

North East Combined Authority

Transport North East Committee

4 December 2014

Meeting held: Town Hall and Civic Offices, Westoe Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE33 2RL

Present:

Councillor: Lott (in Chair)

Councillors: Foster, M Green, S Green, Hobson, J McCarty, McElroy, Speding and West

Notes of Inquorate Meeting

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen, Forbes, Ledger, Swithenbank and Watson.

The meeting was not quorate. Members decided to proceed informally so that their comments on transport budget could be gathered in advance of the report being written to the January meeting of the North East Leadership Board on the overall budget 2015/16 for the North East Combined Authority (NECA).

Members asked that consideration should be given to the appointment of substitute members to the Committee. In response, it was noted that this matter was being addressed; work was in progress to consider the feasibility of appointing substitute members for committees of NECA.

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

29 TRANSPORT BUDGET 2015/16

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

(a) Transport Revenue Budget and Levies 2015/16

Members considered the report which provided a progress update in relation to the transport related budgets for the delivery agencies for 2014/15. The report also set out the latest information about the draft transport budgets and transport levies for 2015/16 for consideration and comment in order to inform a report on budget for the 20 January 2015 meeting of the North East Leadership Board.

During the ensuing discussion it was noted that:

- A Member commented on the lack of clarity, separation and ring-fencing in relation to the transport part of the grant funding for local authorities from the government. A Member also commented that this clarity was needed particularly for understanding implications in relation to the funding of the statutory concessionary travel scheme. A Member suggested that reference should also be made to the availability of accurate data on the use of concessionary travel from smart technology. It was noted that the forthcoming consultation on the Local Government Finance Settlement would provide an opportunity to feed these comments in.
- A Member welcomed the report.
- Members commented that it was important to lobby the government in relation to funding for concessionary travel.
- A Member welcomed the significant investment in the important areas of priority for the North East Combined Authority area.
- Members commented on the importance of making sure that Metro services were efficient and effective. Members referred to complaints from residents about disruptions to services. In response, B Garner referred to the apologies that had been offered at the last meeting of the Committee for the performance of the Metro services earlier in the autumn and explained the reasons for this performance. These were the low rail adhesion which had impacted on the speed of trains and the poor performance of the train fleet. It was noted that improvements had been seen in November. It was also noted that DB Regio was working closely with Nexus to drive improvements.

AGREED – That:

- i. the report be noted;
- ii. Members' comments be noted;
- iii. the contents of the report should form the basis for an overall draft budget for NECA for 2015/16, for consideration by the NECA Leadership Board in January, taking into account any comments that might be received from the budget consultation; and
- iv. The performance of the Metro services be added as a topic for discussion at the forthcoming policy seminar.

(b) Transport Capital Programme 2015/16

Members considered the report which outlined the proposals for the Capital Programme during 2015/16 and the funding sources that had been identified to deliver the programme, which covered a wide range of transport improvements and initiatives.

During the ensuing discussion it was noted that:

- A Member welcomed the significant investment across the NECA area that, amongst other improvements, should bring improvements for cyclists and Metro users, help to improve road safety and address road congestion for car drives, which would bring improvements to all road users. A Member also welcomed the upcoming re-opening of the Tyne Pedestrian and Cyclist Tunnels.
- A Member made a reference to the Chancellor's Autumn Statement which had been announced after the publication of the report.
- Members welcomed the funding position in relation the Metro Asset Renewal Plan, as in recommendation 4.

AGREED – That:

- I. The transport capital programme as set out in the report be recommended for the inclusion in the NECA capital programme that would be recommended to the Leadership Board on 20 January 2015;
- II. Members recommended the distribution of the Tyne and Wear share of the LTP Integrated Transport Block grant to the Tyne and Wear Districts;
- III. A further report be received following the delivery of the 2014/15 programme, ensuring that any variations during the remainder of the current financial year were accommodated in the capital programme;
- IV. Members noted that for planning purposes, Nexus had received a verbal confirmation that the Department for Transport (DfT) Investment Board had resolved at its 11 November meeting, that full (100%) funding for the Metro Asset Renewal Plan for 2016/17 was to be confirmed, with an increase from 50% to 75% funding for years 2017/18 and 2018/19. In addition, Nexus had received a positive feedback from a recent DfT commissioned audit and full (100%) funding for years 2017/18 and 2018/19 was expected to be confirmed, subject to a further review as part of Spending Review 2015 in late 2015; and
- V. Members' comments be noted.

30 **DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NEXUS**

It was noted that B Garner, the Director General of Nexus, was leaving Nexus. Members thanked B Garner for his work on delivering and improving public transport services and congratulated him on his achievements.

31 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, 26 February 2015 at 2pm at Northumberland.