



Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority

Minutes of the 172nd meeting of the PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY
22ND NOVEMBER 1999
(10.30 a.m. – 11.05 a.m.)

2A

PRESENT:

Councillor T.D. Marshall in the Chair
Councillors Bate, Boyack, Galbraith, Hanson, Holt, Mulgrove, Ord, Spring and P. Wood.

IN ATTENDANCE

D. Johnson, M. Buckingham, P. Fenwick, P. Hedley and S. Wilson.

Representing Nexus

M.J. Parker, T. McCrady, B.G. Garner and M. Fearnley.

ALSO PRESENT

Steve Nicklin, District Audit.

44. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Flynn, L. Green, M.A. Green, Keating and D.L. Wood.

45. SALVE

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Peter Wood who was attending his first meeting of the Authority since having been appointed as a representative of the City of Sunderland.

46. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd September 1999 be confirmed and signed as a correct record, the Director General having paid tribute to the contribution of the work of the staff of Nexus towards the overall public transport arrangements in connection with the Great North Run on 10th October 1999.

47. BEST VALUE: PROGRAMME OF REVIEWS

Submitted: Report of the Clerk reviewing progress made to date on the application of the Government's Best Value concept to the work of the PTA and proposing measures to take this forward.

Amplifying the circulated Report, the Deputy Clerk & Treasurer explained the main features of the process and the role in them that Members would be expected to play, particularly with regard to the consultation element and the need to ensure that all facets of its functions were fully scrutinised. He acknowledged that the situation was complex in that the PTA was the Best Value authority for the purposes of the legislation while Nexus, to whom the legislation did not apply, was responsible for delivering many of the services funded by the Authority. To assist in the process, it was being recommended that an inter-district officer group be appointed to provide independent and objective advice on the process.

The Director General tabled copies of the revised Local Performance Plan as agreed at the previous meeting together with copies of the supporting questionnaire that was being used to elicit public opinion. In response to Councillor Ord's enquiry as to how the views of service

users were to be obtained, the Deputy Clerk explained that this was envisaged as being carried out in a number of ways: a key element in the process would be through the five district transport advisory committees. This would be supported through consultation with each district's network of area or advisory committees and citizen's panels. In addition, Nexus had a considerable amount of information available through its ongoing market research and customer tracking programmes. With regard to consultation on policy issues it was explained that once the Authority had finalised its views on how best to update and rationalise the existing General Policy Statement, the draft document would be widely distributed to all relevant organisations in Tyne and Wear together with the adjacent counties of Durham and Northumberland and made available to the general public. Responses from this exercise would be taken fully into account in formalising any changes to the PTA's present policies.

RESOLVED – That:

- (i) the proposals for an inter-authority best value officer group to provide advice to the PTA on the programme and process be approved;
- (ii) the proposals for the Authority's programme of Best Value Reviews covering the Tyne Tunnel and services provided by Nexus be noted; and
- (iii) a further Report be brought to the Authority's meeting in January 2000 on progress regarding the programme and working group referred to above.

48. THREE YEAR PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLAN: GUIDANCE ON PREPARATION

Following consideration of a Report of the Clerk submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Transport Act 1983 and having noted the Government's proposals to introduce five-year Local Transport Plans from 2000/1 onwards, it was:

RESOLVED – That Nexus be advised that the draft Plan should continue to afford priority specifically to:

- (i) expenditure on any essential Metro safety works;
- (ii) the extension of Metro to Sunderland;
- (iii) the maintenance of low-cost concessionary travel; and
- (iv) the continued implementation of budget economies where these do not adversely affect service delivery unduly.

49. TYNE TUNNEL: PERSONNEL MATTERS

RESOLVED – That, as recommended in the circulated Report of the Clerk, approval be given to the establishment of a Personnel Panel comprising Councillors M.A. Green (Chairman), Hanson (Vice-Chairman) and Ord or their nominees to deal with any matters where employees at the Tyne Tunnel have the right of appeal to their employer and any other personnel issues that require the attention of Members.

50. CARE SERVICES REVIEW

RESOLVED – That the proposals for revisions to the Care Services as set out in the circulated Report of the Director General be approved for the purposes of consultation and that the results thereof be considered by the Authority at its meeting on 27th January 2000.

51. CONSULTATION ON PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE NOTE 13

RESOLVED – That, as recommended in the circulated Report, the Director General, following consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to prepare and submit a response to the Government's consultation on PPG13, it having been noted that discussions were to take place with the other authorities in Tyne and Wear with the view to ensuring that all responses submitted are complementary and reflect the overall aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan.

52. MILLENNIUM PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES

RESOLVED – That the levels of service provision proposed for 31st December 1999 as set out in the circulated Report of the Director General be noted and that approval be given to the charging regime recommended for Metro together with a £1.00 flat fare for secured bus services.

53. TRANSPORT BILL POLICY BRIEFING SEMINAR

RESOLVED – That three Members be authorised to attend the above Seminar to be held in London on 2nd December 1999, it having been noted that arrangements were being made through the LGA's Special Interest Group for the appointment of lobbyists to represent the interests of all six PTAs with the costs being shared equally between them.

54. PTA/NEXUS AUDIT 1998/1999

Introducing Steve Nicklin from District Audit, the Deputy Clerk and Treasurer explained that two particular issues had been drawn to the attention of Members in the circulated Management Letter regarding the audit of the PTA's Accounts for 1998/1999. In respect of the financial standing of the Authority and the implications for it of the second Tyne Tunnel and the Sunderland Metro, these were to be addressed as part of the forthcoming budgetary process. With regard to the preparations for Best Value, proposals were to be brought to the Authority in January as agreed earlier in the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the District Audit Management letters in respect of the Accounts of the PTA and Nexus for 1998/1999 be noted.

55. REVIEW OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME 1999/2000

RESOLVED – That the variations to the Capital Programme for 1999/2000 as set out in the circulated Reports of the Deputy Clerk & Treasurer, the Director General and the Engineer to the Tyne Tunnel be approved.

56. NEW TYNE CROSSING: ACQUISITION OF ST. PETER'S SCHOOL, JARROW

RESOLVED – That, as recommended in the circulated Report, approval be given to the budgetary provision of up to £2,097,489 for the acquisition of the freehold of the site of St. Peter's School, Ferry Street, Jarrow and that the Engineer be authorised to issue the necessary instructions to Officers of South Tyneside Council to initiate the procurement procedures for the new school buildings in accordance with the programme outlined in paragraph 4.3.

57. SUNDERLAND METRO

In order to ratify the various agreements necessary to take the project forward it was agreed that a meeting of the Authority be held on Wednesday, 8th December 1999 at 10.00 a.m.