



north east combined authority

North East Combined Authority, Leadership Board

Tuesday 13th November, 2018 at 9.15 am

Meeting to be held: Committee Room, Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street,
Gateshead, NE8 1HH

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SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA

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To All Members

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North East Joint Transport Committee

Date: 20 November 2018
Subject: Transport Budget and Levies
Report of: Chief Finance Officer

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to set out a summary of the proposed draft Transport revenue budget and levies for 2019/20, and provides an update on the transport revenue budget position in the current year.

Recommendations

The Joint Transport Committee is recommended to: -

- i. Receive this report for consideration and comment;
- ii. Note the position of the current year 2018/19 Transport Budget and Levies, as set out in sections 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 of this report;
- iii. Agree the following proposals for the basis of consultation about the 2019/20 Transport Revenue Budget:
 - a. The 2019/20 net Transport Budget and levy for Tyne and Wear is indicatively proposed to be set at £61.1m which is a further reduction of £0.7m compared with the budget and levy for 2018/19. The budget savings needed to deliver this are expected to be made by Nexus in 2019/20 without significant impact on transport services, through efficiencies and temporary use of Nexus reserves.
 - b. The indicative Transport Budget and Levy for the Durham County Council area is expected to be £15.557m, which is a small reduction of £0.140m, compared to 2018/19. At this point no significant reduction in services is envisaged.
 - c. The indicative Transport Budget and Levy for the Northumberland County Council area is expected to be £6.119m, which is a small reduction of

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£0.032m compared to 2018/19. At this point no significant reduction in services is envisaged.

- d. That the Tyne Tunnel Tolls are proposed to be increased to keep pace with inflation and the increase in the shadow toll payable to the concessionaire TT2, in line with the concession contract and the agreed approach to the funding of the Tyne Tunnels, as set out in section 2.5.5.
- iv. Note that the budget proposals for Transport will be subject to a consultation process of two months, including reports to the Audit and Standards and Oversight and Scrutiny Committees and to the North East England Chamber of Commerce; as well as being available for comment on the web site and through individual councils' budget consultation processes, as considered necessary.
- v. Note the intention to consider and approve the Transport Revenue Budget and to set the Transport Levies for 2019/20 at a meeting in January (potentially 22 January) after taking into account any comments received on the proposals for 2019/20.

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1. Background Information

1.1 This report sets out a summary of the proposed draft Transport revenue budget and levies for 2019/20, and an update on the revenue position in the current year.

1.2 The Transport budget for 2018/19 was agreed by the NECA Leadership Board at its meeting on 16 January 2018, when total transport levies of £83.648m were set.

2. Proposals

2.1 Transport Revenue Budgets 2018/19 Forecast and 2019/20 Proposals

2.1.1 As the Transport levies and revenue grants are normally fixed for the year there is no change in Levies payable and minimal change in the NECA revenue budget itself. Any surplus or deficit against the budgets for the three main delivery agencies (Durham County Council, Northumberland County Council and Nexus) is retained or managed within the reserves of that organisation. The significant change is a £3.333m reduction in the grant payable to Nexus later in the year, with £3.333m being paid instead to a Metro Fleet Replacement Reserve as a second year contribution towards the match funding contribution that is required by the Department for Transport.

Table 1: 2018/19 Transport Levies and Grants

	2018/19 Original Budget	2018/19 Forecast	Spend to date Oct 2018
	£000	£000	£000
Total Transport Levies	(83,648)	(83,648)	(41,824)
Grant to Durham	15,692	15,692	7,846
Grant to Northumberland	6,146	6,146	3,073
Grant to Nexus	59,700	56,367	29,850
Contribution to Metro Fleet Replacement Reserve		3,333	0
Retained Transport Levy Budget	2,110	2,108	879
Contribution (to)/from NECA Transport reserves	-	(2)	(176)

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- 2.1.2 The overall total proposed net revenue budget for Transport in 2019/20 is £82.776m. This represents a net cash reduction of £0.872m (1.04%) on the budget for 2018/19 agreed by the NECA Leadership Board in January 2018. Information about the draft budget and the levies for each of the three areas covered by the Joint Transport Committee (JTC) are summarised in the table below and set out in more detail in the following sections.

Table 2: Summary of proposed transport budgets and levies 2019/20

Area	Transport Levy	Change from 2018/19
	£000	£000
Durham	15,557	(140)
Northumberland	6,119	(32)
Tyne and Wear	61,100	(700)
Total	82,776	(872)

2.2 Durham County Council

- 2.2.1 The budget and levy for public passenger transport activity in County Durham is expected to be in the region of £15.557m for 2019/20. This compares with a levy for 2018/19 of £15.697m.

Table 3: Draft Durham Transport Budget and Levy 2019/20

	2018/19 Original Budget	2018/19 Forecast	2019/20 Proposed Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Concessionary Fares	11,940	11,940	12,059
Subsidised Services	2,850	2,553	2,558
Bus Stations	144	152	163
Bus Shelters	19	27	19
Passenger Transport Information	89	85	90
Staffing	650	650	663
Share of NECA Transport Costs	5	5	5
Net Expenditure	15,697	15,412	15,557

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2.2.3 For 2018/19 an underspend of £0.285m is forecast, which will be retained by Durham County Council at the year-end. The main reasons for the projected underspend are as follows:

1. Subsidised Services - £297k under budget – this relates mainly to medium term financial plan savings made early following changes to the procurement of bus services.
2. Bus Stations - £8k over budget – this results from increased Repairs and Maintenance and vandalism.
3. Bus Shelters – £8k over budget – this results from increased repairs and maintenance.

2.2.4 Durham Council is currently developing its 2019/20 budget proposals, but some draft figures are set in the table above. At the current time, net budgets are proposed to be largely in line with the current year, with no significant adverse impact on services anticipated at this point.

2.3 Northumberland County Council

2.3.1 The proposed budget and levy for public transport activity in Northumberland is £6.119m for 2019/20. This compares with a budget of £6.151m for 2018/19. The budget and levy for 2018/19 and 2019/20 is summarised in the table below. :

2.3.2 *Table 4: Draft Northumberland Transport Budget and Levy 2019/20*

	2018/19 Original Budget	2018/19 Forecast	2019/20 Proposed Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Concessionary Fares	4,722	4,720	4,690
Subsidised Services	1,230	1,230	1,230
Bus Stations	23	23	23
Passenger Transport Information	25	27	25
Staffing	145	145	145
Share of NECA Transport Costs	5	5	5
Net Expenditure	6,151	6,151	6,119

2.3.3 The main areas of expenditure operated by Northumberland are:

- i) Concessionary Fares – Although claims from operators are received monthly all adjustments are being reimbursed with an accurate overall rate. It is currently forecast that Concessionary Fares will break-even in 2018/19.
- ii) Subsidised Bus Services – The Council supports a range of socially necessary bus services, mainly in the rural North and West areas of the County but

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also some in the more urban South East. It is forecast that the Council will break-even at the end of the financial year. No new routes are currently being proposed to be added to the network.

The Council is currently drafting and assessing its 2019/20 budget proposals so figures remain draft at this stage. The final medium term financial plan and budget proposals will be subject to consultation and therefore the budget may be subject to further amendments. At the current time, budgets are proposed to be largely in line with the current year with no significant changes.

2.4 Tyne and Wear

2.4.1 The distribution of the levy within Tyne and Wear is based on population, in accordance with the Transport Levying Bodies Regulations. The amounts levied on each individual authority will reflect the midyear population estimate for 2017 as well as the reduction in the overall total. The proposed levy for 2019/20 for each of the Tyne and Wear councils is shown below:

2.4.2 *Table 5: Distribution of Proposed Tyne and Wear Transport Levy*

	2018/19 Levy	Proposed 2019/20 Levy	Proposed Reduction
	£000	£000	£000
Gateshead	11,037	10,949	(88)
Newcastle	16,232	16,003	(229)
North Tyneside	11,131	11,061	(70)
South Tyneside	8,181	8,090	(91)
Sunderland	15,219	14,997	(222)
Total	61,800	61,100	(700)

The proposed levy is based on discussions with councils and represents a reduction of £0.700m compared with 2018/19. It takes into account the fact that savings are being delivered in the Nexus budget in the current year and the pressures on councils' budgets. A levy reduction of this scale for 2019/20 was envisaged previously in 2017 and can be achieved without service reductions being needed in the next two years, through use of efficiency savings and Nexus reserves.

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2.4.3 Tyne and Wear Levy Budget – Nexus

The budget proposal for Nexus for 2019/20 will be discussed in more detail by the Tyne and Wear Sub Committee. At its January 2018 meeting, the Leadership Board agreed that Nexus could run a budget deficit of up to £1.934m in 2018/19, which would be funded by using its reserves. In the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report presented to the NECA's Transport North East Committee on 11 October 2018, Nexus reported that it had made a permanent reduction to its base budget requirement and it was now reporting a £1.200m surplus for 2018/19.

2.4.4 The adjustments to Nexus' base budget for 2018/19 are shown in the table below.

Table 6: Adjustments to Nexus budget 2018/19

	£m	£m
Base budget deficit 2018/19		1.934
Budget Savings		
- Concessionary travel	(0.830)	
- Metro fare income	(0.800)	
- High voltage power	(0.500)	
- Secured services	(0.310)	
- Investment income	(0.080)	
- Scholars income	(0.200)	
- Employees	(0.300)	
- Other	(0.257)	(3.277)
Budget Pressures		
- Commission income	0.060	
- Inflationary adjustments	0.058	
- Departure charges	0.025	0.143
Revised base budget surplus 2018/19		(1.200)

2.4.5 The proposed reduction in the Tyne and Wear transport levy of £0.7m in 2019/20 will mean that the grant made available to Nexus in 2019/20 from the Joint Transport Committee will reduce by £0.7m. Notwithstanding this, because of Nexus' improved financial position in 2018/19, it will be able to maintain frontline services during 2019/20. As in previous years, it will be necessary to plan on the basis that Nexus will need to utilise reserves in order to prepare a balanced budget. In so doing, and without any improvement in its funding from April 2021, Nexus will need to work through the Sub-Committee (and the Joint Transport Committee) in regards possible service reductions during 2020/21.

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- 2.4.6 Against a background of medium term financial uncertainty, but with the proposed objectives of its corporate plan for 2019/20 in mind, Nexus has considered its spending plans for 2019/20, assuming its budget is being set at 'stand-still' i.e. if it were to maintain service outcomes.
- 2.4.7 The budget proposal is based on estimates that have a degree of uncertainty in respect of some of Nexus' largest areas of expenditure. In particular:
- a. Nexus is currently in consultation with its four recognised Trades Unions (TUs) concerning pay awards for April 2018 and April 2019. Nexus' offer is the subject of a ballot at this time and the outcome is uncertain. However the 'gap' between the TUs pay claim and that which Nexus have offered (which is broadly in line with the local government settlement) is circa £0.500m in 2018/19 and £1.0m in 2019/20.
 - b. Whilst Metro fare revenue collected to the end of period 6 in 2018/19 is £0.800m above the budget set in January 2018, we are continuing to see a reduction in the sales by third parties, most notably Network Ticketing Limited. If fare revenues worsen during the remainder of the year, this will have a knock-on effect in future years. In addition, the Metro fares review scheduled to come into effect in January 2019 will be considered by Tyne and Wear Sub Committee on 21 November, which will consider and agree an approach based upon another report contained elsewhere on today's agenda.
 - c. The estimate for High Voltage Power is based on intelligence provided by the specialist team at NEPO who assist Nexus in its procurement of this commodity. Previous estimates have proven to be conservative due to better prices being obtained and delays in the implementation of the governments' Electricity Market Reform agenda.
 - d. Whilst the majority of the secured bus services budget is subject to contract price inflation, an element of the budget is dependent on contract renewals and the vagaries of tender returns being different to the previous contractual price.

At its February 2016 meeting, the Tyne and Wear Sub-Committee established the strategic objective that Nexus should be able to balance its revenue budget without placing reliance on its revenue reserves by 2019/20 (minute 65/2016 refers). However, at that time it was anticipated that Nexus' budget deficit would have grown to £7.0m by 2017/18. Through efficiency savings and by redirecting expenditure into priority areas, Nexus has successfully managed and averted this significant budget risk. It is therefore in a position to use reserves again in 2019/20 as a means of protecting services.

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For the third year a contribution of £3.333m will be made to the Metro Fleet Renewal reserve, increasing the reserve to £10m to help to achieve the £25m match funding requirement.

Tyne and Wear Levy Transport Budget (non-Nexus)

2.4.8 This budget primarily relates to activity inherited from the former Tyne and Wear ITA along with central transport activity. The vast majority of the budget relates to financing charges on historic debt. Additionally, there is budget provision to meet the costs of support services and governance, external audit fees and a repayment to the Tyne Tunnels for use of reserves in 2013/14 to pay off the pension deficit.

2.4.9 At this point no saving in the £2.1m Tyne and Wear (non-Nexus) Transport budget has been identified, as the majority of the costs relate to capital financing and are largely fixed. Any saving is likely to be marginal and will not be known until the position and costs of a new Transport Officer post and the support needed for the new Joint Transport Committee and the Tyne and Wear Sub Committee is known.

Table 7: Tyne and Wear Transport Budget (non-Nexus)

	2018/19 Original Budget	2018/19 Forecast	2019/20 Proposed Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Support Services/Staffing	220	220	220
Administration and Governance	42	40	40
Financing Charges	1,798	1,795	1,785
Transport Joint Committee	50	50	50
Total Expenditure	2,110	2,108	2,095
Contribution from Levies*	(2,110)	(2,110)	(2,110)

2.5 Tyne Tunnels

2.5.1 The Tyne Tunnels are accounted for as a ring-fenced account within the NECA budget, meaning that all costs relating to the tunnels are wholly funded from the tolls and Tyne Tunnels reserves, with no call on the levy or government funding.

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2.5.2 Table 8: Tyne Tunnels Budget 2018/19 and 2019/20

	2018/19 Original Budget	2018/19 Forecast	2019/20 Proposed Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Tolls Income	(25,970)	(26,730)	(28,090)
Contract payments to TT2	19,480	20,298	21,197
Employees	33	-	-
Pensions	54	50	52
Support Services	80	95	95
Supplies & Services	45	45	45
Financing Charges	6,579	6,594	6,966
Interest/Other Income	(50)	(50)	(50)
Repayment from TWITA for temporary use of reserves	(240)	(240)	(240)
(Surplus)/Deficit on Tyne Tunnels revenue account met from reserves	11	62	(25)

- 2.5.3 The forecast outturn position for 2018/19 is for a small deficit of £62k, which will be met from Tyne Tunnels reserves. The forecast for tolls income is slightly higher than the original budget, taking into effect the increase in the toll on HGV Class 3 vehicles, which came into effect in March 2018. This is offset by an increase in the contract payments to TT2 whose “shadow toll” payment is due to increase by 10p in line with RPI inflation to £1.90 per vehicle from 1 January 2019. Traffic levels continue to be lower than previously experienced, which has been the case since commencement of the Silverlink works in August 2016.
- 2.5.4 The original budget for 2018/19 included provision for employee costs relating to the contract monitoring officer role. During 2018/19 this post has been vacant, with support provided instead by officers from Newcastle City Council and the support services forecast has been updated accordingly. It is assumed that this arrangement will continue into 2019/20.
- 2.5.5 The 2019/20 budget figures shown in Table 8 above assumes an increase in tolls for both Class 2 and Class 3 vehicles in line with inflation as measured by the Retail Price index. It is proposed that the toll for Class 2 Vehicles (cars and light goods vehicles) be increased by 10p from £1.70 to £1.80 and that the toll for Class 3

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vehicles (Heavy Goods Vehicles) be increased by 20p from £3.40 to £3.60 in spring 2019. This is being discussed in greater detail with the Tyne and Wear Sub Committee.

- 2.5.6 The increase in toll income in 2019/20 as a result of the increase in tolls is estimated to be £1.56m. Without an increase in tolls the Tyne Tunnels account would operate at a deficit of £1.54m, next year which would be unsustainable over the life of the concession.
- 2.5.7 In terms of the formal process for the increase in Tolls, a decision to increase tolls will be taken by the Tyne and Wear Sub Committee in January. NECA as the Host Combined Authority for Transport will implement the proposed increase. This will involve advertising the proposed increase in at least one local newspaper and notifying the Department of Transport. Once notified, the Department has 21 days to determine whether to make the order and, if so, the order will be made 28 days before it comes into effect. A decision on the specific date for implementation will be taken in conjunction with TT2 Ltd, taking into account operational considerations.
- 2.5.8 While the traffic through the Tunnels is likely to increase next year, once the Silverlink junction road work have been completed, there will also be some impact from the planned road works at Testos roundabout. While any increase in traffic will increase toll income this will result in an increase in the contract payments to TT2. Given the current uncertainty around the increase in traffic flow the original budget will be based on current traffic levels with the increase evidenced in summer 2019 being reflected in the revised estimate this time next year.

2.6 Regional Transport Team

- 2.6.1 The Regional Transport Team budget is to support the Joint Transport Committee and North East LEP as a whole, on a seven authority basis. The budget includes salary costs and the items required to ensure a functional central resource across the JTC area including the development of the Transport Manifesto and Transport Plan and various research projects where value can be added at a regional level including modelling works, major schemes bid development, including Transforming Cities fund, the Freight Quality Partnership and other research studies. During the year the team has also taken on the role of providing support to the Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities (ECMA), the costs of which are partly met through a recharge to other member authorities. A summary of the revenue budget for 2018/19 and proposal for 2019/20 is set out in the table below.

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Table 9: Regional Transport Team Budget 2018/19 and 2019/20

	2018/19 Original Budget	2018/19 Forecast	2019/20 Proposed Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure			
Staffing	516	406	531
LTP4 Development	50	11	50
Research and Grant Bid Development (including Transforming Cities Fund)	199	175	200
Miscellaneous	6	5	6
Go Smarter Legacy (Bid/Match Funding)	200	200	-
Total Expenditure	971	797	787
Funded by:			
LTP Integrated Transport Block	(500)	(500)	(500)
LGF Programme Management	(150)	(97)	(150)
Go Smarter Legacy Funding	(200)	(200)	-
Carried forward balances from 2017/18	(121)	-	(137)
Total Funding	(971)	(797)	(787)

2.7 Transforming Cities Fund

During October, NECA was announced as one of ten shortlisted areas to progress to the next stage of bidding for the government's £840m Transforming Cities Fund. The Budget 2018 announced additional money for the Fund, increasing the amount of the fund that we can bid into by £440m to £1,280m. An additional two areas would be allowed to bid for this fund, increasing the number of bidding areas to 12.

NECA will be working with DfT to develop plans which, if successful, will be used to tackle congestion and improve transport connections across the region.

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There is a need to identify revenue resources to support the bidding process and initial project design costs, which may include the use of revenue budget savings in 2018/19, and this will be included in the budget report to the January meeting of the JTC.

2.8 Treasury Management - Borrowing

Currently all external borrowing held by NECA relates to historic Tyne and Wear Transport activities, and the financing of the borrowing debt is met from the Tyne and Wear levy and the Tyne Tunnels budgets and is included within the proposals set out above. While the JTC has an advisory role in connection with the borrowing limits relating to transport, the Treasury Management arrangements are managed by NECA as the accountable body for the JTC and are approved by the two Combined Authorities. A proportion of the outstanding balance of the loans and investments (based on the share of Tyne and Wear population in each combined authority area) will be shown in the balance sheets of the two Combined Authorities. A summary of the actual loans outstanding at the date of the change in governance is set out in the table below, which is less than the approved capital financing requirement:

Table 10: Historic Borrowing and the current Capital Financing Requirement

	Principal	Interest Due	Total	NECA Share	NoTCA Share
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Capital Financing Requirement	193,665		193,665	107,883	85,782
Actual External Debt	167,333	2,274	169,607	94,482	75,125

3. Reasons for the Proposals

- 3.1 The proposals are presented here to inform the JTC of work on the preparation of the 2019/20 Transport Budget and to begin the two month consultation process.

4. Alternative Options Available

- 4.1 The JTC are recommended to agree the proposals set out in this report or suggest amendments or alternative proposals to be considered as part of the budget consultation process.

5. Next Steps and Timetable for Implementation

- 5.1 The Transport budget proposals will be consulted upon with constituent councils, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Audit and Standards Committee and with the North East England Chamber of Commerce. Detailed budget proposals will be

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developed and responses to consultation will be taken into account in preparing the more detailed report to the January JTC meeting.

- 5.2 Under the new governance arrangements the Transport Budget and levies are to be set by the Joint Transport Committee (JTC) based on a unanimous decision. The Transport levy determined by the JTC will be formally issued by the two Combined Authorities. This needs to be done before the Statutory deadline of 15th February 2019.

6. Potential Impact on Objectives

- 6.1 The budget presented in this report is set to achieve the Transport policy objectives of the Authority.

7. Financial and Other Resources Implications

- 7.1 The financial and other resource implications are summarised in this report where they are known. Further details which are developed as part of the budget development and consultation process will be identified in the budget report to the January 2019 Joint Transport Committee.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 The JTC must approve the transport budget, levies and tolls unanimously. The Leadership Board must approve the final overall budget proposals unanimously (incorporating the budget approved by the JTC).

9. Key Risks

- 9.1 Appropriate risk management arrangements are put in place in each budget area by the delivery agencies responsible. Reserves are maintained to help manage financial risk to the authority.

10. Equality and Diversity

- 10.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

11. Crime and Disorder

- 11.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

12. Consultation/Engagement

- 12.1 The NECA Constitution requires that consultation on its budget proposals be undertaken at least two months prior to the budget being agreed. It is proposed that the 2019/20 Transport budget proposals be consulted upon including with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Audit and Standards Committee, constituent councils and the NEECC. The extent of public consultation will be

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proportionate to the impact that the proposals would have on services to the public. At this stage no significant service implications are expected.

13. Other Impact of the Proposals

13.1 There are no other impacts arising from this report.

14. Appendices

14.1 None

15. Background Papers

15.1 NECA Leadership Board Budget 2018/19 and Transport Levies report 16 January 2018

<https://northeastca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Leadership-Board-16-January-2018-Agenda-Pack.pdf>

16. Contact Officers

16.1 Paul Woods, Chief Finance Officer, paul.woods@northeastca.gov.uk, 07446936840

17. Sign off

- Head of Paid Service: ✓
- Monitoring Officer: ✓
- Chief Finance Officer: ✓

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