

North East Combined Authority, Transport North East Committee

8 February 2018

Approved Minutes

Meeting held Crown Plaza, Hawthorn Square, Forth Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 3SA.

Present:

Councillor : N Forbes(Chair)

Councillors: J McCarty, J Harrison, M Green, S Green, J McElroy, G Hobson,
A West, M Mordey, M Speding, Cllr J Riddle and K Shaw

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr G Sanderson (Northumberland)

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

38 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

39 EAST COAST MAINLINE UPDATE

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

Consideration was given to the report the purpose of which was to inform the Committee of the consultation in respect of Network Rail's East Coast Route Study to which NECA will respond. Work continues on making the case for East Coast Main Line (ECML) investment including by the East Coast Main Line consortium, the High Speed 2 East Group and also the formation of a new All Party Parliamentary Group.

Members received a presentation from J Bell and R Fairy on behalf of Network Rail and updated Members on some of the proposals for various stations on the North East section of the line. The 90 day consultation process was due to end on 16 March 2018.

During discussion members comments/queries included:-

- The improvements to Sunderland Station, an update was requested
- Referring to the scope of the study a concern was raised regarding the lack of proposals north of Newcastle even though there were issues such as car parking associated with stations.
- An update was requested with regards to any progress with the Leamside Line
- The usefulness of the report and its connections to TfN.
- The East Coast Mainline has an important role in the economy of the North East and is essential in the transporting of freight and as a means of public transport.
- The fragmented approach of the East Coast Main Line franchise and the collapse of the current Virgin/Stagecoach franchise.

In relation to Sunderland Station it was further noted that funding is in place but discussions with Network Rail were still in progress. Regarding the Leamside Line Members were informed that in order to reopen the line discussions were needed among all partners on the development of a suitable business case that will attract the necessary funding.

RESOLVED that the North East Transport Committee –

- Noted the importance of the ECML to the North East and the work that is ongoing to make the case for investment in it.
- Noted that a response will be prepared to Network Rail's East Coast Route Study Consultation. As the closing date for the consultation of 16 March 2018 is in advance of the next meeting a draft response will be circulated to Committee Members by email for comment prior to sign-off by the Chair and Vice Chairs.
- Endorsed the work of collective interest groups in the ECML described in paragraphs 2.9 – 2.14 to lobby for much needed investment in the North East as part of a larger push for capacity and journey time improvements along the route.

40 **DEVELOPING A SHARED VISION FOR RAIL IN THE NORTH EAST OF ENGLAND**

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

The purpose of the report was to seek Members' views over the creation of a 'shared narrative' describing future aspirations for rail in the North East of England, to be created jointly with Network Rail and the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA).

The NECA already worked closely with the Tees Valley Combined Authority on rail matters through the North East Rail Management Unit. If a shared narrative can be achieved and agreement reached with Network Rail to create a working partnership, a shared vision will be achievable which will allow everyone, including the public, to have a clear understanding of what is needed to improve railways in the North East of England, making them fit for the future.

It was noted that significant investment will be needed and, an invitation be extended to Network Rail and the Tees Valley Combined Authority to form a working partnership.

At this point the Chair suggested that Cllr Marshall (Durham County Council) be the lead spokesperson for the Committee and liaise with Officers and the Tees Valley Combined Authority.

RESOLVED that –

- i) The Transport North East Committee agreed to support the development of a ‘shared narrative’ for rail in the North East of England along with Network Rail and Tees Valley Combined Authority.
- ii) Cllr Marshall be the lead spokesperson for the Committee and liaise with Officers and the Tees Valley Combined Authority.

41 **DFT ROADS CONSULTATION**

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

Consideration was given to the report which updated Members regarding the following points pertaining to two consultations from the Department of Transport:-

- The current Department for Transport consultation on the initial report surrounding the Strategic Road Network (SRN). This supports the future Roads Investment Strategy known as RIS2.
- The current Department for Transport consultation on the proposed Major Road Network (MRN).

Members were given a brief explanation of both the SRN Initial Report and the MRN. In relation to the SRN officers gave a clear description of the purpose of the initial report; this set out the current operation, key challenges and opportunities on the SRN so that investment can be targeted at these priorities. The initial report does not mention schemes at this stage, this will come in the Roads investment Strategy 2 which will be consulted on later in 2018. The proposed NECA draft response was set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

In respect of the establishment of a MRN, this was launched in December 2017 as part of the Government’s Transport Investment Strategy. The NECA draft response was set out in Appendix 2 (attached to the report) with proposed additions; these

are broadly in line with the TfN MRN. It was noted that in the proposed network Sunderland is not connected via the A1231 or A690 as well as Northern Spire. There are no connections into South Tyneside east of the A19, including no Port of Tyne connection. The A167 through Gateshead is missing (this should be included in the TfN's Investment priorities) and the A697 through Northumberland is not defined.

RESOLVED that the Transport North East Committee –

- i) Noted the contents of the Roads Investment Strategy 2 report.
- ii) Agreed that a draft response will be prepared to the Major Road Network Consultation and circulated to Committee Members by email for comment prior to sign off by the Chair and Vice Chairs.
- iii) Noted that officers are hosting a policy workshop to draft responses.

42 **TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PLAN**

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

The report provided an update on the Transport for the North (TfN) Strategic Transport Plan and noted that a draft response will be circulated to Committee Members by email for comment prior to submission on 17 April.

It was noted that the Strategic Transport Plan and the Long Term Rail Strategy was launched on 16 January 2018 via six simultaneous launches, including one at Newcastle International Airport.

At this point members received a presentation from the Chair of TfN (J Cridland), and the Chief Executive of TfN (B White) in respect of the work of TfN.

During discussion members commented on the impact of Brexit on the North East, the importance of transport links and supporting infrastructure, the significant economic importance of the Port of Blyth and the lack of any reference to sustainability in the Strategic Plan.

RESOLVED that the Transport North East Committee –

- i) Noted the Strategic Transport Plan
- ii) Noted that a response will be prepared to the Strategic Transport Plan and the Long Term Rail Strategy. As the deadline for responses of the 17 April 2018 is before the next meeting of the Committee a draft response will be circulated to Committee Members and Heads of Transport by email for comment prior to sign-off by Chair and Vice Chairs.

43 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT**

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

Consideration was given to the report the purpose of which was to provide Members with an update on the 2017/18 Transport Capital programme at the end of the third quarter of the year.

RESOLVED – that the Transport North East Committee noted the report.

44 **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

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

Members considered the report the purpose of which was to provide an update on the 2017/18 budget. It was noted that in respect of Durham County Council's transport levy budget 2017/18 update that the forecast demonstrated a slight overspend of £0.063m. The latest forecast in relation to Northumberland County Council's transport levy budget 2017/18 update demonstrated an underspend against its original budget of £0.229m. Nexus was forecasting a surplus of £1.950m as compared with the original budgeted deficit of £1.610m.

RESOLVED – that the Transport North East Committee noted the report.

45 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

19 April 2018, 2.00pm at Sunderland Civic Centre

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