



North East Joint Transport Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

APPROVED MINUTES

20 December 2018

(2.00 - 2.50 pm)

Meeting held Committee Room, Sunderland Civic Centre, Burdon Rd, Sunderland SR2 7DN

Present:

Councillors: Cllr I Patterson, C Penny-Evans, Cllr Sandra Graham, Castle, Cllr J McCabe, P Stewart, M Clarke, G Stone and W Samuel

QUORUM

Peter Judge, Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the meeting was not quorate and therefore if members wished to proceed, any decisions taken would need to be ratified at the next quorate meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Pending the recruitment of an Independent Chair and Vice Chair, it was agreed that Councillor G Stone be appointed Chair for the purposes of this meeting.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors R Crute (Durham), A Patterson (Durham), J Eagle (Gateshead), A Lower (Newcastle), R Glindon (North Tyneside), G Sanderson (Northumberland), A Ellison (South Tyneside), and J Kelly (Sunderland).

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S Graham declared an interest as a campaign member of Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI).

3 GOVERNANCE CHANGES AND OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

Submitted: Report of the Monitoring Officer and Policy and Scrutiny Officer (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Peter Judge, Monitoring Officer, introduced the report which provided an update on recent governance changes and provided an opportunity for the Committee to discuss the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements moving forward.

Members were informed that a paper had been taken to the Joint Transport Committee on the 18th December that outlined the process for the appointment of an Independent Chair and Vice Chair for the Joint Transport Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Approval had been given to the appointment process which would begin shortly.

In addition, members were informed that at its meeting held on the 20th November, the Standing Orders of the Joint Transport Committee were confirmed. It was also noted at this time that the Joint Transport Committee's Overview and Scrutiny Committee would operate in accordance with NECA's Overview and Scrutiny decision making protocol.

Mr Judge then briefed the Committee on its role and functions as detailed in paragraphs 1.4 to 1.7 of the report following which Nicola Laverick, Policy and Scrutiny Officer, informed members of changes made to the Overview and Scrutiny report template to create a more focused and effective reporting tool that would support Members and Officers in their roles.

In response to comments, questions and points raised by Members, the following was noted:

- In response to questions from Members regarding the call-in process, the Committee was advised that this could be triggered at the request of any 4 members of the Committee. A Call-in Sub-Committee would be established to exercise call in powers as it was felt that a smaller group would make achieving a quorum more likely.
- With regard to a member enquiry regarding what constituted an Independent Person, the Committee was informed that the posts of Chair and Vice Chair would be politically restricted and that holders could not have held political office with a constituent authority within the last 5 years.
- The current NECA decision making protocol which would be developed to suit the needs of this Committee could be found on the website.

RECOMMENDED – That the governance changes and the arrangements for the Joint Transport Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

4 **BUDGET PROPOSALS 2019/20**

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

Paul Woods, Chief Finance Officer, presented the report which sought the views of the Joint Transport Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee on proposals for the setting of the 2019/20 Transport budget, as part of its consultation process. A summary report on the 2019/20 Budget and Transport Levies had been presented

to the Joint Transport Committee on 20 November and was attached to this report as an appendix.

Members were advised that the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be taken into account in the development of the detailed budget report and reported to the Joint Transport Committee when it considered the Budget and Transport Levies for 2019/20 in January 2019.

Mr Woods then briefed the Committee on the main budget proposals as detailed in paragraph 2 of the report and informed them of the main themes arising from the consultation responses received to date. These themes included:-

- The capacity of Metro to deliver its new services, proposed line extensions and the new fleet.
- More detail requested in respect of the concessionary fares and the drivers behind them
- Was there an opportunity for discretionary funding for over 60s travel?
- More detail requested regarding Tyne Tunnel tolls

In response to comments, questions and points raised by Members the following was noted:

- In response to a member concern regarding delays to the refurbishment of the Pedestrian Tyne Tunnel, the failure of the initial contractor to deliver and the subsequent cost to the public purse, Mr Judge advised that the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested that the matter was brought before it via the Tyne and Wear Sub Committee. It was envisaged that this would be reported to that Committee in March 2019. The Audit Committee of the Joint Transport Committee had yesterday agreed to instigate an internal audit of the matter.
- Consideration should be given to addressing the inability of WASPI women to obtain concessionary transport at 60 in contrast to the policies operating in London and Merseyside where this was permitted. In the meantime consideration should be given to providing short term help to those women in hardship.

RECOMMENDED – That the report be noted and the Committee’s comments are considered as part of the 2019/20 budget consultation process.

5 **NORTH EAST JOINT TRANSPORT COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

Submitted: Report of Monitoring Officer and Policy and Scrutiny Officer (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Nicola Laverick (Policy and Scrutiny Officer) presented the report which provided Members with an opportunity to consider the items on the Forward Plan for the current 28-day period and discuss items for the Work Programme for the remainder of 2018/2019 and into 2020

In response to comments, questions and points raised by Members the following was noted:

- Consideration be given to the inclusion of the following member requests for additions to the work programme:-
 - i) concessionary travel,
 - ii) the need to development an up to date Tyne and Wear Bus Strategy following the failure to establish a quality control scheme,
 - iii) Metro contingency planning and in particular the provision of bus replacement services during service disruption
 - iv) the subsidising of rural bus services, in particular how this is managed and improved,
 - v) transport emissions in the light of the Government requirement to produce a Clean Air Strategy.

RECOMMENDED – That:

- i) The Forward Plan and Work Programme 2018/2019 be noted, and
- ii) Consideration be given to the inclusion of the member requests for additions to the work programme as detailed above.

6 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 14th March 2019 at 2.00pm.