

## North East Combined Authority

### Transport North East Committee

24 November 2015

Meeting held Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UQ

#### Present:

Councillor: Forbes (Chair)

Councillors: Foster, Gallacher, M Green, Hepple, Hobson, McCarty, McElroy, Mordey, Speding, Tomlinson and West

#### 14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Green.

#### 15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, subject to the inclusion of Councillor M Mordey in the attendance list as present for a part of the meeting, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 17 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR OF TRANSPORT NORTH EAST (TYNE AND WEAR) SUB-COMMITTEE

Submitted: A report of the Monitoring Officer (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Members considered the report which invited them to formally appoint Councillor G Hobson as the Vice-Chair of the Transport North East (Tyne and Wear) Sub-Committee.

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Gladys Hobson be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Transport North East (Tyne and Wear) Sub-Committee.

#### 18 TRANSPORT MANIFESTO FOR THE NORTH EAST

Submitted: A report of the Chief Executive Officer for Transport (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Members considered the report which provided the latest version of the Transport Manifesto for the North East, sought Members' approval to go out to public

consultation and set out an indicative timescale for the subsequent production of the full Transport Plan for the North East.

In welcoming the report Members raised the following matters:

- the benefits of relocating the “What is Transport North East?” section earlier in the document;
- the importance of consultation with rural communities;
- the importance of appreciating the differences between potential transport solutions for urban and rural areas;
- the importance of inclusion of the issue of connectivity to Scotland;
- the need for revised timescales in relation to the consultation period, with a view to extend it;
- in the light of the budgetary constraints the importance of being careful when setting out promises that might prove difficult to achieve;
- the importance of ensuring that any focus on the development of Newcastle Airport was not to the detriment of Durham Tees Valley Airport;
- the document should be available in different formats to ensure accessibility; and
- the importance of a briefing for Members at further stages.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- i. Members’ comments be noted and addressed;
- ii. Delegated authority be given to the Chair to sign-off the final version of the document;
- iii. Public consultation be undertaken on the Transport Manifesto; and
- iv. The timescale for the production of the Transport Plan be noted.

## 19 **TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH**

Submitted: A report of the Chief Executive Officer for Transport (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Members considered the report which provided an update on the Transport for the North programme. As a further update, Members noted the developments in relation to working more closely with Transport Scotland. Members also noted the significance of the detail in the forthcoming Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015.

The ensuing discussion focused on the subject of freight, including the need for further discussions involving local authorities and Transport for the North on the network of routes for freight to ensure an effective infrastructure for servicing ports in the NECA area, particularly given the lack of capacity in the rail network.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

## 20 DRAFT BUDGET 2016/17 AND TRANSPORT LEVIES

Submitted:

- (i) A report of the Chief Finance Officer (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes); and
- (ii) A revised table for Table 1 at paragraph 2.10 (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Members considered the report which provided information about the draft transport budgets and transport levies for 2016/17.

During the introduction of the report, the Chief Finance Officer made references to the key issues arising, including the following:

- the potential cuts to the revenue budget as a result of the austerity measures
- the positive news in relation to capital investments and the devolution agenda;
- the potential reductions in the transport levies;
- pressures on discretionary services; and
- the provisional timetables in relation to setting the budget, including in relation to devolution.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- It was confirmed that Members would be fully engaged in the forthcoming strategic review of the funding for transport, which also would be subject to a wider consultation at appropriate stages. In response to a Member's question, it was confirmed that the review would include matters such as the use of reserves and proposals in relation to the Tyne Ferry.
- Clarification was provided on the provisional position in relation to the Metro Rail Grant and Grant to Nexus.
- A discussion took place about the importance of making difficult decisions early to avoid the escalation of the impact of any delays, whilst allocating sufficient time for consultation.
- Members commented on the disappointing opinion given in relation to the proposed Quality Contracts Scheme by the Quality Contracts Scheme Board.
- Clarification was provided on the use of the Tyne and Wear reserves, including the previous decision of the former Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority to use the reserves to temporarily support concessionary travel whilst identifying efficiency savings elsewhere.
- It was confirmed that the Tyne and Wear reserves did not include Metro
- Clarification was provided on the position in relation to the funding for Metro.
- The Chair expressed concern that some issues relating to transport functions in Northumberland, Durham and Tyne and Wear were still being considered separately, rather than on an integrated basis across the Combined Authority as a whole. Members noted the importance of the creation of the North East Combined Authority as a single transport authority, a single legal entity, including for the purposes of allocation of future funding by the government and in respect of exercising new powers as part of the devolution agenda. It

was noted that integration would need to protect the relative financial position of the constituent authorities.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- i. The report be noted;
- ii. A progress report, inclusive of timetables, be provided to a future meeting;
- iii. The overall transport net revenue budget of £86.7m proposed for 2016/17 as set out in section 3 be noted;
- iv. The transport levies for 2016/17 outlined in section 4 of this report be recommended for consideration by the NECA Leadership Board in January, taking into account any comments that might be received from the budget consultation; and
- v. A report be provided to the next meeting of the Committee setting out proposals to ensure the closer integration of transport services between the constituent local authorities.

**21 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16 UPDATE**

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

Members considered the report which provided a financial monitoring update on the delivery of the 2015/16 transport capital programme. As an update, it was noted that the £19m figure in paragraph 1.3 should be amended to read £12.3m.

The ensuing discussion focused on the position in relation to the capital spending in 2015/16, the importance of effective scrutiny of programmes, potential future opportunities presented by devolution, the Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 and the need for clarity in relation to resources that would be devolved to ensure that local authorities were not at disadvantage as a result of the new funding allocation arrangements.

Members noted the complexity of the process to deliver projects at district level, the likelihood of future opportunities for identifying further projects as part of devolution and the importance of working at all levels to ensure delivery of the capital schemes.

Member also noted the position in relation to the timetables of the works to strengthen bridges in South Tyneside.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

**22 REVENUE BUDGET 2015/16 UPDATE**

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

Members considered the report which provided a monitoring update on the 2015/16 transport-related revenue budget.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

23 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday, 26 February 2016, following the conclusion of the Transport North East (Tyne and Wear) Sub-Committee.