

**North East Combined Authority, Transport North East Committee**

19 April 2018

Meeting held Sunderland City Council, Burdon Rd, Sunderland SR2 7DN

**Present:**

Councillor: N Forbes(Chair)

Councillors: J McCarty, J Harrison, M Green, S Green, J McElroy, G Hobson,  
A West, M Mordey, M Speding, C Marshall and J Allen

**46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors K Shaw (Durham), G Sanderson (Northumberland) and J Riddle (Northumberland).

The Committee were advised that Councillor N Forbes had been delayed, and it was agreed that Councillor C Marshall would Chair the meeting in his absence.

**47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**48 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**49 TRANSFORMING CITIES FUND**

Submitted: Report of Managing Director Transport Operations (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Helen Mathews (Head of Transport Policy) presented the report which informed the Committee of the Transforming Cities Fund guidance and of the north east's intention to bid for funding. Members were advised that the first stage of the bid would be the submission of an expression of interest by the deadline of 8 June 2018, following which up to ten city-region areas would be shortlisted.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- That the Fund was a fantastic opportunity, and that it would be sensible to have a number of schemes prepared ready to feed into the second stage of

the bid – or to keep as a pipeline of schemes ready for any future funding opportunities.

- That half of the total funding available had already been awarded to Mayoral Combined Authorities, and that it was the remaining half would be divided between the ten shortlisted city-regions.
- That the guidance explicitly stated that regardless of any changes made to governance structures in the north east, the seven authorities would be expected to bid jointly and so the proposal would be submitted by either the NECA or by the Transport Joint Committee, depending on which was in existence at the time of the bid.
- That there should be alignment between the package of schemes developed for this bid and those being developed to tackle other specific issues, such as air quality.

**RESOLVED** – That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

## 50 **IMPROVING AIR QUALITY IN THE NECA REGION**

Submitted: Report of Managing Director Transport Operations (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Helen Mathews presented the report, which provided an update on the air quality challenges facing authorities in the region, the targets set by government and the action being taken to address them.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- That a traffic management study was being conducted at Leam Lane, and officers were hopeful that this would result in it being removed from the list of Air Quality Management Areas.
- That whilst air quality was an important issue, with approximately 50,000 deaths a year nationally being attributed to air pollution, it was often difficult to face up to the realities of addressing it and that more work was needed to cascade messages about the importance of the issue down through members.

**RESOLVED** – That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

## 51 **SMARTER TRAVEL, SMARTER CITIES' (SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT FUND EXPRESSION OF INTEREST)**

Submitted: Report of Managing Director Transport Operations (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Councillor Forbes joined the meeting, apologised for his late arrival and took over as Chair, thanking Councillor Marshall for chairing the meeting up to that point.

Helen Mathews presented the report, which provided an update on the Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) Fund Expression of Interest (“Smarter Travel, Smarter Cities”) that was submitted to government on 31 January 2018, and outlined the proposed governance arrangements for the programme. Members were advised that a formal letter inviting a bid was expected soon.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- That having a programme manager was a necessity due to the level of paperwork that would be involved and the additional capacity this would require. Revenue funding would be provided to support the role as part of the bid. The role would not be full-time and it was likely that an existing member of the team would be appointed.
- That Durham County Council was not included in the bid as it was part of a transition region, but that they would share information with the NECA about the work they were doing.

**RESOLVED** - That:

- i. The Committee noted the contents of the report.
- ii. The Committee approved the proposed governance arrangements.

## 52 **TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH UPDATE**

Submitted: Report of Thematic Lead for Transport and Digital Connectivity (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Councillor Forbes (Thematic Lead for Transport and Digital Connectivity) and Helen Mathews presented the report, which updated members on progress being made in four areas of Transport for the North (TfN) activity: Governance, the Strategic Transport Plan, the Strategic Development Corridors and Northern Powerhouse Rail.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- That consultation on the Transport Plan had closed and that the results would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee, with further local consultation then to take place in the autumn.
- That it was felt to be important to keep this update report as a standing item on the agenda due to the increasing importance of TfN in terms of bidding for investment in the region.

**RESOLVED** – That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

## 53 **DFT MAJOR ROAD NETWORK CONSULTATION**

Submitted: Report of Managing Director Transport Operations (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Helen Mathews presented the report which updated members on the Major Road Network (MRN) consultation response to the Department for Transport (DfT).

In discussion the following points were noted:

- That there were differences between the MRN being proposed by the DfT and the one proposed by TfN, and that of the two the TfN proposal would be the NECA's preferred option.
- That it was disappointing that the DfT methodology dealt only with existing issues, rather than addressing forecasts for growth.

**RESOLVED** – That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

#### 54 **RAIL STRATEGY UPDATE**

Submitted: Report of Managing Director Transport Operations (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Chair presented the report which informed members of some of the wider rail industry issues worthy of note, including the VTEC East Coast Mainline Franchise situation, the May 2018 timetable changes for Northern and TransPennine, new services proposed by Grand Central and the final TNEC response to the East Coast Route Study.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- That there was no current indication that the promised improvements to the East Coast Mainline would be delivered following the decision to end the franchise with Virgin Trains, and that this was problematic for the region as it was the main route not only for local connectivity but also for connectivity to the south.
- That it was not yet known when a new franchise for the East Coast Mainline would be awarded, but that assurances should continue to be sought about delivery of improvements regardless of this.

**RESOLVED** – That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

#### 55 **METRO NEW FLEET PROCUREMENT UPDATE**

Submitted: Report of Lead Chief Executive for Transport (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Helen Mathews introduced the report which provided members with an update on the Metro Future programme, including progress with the Department for Transport funding approval process.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- That Nexus were in the first stage of engagement with the market with regards to procurement of the new fleet of Metro trains, and that the aim was still for the first of the new trains to be delivered by the end of 2021.
- That the timescales for delivery set out in the report were felt to be realistic. Once the supplier had been confirmed officers could work with them to look review the timescales, but it was unlikely that they could be improved.
- That it was not possible to order 'off the peg' trains in order to speed up procurement as there were a number of specific features within the Metro network, such as the size of the tunnels and the gauge and weight of the trains. These factors required there to be some tailored elements to the trains, and it had been part of the earlier discussions with DfT that there would be a need for some bespoke design.
- That it was right to keep pushing for earlier delivery of the new trains if possible, as the existing fleet had a high failure rate and were likely to become increasingly difficult to maintain.
- That the contract to be awarded would be for both design and maintenance of the new trains.
- That the submission of a Full Business Case to DfT was required before funding could be released and that the purpose of this was to provide DfT with assurance that costs had not escalated and that a robust procurement process had been followed. If costs had significantly increased the Business Case could be questioned, but officers did not anticipate there being any problems.

**RESOLVED** – That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

56

## **DISCHARGE OF TRANSPORT FUNCTIONS BY NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

Submitted: Report of Interim Executive Director: Place, Northumberland County Council (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Stuart McNaughton (Principal Transport Policy Officer, Northumberland County Council) presented the report, which provided members with an update on the discharge of delegated functions at Northumberland County Council for the financial year 2017/18.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- That consideration should be given to reviewing bus partnerships and franchising collectively across the whole of the NECA area, in light of reducing budgets within all constituent authorities and in order to ensure the provision of services. During the Quality Contract Scheme process a number of commitments had been made by bus operators, and they should be asked to deliver on those commitments.

- That the Committee should be giving greater impetus to the roll-out of smart ticketing in order to drive that area of work forward.

**RESOLVED** – That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

57 **DISCHARGE OF TRANSPORT FUNCTIONS BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

Submitted: Report of Vice Chairman with Portfolio Responsibility for Transport, Durham County Council (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Adrian White (Head of Transport and Contract Services, Durham County Council) presented the report which provided members with an update on the discharge of delegated functions at Durham County Council for the financial year 2017/18.

Thanks were expressed to the Committee for their work on young people's fares, which had resulted in a region-wide standardisation of the age groups covered by reduced fares on commercial bus services. All operators now considered young people under 16 as child fares. Reduced price tickets for people under 19 were also more generally available.

**RESOLVED** – That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

58 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING UPDATE**

Submitted: Report of Chief Finance Officer (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Paul Woods (Chief Finance Officer) presented the report which provided the Committee with a monitoring update on delivery of the 2017/18 Transport capital programme.

**RESOLVED** – That the Committee noted the contents of the report.