



North East Combined Authority, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 28th March, 2017 at 2.00 pm

Meeting to be held at Sunderland Civic Centre

www.northeastca.gov.uk

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA

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6. **Policy Review - Transport Related Barriers to Education, Employment and Training** 1 - 4

Response from North East Leadership Board to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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To All Members

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Leadership Board

Policy Review on transport related barriers to education, employment and training

Response from North East Leadership Board to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Dear Councillor Wright

On behalf of the North East Leadership Board, thank you and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the work you have undertaken on your Policy Review on transport related barriers to education, employment and training, and for presenting your findings today. You and your Committee and the officers involved are to be congratulated on undertaking this important piece of work and for gathering the evidence that you have collected.

I can now advise you that the North East Leadership Board's response to your Committee's recommendations is as follows:

1. Transport costs faced by young people: Your Committee's support for the TNEC Task & Finish group that has been established to investigate transport cost issues faced by young people, is welcomed, including the nomination of Councillor Eagle to be part of the group. The Transport Manifesto states that transport should be affordable and this theme is continued in the draft Transport Plan.
2. Ticketing system improvements: The Board is grateful to your Committee for correctly identifying this as an important issue. The North East Smart Travel Initiative (NESTI) has been progressing this issue successfully. As a result, Pop Pay As You Go can now be used as payment on the majority of services provided by the three major bus operators; on Metro (with a daily price cap); the Shields Ferry; and a range of small bus operators, including the Park and Ride service in Durham. Passengers with Pop Cards can thus use the same card for each leg of their journey without having to pay cash each time, although bus operators have not yet agreed to offer a price cap in the way that Metro does. Uptake of Pop Cards has increased sharply since Pop Pay As You Go Cards became available on-line. Again, the Transport Manifesto

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(in response to consultation replies) includes a theme that transport should be integrated and this too is expanded upon in the draft Transport Plan.

3. Access to work places and timetables to meet the needs of workers and the need for onward connections: The Board also notes the comments from the Call for Evidence about the difficulty of accessing employment locations which are away from the public transport network, and of getting to work at shift times. This point is also already reflected in the Transport Manifesto; one of its themes is that transport should be accessible in terms of running as near as possible to where people live and want to travel to. The draft Transport Plan deals with this in more detail.

4. Improvements to the walking and cycling network: The Board is likewise grateful to your Committee for raising this point. The Transport Manifesto has a specific section devoted to Walking and another one on Cycling. These two topics are extensively covered in the draft Transport Plan. In addition, the North East Combined Authority and all seven Councils are fully committed to promoting walking and cycling, including investing in walking and cycling infrastructure wherever possible. For example, North Tyneside Council's "Preston Grange (A191 Rake Lane) cycling and walking improvements" project sought to provide a convenient cycling and walking route which would support active travel to local schools, encourage cycling to work and improve links in North Tyneside's cycling and walking network. The project was funded from various sources including the Government's Linking Places Fund, regional Go Smarter School Links funding, and developer funding from a neighbouring sports pavilion development. Disappointingly, however, the region's "Access Fund" bid, intended to help maintain the NECA-wide Go Smarter programme, has been declined for funding by the Department for Transport. This will hamper our plans to promote sustainable travel alternatives for journeys to schools and workplaces and means that a number of existing successful initiatives may have to be ended due to lack of further funding. The implications of this announcement are currently being evaluated by officers and a report will be produced for the 20th April meeting of Transport North East Committee advising Members of the anticipated consequences for this region.

5. Potential disadvantage by being cut off from prosperity and opportunities: Finally, your Committee's comments about public transport's role in enabling access to essential facilities, including education, training and employment, without the need to use a car, are noted. The particular needs of isolated communities, especially rural areas, in this regard are also noted. As stated

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above, the Transport Manifesto includes a theme on the Accessibility of transport, and the section on bus services sets out the intention to have “good network coverage reflecting local needs including in rural areas”. Again, the question of how to ensure an effective public transport network is covered extensively in the draft Transport Plan, which includes sections on the needs of rural areas.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Watson".

Councillor Paul Watson
Chair, North East Leadership Board

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