

North East Combined Authority, Transport North East Committee

9 February 2017

(2.00 - 3.40 pm)

Meeting held Committee Room, Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QH

Present:

Councillor: N Forbes (Chair)

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

76 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Speding (Sunderland), Cllr Hepple (Northumberland) and Cllr Sambrook (Northumberland)

77 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

78 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 3 NOVEMBER 2016

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 November 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

79 NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION - CALL FOR EVIDENCE

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

Members considered the report which provided details of the National Infrastructure Commission's recent Call for Evidence and a suggested NECA response. Committee also received a presentation on the themes within the Assessment and responses to questions.

In discussion members commented on the importance of strong links between transport and economic development thereby providing opportunities for people to access meaningful employment. Recognition was given to the important role of the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP) and ensuring strategic infrastructure links to the IAMP. The re-opening of the Leamside Line linking the East Coast Main Line (ECML) to Pelaw via Leamside and Fencehouses connecting the region with the rest of the country was welcomed. Reference was made to the HS2; the international role of the ports and the poor transport systems connecting

the rural areas of Durham and Northumberland to the urban towns. Officers noted suggested amendments and the request that the amended report be circulated to all Members of TNEC.

RESOLVED that –

The report be received and approval given to the NECA response.

80 **TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH UPDATE**

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

Members considered the progress report which provided a further update on the Transport for the North (TfN) programme. The report also suggested that a Members Seminar be arranged to enable further discussion of the proposed Major Route Network and other emerging parts of the TfN strategy. It was noted that TfN has submitted proposals to the Secretary of State to become a statutory body; once approved TfN would become the first sub-national transport authority in England.

Members were also informed of an in-depth national connectivity commission for which senior leaders from across the north were invited to examine major connectivity routes including ports and airports.

The commission's findings recognised the role of the Port of Tyne and the strategic importance of Newcastle.

Below is a summary of the comments noted during the ensuing discussion:-

A copy of the Commission's findings be circulated to all Members prior to the Policy Seminar.

The importance of the Transport Strategy and Investment Plan as a means of influencing how Highways England determine their funding priorities.

The Transport Manifesto developed at the onset of plans for devolution. Nexus continues to deliver the Manifesto across Tyne and Wear as do Northumberland and Durham

Whilst Members welcomed the role and purpose of TfN there was a concern as to how NECA Members could influence from the bottom up; give a higher priority to the NECA area.

Committee had considered numerous reports in relation to TfN and the Policy Seminar will provide an opportunity for more detailed discussions.

RESOLVED – that

- i) The report be noted.

- ii) Substitute Members of Transport North East Committee be invited to the Policy Seminar on 14 March 2017, and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to consider the role of TfN at a subsequent date.

81 **TRANSPORT MANIFESTO AND PLAN FOR THE NORTH EAST**

Submitted: A report by the Lead Chief Executive for Transport

Members considered the report which provided details of progress with the Transport Manifesto and the next steps for the Transport Plan.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted and the next steps be endorsed.

82 **RAIL PROJECTS UPDATE**

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

Members considered the report which provided details of the continued progress of schemes aimed at improving the short and medium term rail services in the North East and queried whether a representative from Net Work Rail could be invited to a future meeting.

RESOLVED - that

1. Committee agreed to continue supporting the schemes as set out in the report.
2. Network Rail be invited to send a representative to a future meeting of the Committee.

83 **HORDEN RAIL STATION - APPROVAL OF LOCAL GROWTH FUNDS**

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

Members considered the report which sought approval for the issuing of a Local Growth Fund grant agreement.

Members sought confirmation that the decision sought was within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED – that the Committee approved the recommendation to agree to proceed to a full Grant Funding Agreement for a local Growth Fund grant of £3.34m, with a phased release for progressive stages of work, to the Horden Rail Station project based on production and review of a full business case and subject to the specific funding conditions set out in Section 2.4 of the report.

84 **SUMMARY OF MARKET RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION FOR NEW METROCARS DESIGN**

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

Members considered the report which introduced the findings of the consultation and market research in relation to the design of the new fleet of Metrocars. This included the three strands of research undertaken, common items associated with the current fleet and layout and what users would like to see in a new fleet.

Amongst the matters discussed during the ensuing discussion were the following:

- Feedback from the parliamentary event; Members heard that there was acknowledgment that the metrocar fleet be replaced and that government acknowledged the importance of Metro to the area.
- The use of mobility scooters previously prohibited following incidents of a health and safety nature. Although a new fleet may have more storage further work would be needed to resolve the other issues related to the risks of mobility scooter usage on the system.
- The plans to move to 'linear' seating on the new fleet which would provide more space for passengers to stand as well as improving space for wheelchairs, buggies and luggage.

RESOLVED – that:

- i) Committee noted the findings emerging from the market research and consultation and that the findings will inform the development of the final detailed fleet specification.
- ii) Committee agreed to receive an update report in April 2017 in relation to the high level fleet specification prior to it being submitted to the Leadership Board for full approval.

85 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE POLICY REVIEW: TRANSPORT RELATED BARRIERS TO EDUCATION**

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

Members considered the report which summarised and commented on the recent Policy Review undertaken by the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee into transport-related barriers to education, employment and training.

Members acknowledged the call for evidence and responses, the time given to the review and the four recommendations.

RESOLVED – that Committee welcomed the report and its findings including the comments and recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which can be incorporated into the Transport Plan.

86 **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.

87 **REVENUE BUDGET 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 the 2016/17 transport-related revenue budget.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

88 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

20 April 2017 at 2.00pm at County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland