greater increase at some time in the future. A return to precepting powers for PTAs was therefore advocated.

In response it was pointed out that while the view of the Leaders' was that the levy should be kept at £39.9m until 2002 because of the districts' overall service commitments, they had been advised that it might be necessary to revisit this in the light of the circumstances prevailing when successive budgets were being considered by the Authority.

On the question of whether consideration might be given to some further relaxation of the limitation on travel in the morning peak, it was noted that this was to be the subject of discussion with the Operators' Panel early in the New Year. Other issues such as a possible curfew on child travel could also be raised although it was recognised that such a restriction could be difficult to implement operationally.

Having noted that the Tyne and Wear Scheme compared extremely favourably with others across the country and would continue to do so despite the increase, it was by ten votes to nil:

RESOLVED – That the Motion be adopted.

91. REPLACEMENT IT EQUIPMENT

RESOLVED – That, as recommended in the circulated Report of the Director General, the Capital Programme be adjusted to provide for the replacement and upgrading of the Nexus PC network at an estimated cost of £167,000 phased £73,000 in 1997/98, £ 77,000 in 1998/99 and £17,000 in 1999/2001 and that such expenditure be financed from Reserves.

92. CARE SERVICES: MONITORING REPORT

RESOLVED – That the circulated Report of the Director General advising of current performance in respect of the Care Services be noted and that arrangements be made in due course for all Members of the Authority to inspect the central booking and other facilities in order to observe operational procedures at first hand.

93. VISIT TO SMARTCARD OPERATIONS AND OTHER TRANSPORT INITIATIVES

RESOLVED – That, as recommended in the circulated Report of the Director General, all Members of the PTA be authorised to attend the above visit on 7th and 8th January 1998, Councillors Bate, Conaty, Lennox, Marshall, Moore, Nugent and Ord having signified their availability on those dates.