

## North East Combined Authority

### Transport North East Committee

3 November 2016

Meeting held Committee Room, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UQ

#### Present:

Councillor: N Forbes (Chair)

Councillors: M Brain, N Foster, M Green, J Harrison, A Hepple, G Hobson, J McCarty, M Mordey and A West

#### 63 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors S Green, A Sambrook, M Speding and E Tomlinson.

#### 64 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

#### 65 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 July 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 66 TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH UPDATE AND PRESENTATION

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

Members considered the progress report, and also a presentation from I Palmer, the Senior Policy and Strategy Officer for Transport for the North, on the details of the Transport for North (TfN) Northern Transport Strategy and Investment Plan (presentation slides are attached to Official Minutes).

This is a summary of the matters noted during the ensuing discussion:

- It was understood that, whilst the new government was cautious about the Northern Powerhouse agenda and relevant discussions were ongoing, the message remained that the current momentum should be sustained and the work continue as planned. It was yet to be confirmed what message would be issued by the government with regard to TfN as part of the Autumn Statement.
- It was confirmed that the NECA was fully participating in TfN's work to improve connectivity between the partner areas in the North. This work on connectivity was informed by the strategic studies of the road network in

conjunction with DfT and Highways England, work on Northern Powerhouse Rail in conjunction with Network Rail and also by local priorities.

- Members felt that the TfN partnership should give a higher priority to the NECA area as a whole and its individual city areas. It was noted that there was a balancing act to achieve, TfN was evolving and it was critical for the North East to continue to work in partnership with TfN to ensure a stronger voice for the North overall and to bring improvements to the NECA area.
- Members felt that, notwithstanding the importance of the economic growth agenda, it was equally important to prioritise health and wellbeing, social inclusion, reduction of car use and care for the local communities that were affected by strategic road network development proposals. It was important that the strategic work continued to develop plans that were based on the right balance of priorities. This required joint thinking between TfN, central government and local authorities.
- Members welcomed the role and purpose of TfN but highlighted the importance of understanding their powers and responsibilities. Members suggested that consideration should be given to organising a policy seminar for Members on TfN at around March 2017.

**RESOLVED** – That the report, presentation and Members’ comments be noted.

## 67 **TRANSPORT MANIFESTO AND PLAN FOR THE NORTH EAST**

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

Members considered the report which sought their approval of the final version of the Transport Manifesto for the North East and provided information on the next steps for the Transport Plan.

In discussion, Members commented on the good progress achieved in developing a direction of travel for the region; the inclusion of health, economy, connectivity and environment agendas in the developing Transport Plan; and the intended timescales and the importance of progressing with the next stages as quickly as possible whilst having regard to a level of sensitivity around local elections 2017. Officers reported that further work was still required, including with stakeholders. It was noted that further information on the draft Transport Plan would be provided to the Committee in due course.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- i. The Transport Manifesto for the North East, as attached to the report and incorporating feedback from the public consultation, be adopted as the final version; and
- ii. The contents of the report regarding the Transport Plan for the North East be noted.

## 68 **NECA CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL**

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

Members considered the report which set out a number of issues relating to Concessionary Travel in the NECA area and proposed a way forward for each of them, including inconsistencies in discretionary concessions across the NECA area, the WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) campaign in relation to concessionary travel for women born in the 1950s and concessionary fares for young people in the NECA area.

In discussion, Members commented on the lack of resources at the local level to support the national concessionary travel scheme; the complex picture across the NECA area in relation to concessionary fares for young people; the importance of working to ensure there were no artificial barriers between areas of the region; the opportunity of working with the Youth Councils and Youth Parliament to seek their views; and the need for clear timescales.

The following TNEC Members would participate in a task and finish group to consider public transport fares for young people in the NECA area in more detail: Councillors J McCarty (to chair), A Hepple, M Green, M Mordey and N Forbes. The invitation would also be extended to other Members of NECA. A report on the findings of the task and finish group would be presented to the Committee by as soon as possible.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- i. The establishment of a task and finish group to consider public transport fares for young people in more detail be endorsed;
- ii. The intention of Nexus and the Regional Transport Team to commission an independent report into the opportunities that an improved ticketing offer for young people could provide, be endorsed; and
- iii. The intention of the Thematic Lead for Transport to write to the government to advise that the NECA noted the points raised by the WASPI campaign and requests that the government responds to them be endorsed.

## 69 **BUS SERVICES BILL UPDATE**

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

Members considered the report which provided an update on the Bus Services Bill which was progressing through Parliament, and highlighted some important issues arising from the Bill that could affect the NECA area.

As an update, it was noted that the bill had completed the House of Lords stage with the following amendments:

- bus franchising powers to local authorities;
- section 21 preventing local authorities from setting up their own bus companies had been removed;
- a requirement to provide audio/visual announcements on buses had been added; and
- local authorities could set air quality requirements.

In discussion Members commented on the importance of local authorities communicating comments and concerns to the relevant MPs.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- i. the update regarding the Bus Services Bill be noted;
- ii. the Bill's implications for the NECA area be noted; and
- iii. officers would commence work on preparing a new NECA Bus Strategy for Members' consideration.

## 70 **METRO FUTURES PROGRAMME UPDATE**

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

Members considered the report, which provided an update on progress and status of the Metro Futures Programme which consisted of three main projects: the introduction of a new fleet of Metrocars, securing funding for Essential Renewals (ARP Phase 3) and Metro network extensions and enhancements.

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

## 71 **HEAVY RAIL UPDATE**

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

Members considered the report, which provided an update on the recent developments regarding the heavy rail issues affecting the North East.

In discussion:

- Members discussed the regional and more local priorities, including the importance of connectivity and HS2, and the importance of engagement of NECA in discussions on options and preferences in relation to stops on key routes.
- Members received confirmation that, in considering connectivity, capacity and journey times as part of Northern Powerhouse Rail, consideration was given to the whole region and beyond, although at this point of time it was too early to confirm any specific options.

- It was noted that information would be provided on the status of the plans to increase rail services at Cramlington Station.

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

## 72 **NORTH EAST COMBINED AUTHORITY – DEVOLUTION UPDATE**

Submitted: A report of the Head of Paid Service (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Members considered the report, which provided an update on the position in relation to the devolution agreement.

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

## 73 **DRAFT TRANSPORT BUDGET AND LEVIES 2017/18**

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

Members considered the report which provided a summary of the latest information about the draft transport budgets and transport levies for 2017/18 for consideration and comment in order to inform the recommendations to be made in the report to the NECA Leadership Board meeting on 15th November 2016 about the draft Transport Budget for wider consultation. It was noted that the Delivery Agencies as referred to in paragraph 3.2 of the report were Nexus, Durham County Council and Northumberland County Council.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- i. the report be noted;
- ii. the current position with regard to the development of the overall potential transport net revenue budget of £84.808m proposed for 2017/18 as set out in section 3 and the potential Budget position for the following two years be noted; and
- iii. Members of the Committee would be informed of the results of consultation and given the opportunity to comment on Transport proposals that would be included in the NECA Leadership Board report to be considered on 17 January 2017.

## 74 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17 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 delivery of the 2016/17 Transport capital programme.

**RESOLVED** – That the report, including the actions that were taken and proposed to deliver the 2016/17 capital investment programme, be noted.

75      **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, 9 February 2017 at 2pm at Newcastle Civic Centre.

Signed .....

Date .....