



Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority

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24 March 2005 10.30 am – 12.10 pm

Present:

Councillor: D Wood (In the Chair)

Councillors: Bollands, Green, Hanson, Heron, Hodson, Keating, A Ord, D Ord, O'Shea, Shipley, Sleightholme and P Wood

In Attendance: P Fenwick, P Hedley, C W Crowe, C Warren, B Stonehouse, H Emms, R Hibbert, S Copeland, P Woods, P Whiteman and P Moody

Representing M Parker, B Garner, S Atkinson and K Mackay

Nexus:

72. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were submitted for Councillors Lawson and Clare and for I Stratford.

73 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Reference was made to the need for members to declare interests in any appropriate matter under consideration at the meeting.

74 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

(a) **Rail Issues Update**

(Minute 69 refers)

The Director General reported on the awarding of the East Coast Mainline franchise to GNER.

Nexus was making arrangements to contact GNER with a view to discussions taking place concerning Newcastle Station.

75 **NOTES OF PTA POLICY SEMINAR HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2005**

It was indicated that it was felt that there was no need for a further meeting with regard to the Regional Funding Allocation Consultation.

With regard to the Best Value Review meetings, these would be held shortly.

The "Wrong Track" School Liaison Interactive DVD was distributed at the meeting.

76 **RATE OF INCREASE OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2005/06**

A report of the Clerk to the Passenger Transport Authority was submitted which set out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as to the rate of increase of the Authority's members allowances for 2005/06.

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) The members allowances for 2005/06 be increased by 2.95 % as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- (2) A new members allowances scheme be made accordingly to be effect from 1 April 2005.

77 **MEMBERSHIP OF THE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**

The report of the Clerk referred to the last meeting of the authority at which clarification had been requested as to the basis for district representation from the authority.

The report referred to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1985 relating to the composition of the Passenger Transport Authority and also referred to the method of making any change in the Authority's membership.

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) The issue be referred to the Tyne and Wear Leaders meeting for a view on changing the membership taking into account the membership of the other Joint Boards in Tyne and Wear.
- (2) The appropriate Government department be asked what the timescale would be if it were decided to make a change to the membership.

78 **TYNE AND WEAR PTA FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The report of the Treasurer and Deputy Clerk referred to a report in November 2004 outlining a programme of work to review and update the corporate governance of the Authority. The review of financial regulations had now been completed and a copy was attached to the report.

A member referred to the relationship between the PTA and Nexus as mentioned in the financial regulations. In answer to this P Woods mentioned that there had be to a "two hatted" approach. The Officers would give further consideration to the wording of financial regulations to see if any additional amendments were necessary to cover the relationship between the PTA and Nexus

RESOLVED – That the new financial regulations be approved and adopted with immediate effect.

79 **AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT ON THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN**

The report of the Clerk to the Passenger Transport Authority indicated that the Audit Commission had conducted an inspection of the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority in relation to its local transport plan under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999, during the last three months of 2004.

The report set out the Audit Commission's judgement including:-

- The assessment that the Passenger Transport Authority provided a "good", 2-Star service that had "promising" prospects for improvement.
- The strengths of the service.
- Areas identified for improvement.
- Prospects for improvement.
- Constraints on performance improvements.
- The Commission's recommendations.

An Action Plan to address the key outcomes of the review would be prepared and reported to a future meeting of the Authority.

RESOLVED – That:-

- (1) An Action Plan to address the issues raised by the Audit Commission be submitted to a future meeting of the Passenger Transport Authority.
- (2) Clarity be sought on the Audit Commission's reference to "political tensions" in paragraph 3.4.1.

80 **2004/05 CAPITAL PROGRAMME – THIRD QUARTERLY REVIEW**

The report of the Deputy Clerk and Treasurer to the PTA and Director of Finance and Administration, Nexus set out the performance of the 2004/05 Capital Programme to the end of the third quarter, 31 December 2004. It was indicated that the Programme had changed potentially from the previous report, the main changes being within the Major Projects and the reasons for this were set out.

RESOLVED – That:-

- (1) The revised position regarding the 2004/05 Capital Programme as set out in appendix A to the report be noted.
- (2) The changes to the Capital Programme as set out in appendix B to the report be approved.

81 **REVIEW OF BICYCLES ON METRO**

The report of the Director General, Nexus indicated that its purpose was to appraise the PTA of issues surrounding the allowance of bicycles on the Metro.

In a summary of the key issues it was indicated that:-

- Nexus currently only allow bicycles on the Metro of a “folding” variety.
- A number of groups and individuals had asked Nexus to review its policy. In this regard a letter from Sustrans was appended to the report which, amongst other things, suggested that there be a limited trial of allowing bicycles on the existing Metro Cars.
- Nexus had conducted market research to ascertain the public’s opinion on the current policy and had drawn in stakeholder and user groups to the consultation (a summary of the findings of the consultative study conducted by Nexus in 2004 was appended to the report).

The report was introduced by the Director General who referred to various risks associated with allowing bikes onto the Metro including revenue, costs, safety and enforcement.

Member’s expressed various views as follows:-

- It was accepted that at peak times it was not practical to allow bikes onto the Metro however on Sundays the Metro was not particularly busy and it would be possible for a trial to take place on that day.
- On some Sundays the Metro was busy and the risk, which had been referred to, outweighed the benefits however, when new cars are in use the strategy should be looked at again.
- With regard to the existing “folding” bike policy there had been no count of numbers using the Metro. The figures were available for wheelchair and “child buggy” usage. Prams were not allowed to use the Metro.
- If bikes were allowed on the Metro it was envisaged that there could be groups of cyclists wanting to travel at the same time. If there were a limit of three per car it was felt that there could be difficulties.
- The London Underground did not allow bikes although they were allowed on some Overground Trains.
- There were dangers in taking bikes down escalators.
- The safety on the Metro was very important and if a new policy was introduced it would be necessary to police it. Large numbers of children had bicycles and may well wish to make use of the Metro if such a policy was introduced.

RESOLVED – That the ban on bikes at all times on the Metro (other than folding bikes) be continued and plans be made for bikes to use the Metro system when the Metro cars are to be replaced.

82 **DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT (DRT) AND THE PTA’S SOCIAL INCLUSION AGENDA**

The report of the Director General indicated that it was proposed that the Authority establish a “task and finish” group to undertake further work into the potential of taxi’s and DRT in delivering PTA policies. Suggested terms of reference for the group were attached to the report.

RESOLVED:- That:-

(1) A group with the terms of reference set out in the report be approved subject to the reference to "one representative of the taxi trade" being amended to a reference to one representative of the Hackney Carriage trade and one representative of the Private Hire trade.

(2) Membership of the group be Councillors Bolland, Heron and O'Shea and two members from the opposition and Councillor Bolland be the lead member.

83 **CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME 2005/06**

The report of the Director General referred to various proposed changes to the Concessionary Travel Scheme.

RESOLVED:-That the changes to the Concessionary Travel Scheme set out in the report at a total fixed price cost of £20.15m for 2005/06 be approved with effect from 17 April 2005.

84 **BUDGET 2005 – CONCESSIONARY FARES**

The report of the Director General, Nexus referred to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's recent announcement on concessionary fares for the elderly and disabled. It had been indicated that there would be new funding to enable every local authority to provide free off-peak local area bus travel for those aged over 60 and disabled people in England from April 2006. The report referred to several issues as follows:-

- The Tyne and Wear PTA Scheme included Metro, Shields Ferry and local Rail Services within Tyne and Wear whereas the Chancellor's statement only covered Buses.
- Since 2003 the concessionary fare for pensioners had been half fare to 50p on buses with a flat fare of 50p on local Rail, Metro and the Shields Ferry and the qualification age for men had been reduced from 65 to 60.
- The start time for the Tyne and Wear PTA Scheme from Monday to Friday had been advanced from 9.30 am to 9 am.
- There had been concern about cross-boundary issues.
- Representations had been made concerning increasing the number of groups entitled to Concessionary fares (e.g. Jobseekers and single parents on income support).

RESOLVED:- That:-

(1) It is noted that a further report of the Director General will be submitted to the May 2005 meeting which will cover

- Free travel being extended to the Metro and Shields Ferry.
- The issue of cross-boundary travel

(2) Support be given to the Chairman seeking a meeting with the Chancellor of the Exchequer's office in consultation with the Director General with a view to representations being made on the extension of concessions and in this regard the support of local members of Parliament and the Chairs of the other PTA's be sought.

85 **NEW TYNE CROSSING – UPDATE**

The report of the PTA Project Director was submitted which updated the Authority on current progress with the New Tyne Crossing.

RESOLVED:- That the report be noted.

86 **RIVER TRIPS**

The Director General reported on a service, which was being started to provide for short trips on the Tyne. The service would operate for six months and be reviewed.

RESOLVED:- That the report be noted.

87 **ELDON SQUARE BUS CONCOURSE – SCOPE OF IMPROVEMENTS**

The report of the Clerk to the Passenger Transport Authority described the scope of imminent works to develop a new facility at Newcastle's major bus station in partnership with Capital Shopping Centre's proposals for improvement of the Eldon Square shopping Centre.

P Whiteman introduced the report and drew attention to proposals to:-

- Construct a new 10-stand bus terminal on Prudhoe Street with associated alternations to adjacent streets and the multi-storey carpark.
- Create a walkway linking to and across Old Eldon Square.
- Provide new bus shelters and passenger information in Blakett Street.

RESOLVED:- That the report be noted.