



Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority

208th Meeting of the Passenger Transport Authority

6 May 2004

(10.30 am – 11.30 am)

Present:

Councillor: T D Marshall (in the Chair)

Councillors: Galbraith, J S Green, Hanson, Hodson, Lawson, Ord, D Wood and P Wood

In Attendance: P Fenwick, P Woods, J Curran, J Hunter, H Emms, R Hibbert

Representing Nexus M Parker, S Atkinson, K Mackay, A Lee

28 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Green, Spring, Boyack, Anderson, Flynn and I Stratford.

29 **COUNCILLOR T D MARSHALL AND COUNCILLOR G SPRING**

Councillor D Wood drew the Authority's attention to the fact that this was Councillor T D Marshall's last meeting. Councillor Marshall had Chaired the PTA for 8 years and had been a member previous to that. He paid tribute to Councillor Marshall's contribution to the progress of public transport in Tyne and Wear and made specific reference to his role in the development of Sunderland Direct and to his support for Project Orpheus. On behalf of PTA members he thanked Councillor Marshall for his contribution and wished him well for the future.

The Director General (Nexus) thanked the Chairman on behalf of Nexus staff for his commitment and support over the years. He went on to pay tribute to Councillor Gordon Spring (Gateshead) who was retiring as Vice Chair. He referred to the fact that Councillors Marshall and Spring had between them nearly 50 years of public service. Councillor Marshall's Chairmanship had resulted in significant public transport improvements and he presented Councillor Marshall with a gift on behalf of Nexus.

Councillor Ord (Opposition spokesman) added his appreciation of Councillor Marshall's Chairmanship. Councillor J S Green paid tribute to Councillor Spring's dedicated public service throughout his time as Vice-Chairman.

Councillor Marshall responded appropriately.

30 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising:-**(a) Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2004/05**

(Minute 18 refers).

The Director General pointed out that the report presented to the meeting on 25 March 2004 should have referred to the "half concessionary price travel for elderly and disabled" and not half price concessionary travel as stated in the report.

(b) New Tyne Crossing Update

(Minute No 25 refers)

In response to a query, P Fenwick explained that the outcome of the Public Inquiry was still awaited. He referred to correspondence on the matter between the Authority and the relevant Government Department. He advised that the decision was still a couple of months away.

31 **PRESENTATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS**

H Emms (Planning and Transportation, Newcastle City Council) then gave a detailed presentation in the delivery of the Local Transport Plan. The Director General added that this presentation had previously been given to R Devereux (Director General for Roads, Regional and Local Transport – DFT) who was visiting to encourage timely and cost effective delivery of the LTP.

Questions/Comments

- ◆ The Chairman suggested that the issues arising from the presentation and report should be dealt with in a future policy seminar.
- ◆ In response to a query, R Hibbert explained that generally freight transport was a component of the public transport growth projection which had so far received only modest consideration. Work was going on with the Freight Transport Association and the Road Transport Association to identify local network management issues.
- ◆ A member referred to congestion problems on the A1 Gateshead Bypass which he felt were even worse than when a study had been carried out last year
- ◆ In response officers commented that the A1 congestion was a significant factor in the consideration being given to local traffic management issues. The Highways Agency had a programme of further investigation of engineering options for improving the management and capacity of the A1.
- ◆ The Director General explained that R Devereux had been impressed with the quality of the LTP planning work and had complimented officers on the plan.

- ◆ He had been particularly impressed with accessibility standards. A high proportion of the population in Tyne and Wear were within a reasonable journey time of all major facilities. In this respect Tyne and Wear was ahead of other City regions. However, Tyne and Wear currently had less congestion than most of the City regions.
- ◆ Nexus had not yet had the opportunity to present Project Orpheus to the Secretary of State for Transport.
- ◆ The Director General went on to make a number of points relating to Project Orpheus:-
 - (a) Orpheus was about more than trains it was also about the significant refurbishment of the Metro system and included improvements to bus services in the 29 key corridors;
 - (b) it was important to boost the quality of the Metro and persuade people to use public transport as opposed to cars.
 - (c) the Government had sent out different messages about light rail where there had been some success and some failure. Light rail was successful in Europe because of the large amount of investment.
- ◆ The Director General referred to a recent visit by Transport Minister T McNulty where he was complimentary about the all bus/Metro interchanges.
- ◆ H Emms stressed that the key message of R. Devereaux was that Project Orpheus should be understood in its widest sense. He was interested in seeing an integrated transport system with issues being addressed on a corridor by corridor basis.

The Chair thanked officers for their presentation.

RESOLVED - That the information be received and noted.

32 UPDATE ON PTEG SUBMISSIONS

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

The Director General gave a brief summary of the submissions recently made by the PTEG on:-

- ◆ Bus planning, performance and regulation
- ◆ Rail in the City Regions
- ◆ Response to the Secretary of State's Rail Review

(full copies of the reports were available and were also available electronically).

Questions/Comments

- ◆ A member commented on the cost of fares on public transport which could be

socially exclusive. The Director General explained that bus fares in Tyne and Wear had gone up by 60% since 1986 in real terms. However regarding increasing fares the PTA had increased the subsidy per journey for pensioners by more than the rate of inflation.

- ◆ Bus stops in the region had improved greatly. 80% of bus stops has had information relating to the individual stop with a higher level on superoutes
- ◆ A member referred to the fragmentation of the rail industry and the indication that if Authorities had more control fares would be lower.
- ◆ The Chairman referred to the fact that Authorities had very little control over the bus industry since deregulation. It was noted that bus companies made considerable profits. Members felt that the PTA should have a greater say over the provision of subsidies so that support could be allocated across all socially excluded groups.
- ◆ A member felt that there should be more action over unprofitable services and expressed support for the abolition of track access charges
- ◆ The Chairman referred to the Special Interest Group of PTA Chairs which had met recently in Glasgow. The issue of penalty fares had again been raised with a repeat of the request for £20 penalty fare.
- ◆ On the question of extending the invitation to the Special Interest Group meetings to opposition representatives, the Chairman stressed that the situation would be clarified in the new Municipal Year.

RESOLVED - That the report be received and noted.

33

BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2004/05 – 2006/07

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

S Atkinson introduced the report which required members approval of the arrangements for publication of its Statutory Performance Plan and confirmation of the performance indicators to be included, together with future reviews to be carried out, as discussed at the recent policy seminar.

In response to a query on the target for the take up of concessionary travel, the Director General explained that as it was possible to promote concessionary travel for the first time without budget deficit, it should be possible to improve on the current level by active promotion.

A member pointed out that the percentage figures for accessibility were not consistent with that appearing in other reports. S Atkinson agreed that this would be amended for the final publication to ensure that figures were in line with those published in the LTP.

RESOLVED - That

- (1) approval be given to the arrangements to made to produce, print and publish the performance plan to meet the statutory deadline

of 30 June;

- (2) the proposal that a final draft of the performance plan be circulated to members by the end of May for completion of the text and contents during the early part of June (see paragraph 4.2) be endorsed;
- (3) the points made at the policy seminar set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report, be confirmed.

34 **IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN ENGLAND THROUGH LIGHT RAIL**

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

RESOLVED - That

- (1) the report be received;
- (2) Nexus be instructed to work with partners to raise awareness of the recommendations and lobby for their early implementation.

35 **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**

Members were reminded that the Annual Meeting of the Passenger Transport Authority would be held on Thursday 22 July 2004 at 10.30 in Newcastle Civic Centre.

36 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the Confidential Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 March 2004.

37 **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

The Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.