



Minutes

Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Committee
Teesside Airport Business Suite, Teesside International Airport, Darlington DL2 1NJ
10am Tuesday 23rd January 2024

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

Attendees
Members
Councillor Stephen Harker - Chair (Leader of Darlington Borough Council)
Councillor Libby McCollom (Darlington Borough Council)
Councillor Sue Little (Hartlepool Borough Council)
Councillor Theo Furness (Middlesbrough Council)
Councillor Carl Quartermain (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)
Councillor Clare Gamble (Stockton Borough Council)
Apologies for Absence
None
Officers
Tom Bryant - TVCA
Alan Weston – TVCA
Guy Close - TVCA
Sally Henry - TVCA
Emily Campbell - TVCA
Dave Winstanley - Darlington Borough Council
Ant Hewitt – Darlington Borough Council
Kieron Bostock – Hartlepool Borough Council
Craig Cowley – Middlesbrough Council
Ross Asadi – Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Andy Corcoran – Stockton Borough Council
Kim Cain - Arriva
Steve Walker - Stagecoach

	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked members and officers for their attendance.</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Councillor Little declared an interest in her capacity as a transport manager at her husband's transport company.</p>
TC08/2023	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING & MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>The minutes of the Transport Committee held on 17th October were agreed as an accurate record.</p> <p>Matters arising:-</p> <p>Page 5 – Transport Committee members will be invited to attend meetings with officers for a briefing as and when required. This is to be agreed at an individual local authority level.</p> <p>Page 7 The Electric Vehicle Delivery Plan is in the final stages of drafting so will be circulated to members once finalised.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:-</p> <p>The minutes of the Transport Committee held on 17th October 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.</p>
TC09/2023	<p>OPERATOR UPDATE</p> <p>The Transport Committee received a presentation from Arriva & Stagecoach.</p> <p>Kim Cain advised Committee members that some Arriva services were no longer sustainable and had to be withdrawn in summer 2023. However, patronage across the network continues to grow confirming that the services that were withdrawn were not well used.</p> <p>She advised members that Arriva's plan is to ensure a sustainable network.</p> <p>She further advised that currently driver recruitment is not an issue.</p>

Steve Walker advised Committee members that Stagecoach operate in predominantly urban areas so while some changes have had to be made, they are minimal, and the network has been largely protected. Whilst the industry has struggled with a lack of drivers, the drivers at the Stagecoach Stockton depot have worked overtime, which has assisted with any service issues. Cancellations and delays on Stagecoach services have largely been because of congestion.

Transport Committee members were invited to comment and ask questions and these can be summarised as follows:-

Why has patronage not reached pre-pandemic numbers?

Members were advised that Covid has changed travel patterns as more people work from home and more people shop on-line rather than travel to town centres and supermarkets. As a result there has been a change in peak travel times and an increase in leisure travel. Furthermore, there has been an increase in young people travelling on bus. The patronage trend in the Tees Valley is consistent with the national picture. The £2 fare cap has had a limited impact on patronage increase. It was noted that similar trends are being seen with train travel.

Members were advised that the pandemic further encouraged operators to work more closely with each other to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

Do operators do studies to show how buses allow passengers to access employment in places like Teesworks and Teesside Park?

The operators do engage with large employers and communities and are willing to engage further. Teesside Park was cited as an example of where the operators have agreed to put on additional services on a commercial basis following engagement. The operators emphasised that they would always encourage businesses to speak to them.

Do you receive complaints from users about buses running late, not turning up or even leaving earlier than they are meant to and, if so, how do you use that information?

The operators stated that there is no excuse for a bus leaving early unless it is not possible to stop at a particular bus stop due to congestion or anti-social behaviour at the stop. Diversions on the highway hamper bus punctuality and where this is an issue, operators will amend the timetable.

Kim Cain advised members that Arriva services operate using timing points. There are officially registered stops along the route (highlighted in bold on timetables) at no more than 15 minute intervals for which buses are not able to leave early from. All other stops along the service are estimations. All Arriva complaints are dealt with by their customer services team. If a last bus fails to turn up, a passenger can get a taxi, keep the receipt and the cost will be reimbursed by the operator.

	<p>The Committee thanked Kim and Steve for attending the meeting and for providing the useful update.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:- Transport Committee noted the update.</p>
TC10/2023	<p>BUS SERVICE STANDARDS, COMPLAINTS PROCESS AND OPERATOR PERFORMANCE</p> <p>The Transport Committee received a report which provided an update on :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local bus service standards and process for complaining about a service. • Tees Valley local bus service performance. • Tees Flex operational data <p>RESOLVED THAT:- Transport Committee noted the content of the report.</p>
TC11/2023	<p>BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP / BSIP+) FUNDING</p> <p>The Committee were provided an update on Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)+ and BSIP funding.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:- Transport Committee noted the update.</p>
TC12/2023	<p>IMPROVING BUS SHELTERS, AT-STOP INFORMATION AND REAL TIME PASSENGER INFORMATION</p> <p>The Committee were provided an overview of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the role of the Connect Tees Valley Team; • proposals to enhance the customer experience for bus users, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ planned improvements to the bus shelters across the Tees Valley ○ planned improvements to the provision of at-stop timetables and information ○ planned upgrades to the Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) systems • a funding strategy to support delivery. <p>Transport Committee members were invited to comment and ask questions and these can be summarised as follows:-</p> <p><i>We need to see a better standard of bus shelter – cleaner and maintained regularly. An audit of all shelters should be conducted at the start of every year in order to better manage their maintenance.</i></p> <p>The Committee were advised that this will take place for the shelters included in the Clear Channel contract, with a programme of interventions to be developed following the audit. This will be delivered by Clear Channel as part of the contract. Further work</p>

is needed to consider a strategy for the local authority owned bus shelters. However, it was highlighted that there are revenue pressures on both local authorities and TVCA.

We need something in place if a shelter is reported as needing cleaning immediately.

This issue was noted and members should continue to report into the usual channels for now.

I would like it recording that Hartlepool would like any additional funding to be maintained by Hartlepool Borough Council.

Does the QR Code on the proposed bus stop information template feed into the live timetable? If so it would be good to have the same branding and App across the full Tees Valley.

Yes, it feeds into the live timetable and we will look to maximise the amount of digital information provided.

Officers noted that the proposal to improve at stop information and implement a Tees Valley wide process could be implemented using BSIP+ funding. However, TVCA does not have a sustainable long-term revenue stream.

TVCA officers highlighted that the revenue generated by the Clear Channel Contract could provide an opportunity to fund at stop information and other bus related activity in the longer term. However, it was recognised that each local authority needed to consider this proposal individually before Transport Committee could consider a way forward.

RESOLVED THAT the Transport Committee:

- i. Noted the content of the report, including the proposals to:
 - replace or refurbish bus shelters at 411 sites through a new commercial concession contract with Clear Channel;
 - investigate a mechanism and funding strategy to improve and maintain the local authority owned bus shelters;
 - put in place a new Tees Valley wide process for the production, printing and installation of at-stop information, noting BSIP+ only provides a short-term revenue stream;
 - deliver improvements to the Real Time Passenger Information system to be rolled out from January 2025

	<p>ii. Agreed that each local authority will consider the proposed funding strategy, specifically the use of the revenue from the bus shelter concession contract, to enable a further discussion at Transport Committee on next steps.</p>
TC13/2023	<p>BUS FRANCHISING</p> <p>Committee members were provided with a briefing note, which outlined what bus franchising is, what is needed to achieve franchising, as well as a comparison of the franchising and Enhanced Partnership Model.</p> <p>Members were advised that franchising gives a Local Transport Authority control, but with it comes significant financial risk. The statutory process to implement franchising is lengthy and costly. The limited competition in the Tees Valley bus market was also highlighted as a risk.</p> <p>There were no comments or questions.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:- The Committee noted the content of the report.</p>
TC14/2023	<p>TRANSPORT CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME – PROGRESS REPORT</p> <p>Committee were provided with an overview of progress made in the delivery of projects within the Integrated Transport Programme. The programme is comprised of mainly capital funding allocated to TVCA from the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) and first round City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS1), together with funding secured through competitive bidding.</p> <p>Members were invited to ask questions or comment.</p> <p><i>Are there any timescales for the Electric Vehicle Programme Phase 2?</i></p> <p>TVCA is currently in a live bidding process to secure additional funding that would enable the phase 2 roll-out to commence. There is currently no timescale for a decision.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee noted the content of the report and will continue to work closely with TVCA to ensure delivery of the programme within the required timeframes of the different funding streams.
TC15/2023	<p>CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENT ROUND 2 (CRSTS2)</p>

The Transport Committee were provided with a report which will be presented to TVCA's Cabinet and sets out the proposed transport programme to be delivered with the second round City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS2) published indicative allocation of £978m.

The Committee were advised funding is notionally allocated for the period 2027/28 to 2031/32, but the Government has said that there will be an opportunity for some of this funding to be brought forward into the last two years of CRSTS1 (2025/26 and 2026/27). The proposed CRSTS2 programme builds upon the current transport investment programme and will deliver on the ten-year Strategic Transport Plan (STP), which provides the framework for all transport investment by the Combined Authority, and was approved by Cabinet in 2020. The CRSTS2 programme has been developed to include interventions included in the STP, or to enable new strategic opportunities that have been identified since the publication of the STP. There has been engagement with, and input from, each of the Combined Authority's constituent local authorities in the development of the CRSTS2 programme.

The Committee were also advised that Cllr Harker will make a verbal representation at TVCA's Cabinet on the 26th January where he can report on the views of the Committee.

Members were invited to ask questions or comment.

Can the Committee be assured that Local Authorities are not going to need to match fund any of the projects?

TVCA recognises the financial position of the constituent authorities and there is no expectation that Local Authorities will need to provide match funding for any of the projects. Also, this does not preclude us from bidding for other competitive funding streams and we will continue to seek to secure additional funding.

The Transport Committee have not had the opportunity to make any meaningful input into the programme. While I appreciate we are not a decision making committee we would like to have had the opportunity to contribute further.

The money is welcome in this area. Let's hope this leads to a transformational change for the Tees Valley. I look forwards to working together to deliver the schemes as they come forwards.

I have concerns surrounding the governance of the programme and also I am uncertain how the programme has been developed in advance of receiving final guidance from Government.

A Strategic Transport Plan was agreed by Cabinet in 2020 and this provides the framework for all transport investment. The evidence base has been reviewed and independently challenged, which should provide assurance that the programme is

	<p>addressing the right challenges. A workshop was held in December where officers had an opportunity to feed into the programme.</p> <p>When we received the CRSTS1 allocation there were very stringent conditions on how it could be spent. As a result, The Mayor has had conversations with Government ministers about not having nationally imposed guidance for the second round of CRSTS2.</p> <p>If any project within the programme is not deliverable for any reason then it would be brought back to Cabinet. It is the intention that Cabinet will receive regular updates on the progress of the programme.</p> <p><i>I was disappointed that Portrack Relief Road was not included in the programme. I would like to see a commitment to that.</i></p> <p>The Portrack Relief Road scheme is well developed. The proposed funding allocation in the Cabinet report is to develop the A19 New Tees Crossing scheme. However, at the point when a delivery strategy is being considered, then consideration can also be given to the potential delivery of Portrack Relief Road.</p> <p><i>With inflation, are all these projects deliverable? And can they be delivered in the timeframe?</i></p> <p>The budget estimates are considered robust and include appropriate allowances for risk and inflation. So, at this stage the risk has been mitigated, but this will need to be closely monitored as the programme develops. If Cabinet agrees the programme, then it will give us the best chance of delivering the programme given the lead time for project development, particularly for the bigger schemes.</p> <p><i>I would have liked to see the Local Authority Highways Funding higher as it represents a cut to the budget for highway improvements. It also doesn't provide long-term funding certainty.</i></p> <p>TVCA officers responded that the working assumption is that the combined CRSTS2 and maintenance funding will provide the local authorities with a significant uplift in budget through to 2031/32. Furthermore, the CRSTS2 local authority allocation is flexible so can be spent on maintenance or improvements.</p> <p><i>What is the capital revenue split?</i></p> <p>The split is to be agreed with government, but it is expected to be weighted to capital. This will be a key element of project development, which should enable us to enter negotiations with government with a robust understanding of capital/revenue requirements.</p> <p><i>Where will the local contribution come from?</i></p>
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	<p>We need to understand the expectation from government. In CRSTS1 government has been flexible and the match funding has largely been secured from complementary developer contributions.</p> <p><i>I note TVCA is increasing the level of staffing resource. Will funding be available to support local authority resource?</i></p> <p>This will depend on the delivery strategy for each project. If a local authority leads/supports delivery of a project, then TVCA is willing to have a discussion around this as is the case on existing projects.</p> <p><i>The report references using CRSTS1 funding to cash-flow development. Which projects will be affected?</i></p> <p>All projects in the CRSTS1 programme will still be delivered. Further work is needed as the delivery programme for CRSTS1 becomes clearer to balance expenditure on delivery of the CRSTS1 programme with development of the CRSTS2 programme. Ultimately development costs will be charged to the CRSTS2 budget.</p> <p><i>Is there anywhere else in the world that has autonomous trackless trams?</i></p> <p>Yes – TVCA is also in discussion with the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles to support development of the proposal</p> <p><i>It is disappointing there is nothing dedicated to cycling in the programme.</i></p> <p>Active travel is a component of many of the projects and walking & cycling infrastructure will be considered as part of project development.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT the Committee noted the content of the report and that Cllr Harker will relay the Committees views to Cabinet.</p>
	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next scheduled meeting is in April 2024, which falls within the pre-election period. Committee were advised that it is proposed to move the meeting to 7th May 2024 which all members agreed.</p>