

Tees Valley Transport Committee Meeting took place using Teams 7th December, 2020

These Minutes are in draft form until approved at the next Transport Committee meeting and are therefore subject to amendments.

Attendees

Members

Councillor Heather Scott - Chair (Leader of Darlington Borough Council)
Councillor Andy Keir (Darlington Borough Council)
Councillor Wayne Davies (Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council)
Councillor Mike Smith (Stockton Borough Council)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher (Hartlepool Borough Council)
Councillor Ashley Waters (Middlesbrough Council)
Jerry Hopkinson (LEP Board)

Officers

Tom Bryant – Tees Valley Combined Authority
Dave Winstanley – Darlington Borough Council
Kieran Bostock – Hartlepool Borough Council
Craig Cowley – Middlesbrough Council
Simon Houldsworth – Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Andy Corcoran – Stockton Borough Council
Alan Weston – Tees Valley Combined Authority
Sally Henry – Tees Valley Combined Authority

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

As noted.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18TH DECEMBER 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th July 2020 were agreed as a true record.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

It was noted that 2 members of the Transport Committee were not in attendance and also that a further meeting of the Transport Committee will not be scheduled before the elections in May so it was agreed that a vice chair would not be elected.

RESOLVED THAT:-

- A Vice Chair will not be elected for the Transport Committee for this municipal year.

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PLAN UPDATE

Tom Bryant & Alan Weston provided the Transport Committee with a presentation which detailed progress on the Strategic Transport Plan.

The presentation provided updates on:-

Road

- New A19 Tees Crossing;
- A689 Corridor improvements scheme – the committee were advised that there is a consultation on the TVCA website;
- Darlington Northern Link Road – the committee were advised that there is a consultation on the TVCA website;
- Elwick A19;
- Future pipeline of highway improvements;
- Strategic maintenance schemes;
- Teesworks site transport study.

Bus

- Bus Partnership – the committee were advised that the governance structure is in place and that the groups have started to meet and progress the workstreams;
- Bus corridor improvements – the committee were advised that development work is underway to prioritise a Phase 1 investment package;
- Tees Flex - passenger numbers have continued to grow and feedback has been very positive;
- Passenger numbers and financial sustainability – there has been short-term financial support from Government through the Covid Bus Service Support Grant but it is not known how long this will continue;
- Concessionary fares – TVCA, in agreement with the Local Authorities, has been reimbursing at pre-covid levels. Discussions are on-going regarding the 2021/22 position.
- Home to school/college funding - TVCA were allocated £517,308 for the first half of the autumn term and a further £597,308 allocated for the second half of the term;
- Other funding streams – included £207,560 from the Supported Bus Fund and £100k from the Local Authority Covid-19 Bus Service Support Grant.

Cllr Davies commented that Tees Flex has been received very positively in East Cleveland, however, he would like to see it promoted further particularly amongst the elderly. Tom Bryant advised that a communications plan is in place, but Covid has made it difficult to actively promote the service. He agreed to reflect these comments in future communications activity.

Cllr Davies welcomed the grants from the DfT for additional bus routes, but queried what would happen when the funding runs out. Tom Bryant advised that the bus partnership provides an opportunity to explore opportunities.

Cycling & Walking

A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan has been developed and there is a programme of 5 phase one schemes currently in development – one in each Local Authority area.

Rail

- Darlington – funding has been secured to progress to Full Business Case. The submission to DfT is expected by Autumn 2021;
- Middlesbrough – full funding package secured and start on site programmed for Jan 2021;
- Hartlepool – feasibility work has commenced and funding needs to be secured for delivery phase;
- W12 Gauge – funding has been secured to progress the project to Full Business Case;
- Teesside International Airport – feasibility work for station redevelopment has commenced;
- Eaglescliffe – work is at an advanced stage for footbridge replacement and new western access;
- Billingham – preferred option has been selected and feasibility work is at an advanced stage;

- Delivery of improved local passenger rail services - there is limited potential to improve connectivity across Tees Valley until after the completion of the capacity improvements at Darlington. Delays to the introduction of some new services and new trains due to COVID-19. Continuing to lobby through Transport for the North & DfT;
- Delivery of improved national rail services - requirements for Northern Powerhouse Rail / HS2 are being integrated with Darlington Station project development. Middlesbrough Station project will facilitate improved national links
- Delivery of further infrastructure improvement - Working closely with Network Rail to support further rail infrastructure investment to address outstanding capacity constraints.
- Delivery of improved facilities for passengers - Station assessment work being carried out to develop a station improvement investment package to enhance the passenger experience and integrate travel between train, bus, cycling or walking.
- Delivery of improved freight infrastructure - Network Rail is at an early stage of looking at W12 Gauge Clearance northbound (Bowesfield to Ferryhill / Stillington Branch).

Cllr Davies requested a commitment from Tees Valley Combined Authority that it will look at investing in the East Cleveland rail project. Tom Bryant advised that the project is still at the concept stage and that there is a lot of work still to be done to develop the scheme to the point at which an investment decision could be sought. The project is not currently a priority in the Strategic Transport Plan and to develop the various business cases required would need significant investment.

Cllr Davies queried whether it is still a priority to bring the TransPennine Express (TPE) service into Saltburn and if so, what is the expected cost. Tom Bryant advised that this is still very much a priority for the Combined Authority, and it will seek to influence the decision-making process to ensure the case is made. He confirmed that it would require another train to deliver the service. Post-meeting note: TPE has confirmed that under the current operation, the additional operational cost would be over £10m.

Cllr Scott advised that as the East Cleveland project is not in the current Integrated Transport Programme, then the Committee cannot provide a commitment of support.

Decarbonisation & Technology.

- Urban Traffic Management & Control System – a phased system upgrade is being implemented;
- Electric vehicles – working with Energy Saving Trust and Local Authorities to appoint an investor/delivery partner to roll out EV infrastructure. A provider will be procured across the Tees Valley to ensure a coherent approach across the whole geography.

Cllr Keir queried the timeframe associated with the electric vehicle work. He was advised that it is intended to go out to procurement in early 2021 and the Combined Authority has been working closely with all the Local Authorities to discuss what the network might look like.

- Hydrogen - Tees Valley is to be the first hydrogen transport hub in the country. A masterplan has been commissioned and it will focus on the development of multi-modal operational trials, alongside the production, storage and distribution of green hydrogen.
- E-Scooters - Tees Valley was the first area in the country to launch e-scooters. There has been good user take up to date.

Social Opportunity

- Wheels to Work – pilot scheme has worked successfully. Cabinet recently agreed for the scheme to be extended for 3 years. Procurement will start shortly to appoint a provider. This is part of TVCA's support package to allow people to access employment.

Investment

The Integrated Transport Programme Budget 2019/20 – 2028/29 was presented.

RESOLVED THAT:-

- The details of the presentation be noted;
- The presentation be circulated to members after the meeting.

Cllr Scott wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed to schedule the next meeting of the Transport Committee after the elections.