

SHEFFIELD CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

ROTHERHAM TOWN HALL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 JANUARY 2015

PRESENT:

Councillor Sir Steve Houghton CBE, Barnsley MBC (Chair)
(Vice Chair)

Councillor John Burrows, Chesterfield BC
Councillor Julie Dore, Sheffield CC
Councillor Nick Foster, NE Derbyshire DC
Councillor Simon Greaves, Bassetlaw DC
Mayor Ros Jones, Doncaster MBC
Councillor Paul Lakin, Rotherham MBC
Councillor Anne Western, Derbyshire CC

Ruth Adams, SCR Executive Team
Karl Battersby, Rotherham MBC
Huw Bowen, Chesterfield BC
Patrick Devine, SYPTE
Andrew Frosdick, Monitoring Officer
Wes Lumley, Bolsover DC / NE Derbyshire DC
Jo Miller, Doncaster MBC
John Mothersole, Sheffield CC
Ben Still, SYPTE / SCR Executive Team
Neil Taylor, Bassetlaw DC
Diana Terris, Barnsley MBC / Clerk
Craig Tyler, SYJS
Eugene Walker, s.151 Officer
David Young, SYPTE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Watts, G Baxter, A Rhodes,
L Roberts and L Rose

1 APOLOGIES

Committee Members' apologies were noted as above.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members congratulated Cllr Eion Watts (Leader of Bolsover DC and Vice Chair of the Authority) on the award of his OBE in the New Year Honours List.

3 URGENT ITEMS

None

4 ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

None

5 VOTING RIGHTS FOR NON-CONSTITUENT MEMBERS

It was confirmed that no agenda items require voting rights to be conferred on non-constituent Members.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA

None

7 REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

None

8 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

None

9 COMBINED AUTHORITY TRANSPORT LEVY AND SYPTE BUDGET 2015/16

A report was presented to Members regarding the South Yorkshire districts' requirement to agree a transport levy for 2015/16 with this levy funding the transport activities of the Combined Authority principally through resourcing the grant paid to the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE).

It was noted that reflecting resource pressures across local government, the South Yorkshire Local Authorities have asked the Combined Authority finance officers and SYPTE to draw up proposals to reduce the levy by 10% on the 2014/15 figure.

The report therefore presented a mixture of policy choices, efficiency savings and special capital financing measure proposals which reach a 10% reduced levy of £68.381m for 2015/16.

Prior to the consideration of the report, the Chair invited Mr Tony Nuttall to speak on behalf of Barnsley Retirees Action Group and the 'Freedom Riders' organisation which has been campaigning for the reinstatement of additional concessionary public transport enhancements for the elderly which were in place to the end of 2013/14 and enhanced in June 2014. Mr Nuttall argued that making any cut in elderly travel concessions incurs far greater hidden costs and any savings are therefore a false economy. Mr Nuttall informed Members of the findings of the Freedom Riders' own consultation on reinstating additional concessions for the elderly. Finally Mr Nuttall outlined a number of potential, innovative means via which it was suggested further concessions could be funded including a £10 annual fee for rail usage, a £1 flat fee on all buses prior to 9.30am, as recently introduced by TM Travel and by the Combined Authority using its own reserves.

The Combined Authority's Financial Officer, Eugene Walker, explained the reasons for the levy reduction within the context of the budgetary pressures the Local Authorities have to manage across all sectors, including adult social care and education, and proposed that the 10% reduction in funding for transport is proportionate to other cuts.

Regarding suggestions that reserves might be used to fund additional expenditure, Members were reminded of the need to set a 'balanced budget' and protect against unsustainable, longer term spend commitments. It was noted that a further report would be presented concerning current reserves.

It was noted that a paper will be brought to a future meeting setting out a recommended 3-year budget plan, including the future use of capital grant reserves, for the CA's transport activity and SYPTTE which provides a sustainable budget avoiding future unplanned levy increase in the longer term

David Young, PTE Deputy Interim Director General, confirmed to Members that diversity and equality implications have been considered throughout the budget setting process and, in reminding Members of their legal duty to have due regard to section 149 of the Equality Act, drew attention to the Equality Impact Assessments presented with the report which relate to the potential changes proposed i.e. the removal of printed paper timetables funded by SYPTTE, reduced levels of cleaning in Interchanges and at bus stops/shelters, the closure of Transport Information Centres at Sheffield, Meadowhall, Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Interchanges and the removal of the Travel Choices Team which provides public transport support to schools and businesses.

It was noted that the report details the PTE's consultation undertaken to inform the changes proposed and provides feedback and comments on the consultation undertaken by the 'Freedom Riders'.

Cllr Dore reiterated the need for Local Authorities to set balanced all budgets, and suggested that the 10% cut to transport is in keeping with cuts of 15% to other services in Sheffield.

Mayor Jones noted that Doncaster's funding has now been cut by 50% since 2010 and the cuts to transport are less than those being imposed on other service areas.

On behalf of all the South Yorkshire Local Authorities; the Chair restated that none of the districts want to be in the position of having to make cuts and that in setting a balanced budget; efforts have been taken to retain the additional concessions currently in place for the elderly and protect other services including bus services to remote and rural communities.

Acknowledging the questions raised and matters discussed during the meeting, the Chair directed officers to provide written responses to the Freedom Riders regarding the reserves held by Sheffield City Region, Northern Rail's consideration of an annual fee for rail usage and the bus operators' consideration of pre-9.30 flat fees for the elderly, within the next month.

RESOLVED, that the Combined Authority:

1. Agrees the Combined Authority Transport Levy be set at £68.381m for 2015/16;
2. Approves the award of a retrospective capital grant from the CA to SYPTE for up to the maximum amount deemed available and delegate finalisation of the arrangements to the s151 officer
3. Notes that a paper will be brought to a future meeting setting out a recommended 3-year budget plan, including the future use of capital grant reserves, for the CA's transport activity and SYPTE which provides a sustainable budget avoiding future unplanned levy increase in the longer term
4. Approves a revenue grant of £66.574m for SYPTE, to be funded from the Levy, and the savings proposals necessary to deliver a balanced budget for 2015/16, as set out in section 3.3 of this report
5. Approves the cuts to service as described in Section 3.3.6 of the report, having had due regard to the legal obligations set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Impact Assessments appended to this report
6. Notes the reductions in support service costs from SCC and BMBC compared to previous Joint Secretariat charges and note that a further review will be dependent a wider review of resources for the non-transport element of the CA budget
7. Directs officers to provide written feedback to the Freedom Riders within the next month on the initiatives proposed during the meeting to fund additional public transport concessions.

10 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14TH NOVEMBER 2014

RESOLVED, that:

1. The minutes of the meeting of the Combined Authority held on 17th November be agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.

11 SCR DEVOLUTION DEAL

Members were informed that the Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership agreed a Devolution Deal with Government on the 12th December and were presented with a paper seeking formal endorsement of this Deal in recognition of the role that this fulfils in accelerating the delivery of the SEP

Prior to considering the report, the Chair agreed to receive 2 questions from the 'Sheffield for Democracy' group in relation to this matter:

Q1 Under item 2.2 of today's meeting the authority is being asked to endorse the so called 'Devolution Deal' announced by the Deputy Prime Minister on 12th December.

This deal, negotiated in secret and without any public consultation, is being foisted on the people of South Yorkshire and the North Midlands.

The quality and effectiveness of the deal is not open for discussion by the people that will be funding it (Taxpayers) and includes commitments to potentially contentious issues such as the forced labour system known as the 'Work Programme' that supplies businesses with subsidised or free labour under threat of sanctions to those unemployed involved, although the report you are asked to endorse omits this fact. "DWP will consult with Sheffield City region about the possibility of joint commissioning for the next phase of the Work Programme beginning in 2017."

At what point will this authority discuss this deal openly with the public they are supposed to represent?

And

Q2 The minutes of the last meeting reflect neither the question I [Nigel Slack, Sheffield for Democracy] asked nor the Chair's response. The point of asking questions at public meetings is not just to get information but to create a public record of the question and answer. It should be, as it is in Sheffield City Council, an important part of the scrutiny and engagement available to the public.

Will the authority remedy this omission and, as has been asked for on previous occasions, include an agenda item for public questions alongside that for petitions?

Regarding question 1, the Chair proposed that the discussion of the matter in public hopefully negates the suggestion that the deal is being construed in secret.

Regarding question 2, the Authority Members agreed to the introduction of a process for receiving public questions and instructed officers to introduce such a facility.

Regarding the devolution deal itself, it was reiterated that there is no suggestion that powers will be taken away from the district councils. What has been agreed with government is the receipt of some limited powers that will help deliver the Strategic Economic Plan which has already been consulted on.

It was further noted that whilst not requiring any changes to the SCR's existing decision making processes, the Deal would enable the City region to have achieve greater influence over skills, employment, business support, transport and housing.

RESOLVED, that the Combined Authority

1. Endorses the SCR Devolution Deal as announced on the 12th December (Appendix A).
2. Notes that this Deal represents a step in the devolution journey and will represent an important mechanism to help deliver our SEP.
3. Instructs officers to introduce a process for receiving public questions for presentation to Combined Authority meetings.

12 GROWTH DEAL 2 PRIORITIES

A report was received to inform members that the SCR has been asked to prioritise its initial submission for Growth Deal 2 in relation three potential funding options provided by Government and note that the City Region has undertaken this task applying a pro-rata approach to our existing submission.

It was noted that the nature of the funding made available by Government through the Autumn Statement for Growth Deal 2 poses implications for all LEPs as this is phased between 2016/17 – 2020/21. This is instead of the 2014/15 - 2015/16 period that the initial submission was developed in relation to.

A response from the government to the submission is expected in January.

RESOLVED, that the Combined Authority:

1. Notes that this proposal had to be submitted to Government by the 9th December and was agreed by the Growth Plan Executive Group (James Newman and Diana Terris)
2. Endorses the paper as submitted to Government and specifically the three scenarios for Growth Deal 2 (at table 3 in the report)

13 ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

A report was received to advise Members that the government has published a national LEP Assurance Framework for Local Growth Fund (LGF) allocations. This will need to inform the work being undertaken in the City Region to update our existing Assurance Framework so that this is fit for purpose. This primarily involves setting out how this applies to non-transport majors funding.

RESOLVED, that the Combined Authority:

1. Notes the publication of the national LEP Assurance Framework and the respective roles that this highlights for the LEP and CA
2. Notes the work underway to update the existing SCR Assurance Framework by April so that this can be applied to our Growth Deal and LGF allocation

14 ONE NORTH/TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH

Members were presented with a report to provide a progress update on the One North Project and to outline the proposed remit of 'Transport for the North'.

Mayor Jones urged the need to press home the importance of RHADS and build on the efforts undertaken as part of the One North deliberations to get SCR's assets duly recognised.

Cllr Dore noted the long history of the northern Authorities working together on matters of a strategic transport nature, such as the Northern Way initiative.

Cllr Burrows issued a reminder that the north Midlands districts should not be 'forgotten' as part of this process. Ben Still confirmed the understanding that these regions are crucial to the success of Transport for the North as its emphasis is on cross boundary connectivity.

RESOLVED, that the Combined Authority:

1. Notes the progress being made on the One North project and SYPTe's continued representation of Sheffield City Region (SCR) partners.
2. Notes the One North Programme Executive Summary
3. Notes the proposed role, function and composition of 'Transport for the North'.
4. Notes the ongoing work to the end of March 2015.

15 APPOINTMENT OF SYPTe NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

A report was received requesting the approval of the proposed changes to the membership of the PTE Executive Board following the review of the PTE.

Members were asked to note that since the production of the report, the BMBC nominee has been changed to Matt Gladstone, Executive Director (Development, Environment and Culture).

It was also noted that the new Board members would commence duties from the March 2015 cycle of meetings.

RESOLVED, that the Combined Authority;

1. Agrees the officer appointments as Non-Executive Directors (Members) of the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive

16 COMBINED AUTHORITY MEETING DATES FOR 2015/16

Members were presented with a schedule for Combined Authority meetings for 2015/16.

It was noted that any future, currently unknown issues that require meeting dates to be changed would be addressed as timely as possible.

RESOLVED, that the Combined Authority

1. Agrees to the proposed schedule in principle
2. Instructs the SCR officers to liaise with district Member Services teams and personal assistants to make appropriate diary arrangements

17 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2014

RESOLVED:

1. That the minutes of the SCR Combined Authority Transport Committee held on 15th December be noted.

CHAIR