



Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority

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22 September 2005
(10.30 am – 12 noon)

Present:

Councillor: D Wood (in the Chair)

Councillors: Bollands, Clare, Green, Hanson, Hodson, A Ord, D Ord, O'Shea, Shipley, Watson and P Wood.

In Attendance: P Woods, S Ovens, P Hedley, P Fenwick, C Warren, J Curran and G Gray

Representing Nexus: M Parker, B Garner, S Atkinson, K Mackay and L Robinson

40. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lawson and Sleightholme.

41. **NEW TYNE CROSSING UPDATE**

RESOLVED – That this be considered in the confidential part of the meeting due to the issue of legal proceedings.

42. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

A Member queried whether members had to declare their concessionary travel pass at every meeting. S Ovens undertook to look into this matter.

43. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2005 were confirmed as a correct report and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising:-

(a) **December Timetable Changes**

(Minute No. 27(a) refers)

In response to a query, S Ovens explained that this issue was not finally resolved. He explained that the legislation had changed in 2001. Whilst this had apparently not intended to alter the position where the PTA was responsible for establishing general policy, the details of service delivery being left to the PTE, the new wording of the legislation suggested the contrary. Enquiries were being made of other PTAs. Before a report was produced for the Authority, officers needed to better clarify the correct position.

(b) **Simplification of Metro Fares**

(Minute No. 29 refers)

A member queried the benefit of a poster illustrating the two metro routes separately being displayed in advance of the December changes to routes and timetables. K MacKay explained that this was to test passengers' reactions before the final map was produced.

In response to a member's query, the Director General explained there had only been two written complaints about the fare changes resulting from the new fare zones. Customer response forms and some of these had indeed welcomed the changes.

A member expressed his concern that the Metro was now more expensive than buses, particularly on a short journey e.g. from Regent Centre to the City Centre. He would be asking for detailed information about the ridership on these short journeys. The Director General explained there had been no noticeable impact so far in terms of overall passenger behaviour but that there would be a further report back as part of the Annual Fare Proposals which would be submitted to the November meeting of the Authority.

(c) **Concessionary Travel Update**

(Minute No. 30 refers)

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, a joint report of the Deputy Clerk and Treasurer to the PTA and the Director of Finance and Administration, Nexus was tabled (for copies, see Official Minutes).

The report updated members on discussions with the DFT and ODPM on the funding of free travel for the elderly and disabled on buses from April 2006.

The Chair explained that he had met with other PTA chairs and with the Transport Minister, Karen Buck. Meetings were continuing under the auspices of the Special Interest Group. A motion had gone forward from the last meeting of the SIG (a meeting of Leaders of the 7 UK PTAs) and he had copied this to all members. He hoped that the dialogue would continue particularly with local MPs. A member again made the point that the concessionary travel was for buses only and did not extend to the Metro, this would seriously disadvantage the metro service and could cause a severe financial shortfall.

A member pointed out the Authority's duty to encourage the greatest possible use of all modes of public transport. In answer to a query, B Garner explained that there had been no formal discussion with bus operators regarding "fixed deals". Proposals were required to be put forward by the end of November to generate formal consultation with the operators. The operators did have recourse to the Secretary of State if they were unhappy with the eventually reimbursement arrangements.

P Woods drew attention to the proposed response by the PTA NEXUS at paragraph 3.7. He stressed the importance of continuing political lobbying by officers and members in an attempt to seek support for the special grant option. Reimbursement rates were a critical issue. A member suggested strengthening the wording of the fourth paragraph.

RESOLVED – That the principles to be included within the PTA/NEXUS response to the ODPM consultation papers as described in section 3.7, be endorsed, but the wording be looked at again.

(d) Increasing Membership of the Passenger Transport Authority

(Minute No. 33 refers)

S Ovens reported that the Secretary of State was minded to agree the application to increase the numbers of members and was now engaged in statutory consultation. He had written to the 5 local authorities asking for their views by late October.

44. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS – 2004/05 POST AUDIT

Submitted a report of the Treasurer and Deputy Clerk to the PTA (copies attached to official minutes).

P Woods explained that in accordance with the Audit Commission regulations the audited accounts of the PTA were required to be re-submitted. He drew attention to changes since they had last been before the Authority's. In response to a query, P Woods explained that all local authorities were required to submit a detailed review of their systems in the form of a statement of internal control. This had been subject to comment at the Authority's Standards and Audit Committee. The statement identified areas of weakness and allowed the authority to improve its internal systems of control. P Woods confirmed in response to further queries that there would be a training session organised for members in issues on the budget and other financial matters.

RESOLVED – That the publication of the authorities audited accounts be approved.

45. PETITION RE: STAGECOACH NETWORK CHANGES: LAKESIDE VILLAGE, SUNDERLAND

Submitted a report of the Director General (copies attached to Official Minutes)

RESOLVED – That

- (i) the report be received and noted;
- (ii) Nexus be instructed to respond to the petitioners by advising them that the complaints were noted, but that no action would be taken by Nexus to secure additional service, as this was not justified.

46. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/06 – FIRST QUARTERLY REVIEW

Submitted: Joint Report of the Director of Finance and Administration, Nexus and the Deputy Clerk and Treasurer to the PTA (copies attached to Official Minutes).

A member raised a query relating to Metro improvements and for particularly to the condition of Felling Bridge and Station. He maintained that this was one of the worst stations on the system and was in need of urgent upgrading. He queried how the scheme could be progressed as soon as possible. K MacKay undertook to explain to the member outside of the meeting the problems associated with this work, which involved Network Rail.

In response to a query K MacKay explained that all temporary works were being removed from Tyne Dock Station. A member expressed concern about some recent graffiti in the station. This would be removed as soon as possible.

A member referred to the replacement/refurbishment of bus shelters, which were paid for, from public money with no contribution from operators.

A member wishes to record a specific complaint about the passenger information kiosk adjacent to North Tyneside General Hospital. This matter would be investigated.

RESOLVED – That

- (i) the revised position regarding the 2005/06 programme as per appendix (a) be noted;
- (ii) the changes as detailed in appendices (b) and (c) be endorsed.

47. RAIL ISSUES UPDATE

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

A member referred to the importance of the publication of the Regional Planning Assessment in October which gave an insight in to Government thinking and he referred to a number of rumours circulating about closure of stations and higher fares. This could have an important impact on City Centres. In addition, less rail could mean more congestion on the roads. A member asked to be advised of the level of revenue which would be made from the halving of the heavy rail service between Sunderland and Newcastle. He went on to express the need to maintain a minimum level of service on core routes such as along the Durham coast. He also stressed the importance of the basic service between Middlesbrough and Newcastle.

The Director General said he would report on savings as soon as discussions with the DFT were concluded. He emphasised that any savings would go in to the improvement of Sunderland Station. A member stressed the importance of connections between the North Eastern areas such as Liverpool and the development of links between Middlesbrough/Stockton and Newcastle/Sunderland.

RESOLVED – That

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) a report on the implications of the RPA be brought back to the authority.

48. SUPEROUTES

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

B Garner introduced the report, drawing members attention particularly to the performance to date on Superoutes and referring to the improved attitude and awareness of superoutes. A partners meeting would be held next week to discuss how to move forward and there would be report back to the PTA on steps on how to improve the delivery of service.

P Matthews (Go North East) was present. He welcomed the summary given in the report and confirmed his commitment to the Superoute Scheme.

The Chairman explained that members wished to have a further meeting between the PTA and the bus operators. The Director General was to draft an agenda and submit it to Councillors for their views before arranging the meeting with the operators. In response to a Members query on concern about bus drivers not using bus priority lanes, B Garner Explained that the process of establishing bus priority measures through the LTP and it was up to Nexus and the bus operators to put this into practice. Partnership working with the operators was essential and produced number benefits for the service in the area.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and noted.

49. **MEMBERS ANNUAL INSPECTION 2005**

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

Members wished to place on record their thanks to G Merrylees for his organisation of the annual inspection.

RESOLVED – That the information be received and noted.

50. **TYNE & WEAR TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE/DISTRICT TRANSPORT FORUM**

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

RESOLVED – That

- (i) the proposed items for the respective agendas for the next TWTAC/DTE meetings be noted;
- (ii) the dates of the relevant meetings be noted.

51. **PETITIONS RE: PLANS TO WITHDRAWN SERVICE NO 73 FROM CALLERTON VILLAGE**

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

The petition read as follows:-

“We the undersigned urge Stagecoach Busways to reconsider the proposed plans to withdraw service number 73 from Callerton Village to Newcastle”

A member hoped that this petition would be taken seriously and felt that it raised wider issues about the sustainability of communities. These were strategically very important issues for public transport in the region.

This would be subject to the report at the next meeting.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and a report be brought back to the next meeting.

52. **REPRESENTATION FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC – SAVE OUR CITIES**

A member of the public wished to raise concerns from the Save Our Cities group. The Chairman asked that this be discussed with officers from Nexus outside of the meeting.

53. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the grounds indicated.

Business

**Paragraph of
Schedule 12A to the
Local Government Act 1972**

Single Status Arrangements
for the Tyne Tunnel and

11

New Tyne Crossing Update

12

Doc: 0067767