

Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee Minute



Minute of Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee

24 February 2017

held in 131 St Vincent Street, Glasgow

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Minute of the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee held in the Lewis Room, 131 St Vincent Street, Glasgow on 24 February 2017

- Present** Councillors John Bruce (Chair), Kaye Harmon, Robert G MacIntyre, Bobby McDill and David Wilson.
- Attending** Valerie Davidson, Treasurer/Secretary; Valerie A Bowen, Senior Committee Officer and Martin Breen, Planning and Projects Officer.

1. Apologies

Apologies were submitted from Councillors Jacqueline Henry, Jonathan Findlay, Eileen Logan and Nan McFarlane.

2 Declaration of interest in terms of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000

The Joint Committee noted that there were no declarations of interest.

3. Minute of previous meeting

The minute of the meeting of 4 November 2016 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

4. Update on 2016/2017 scheme costs and proposed revenue budget for financial year 2017/2018

There was submitted a report (issued) of 8 February 2017 by the Treasurer

- (1) reminding members of the various changes which had been made to the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme to ensure the long term financial sustainability of the Scheme,
- (2) drawing members' attention to the following key points, which had arisen from the monitoring of the first 3 quarters of 2016/2017:-
 - (i) Subway services had been suspended for the period 2 July – 10 August 2016 in order to carry out planned essential engineering works;
 - (ii) works affecting all rail services in Q1 and Q2 were likely to have impacted on concession patronage;
 - (iii) that, taken together, the above patronage had led to an overall reduction in 1.6% on total travel for the period, which had resulted in a corresponding reduction in expenditure of approximately £12,300; and
 - (iv) the current forecast for year-end patronage levels had intimated a year on year percentage reduction of 0.8%;

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- (3) enclosing as appendices to the report
- (a) the revenue monitoring report as at 30 January 2016 (period 11) (Appendix 1);
 - (b) a proposed revenue budget for 2017/2018 of £4.173m, funded by £4.173m of Local Authority requisition (a decrease of 2% from 2016/2017) (Appendix 2); and
 - (c) a list of ferry routes and fares showing the level of discount on each route (Appendix 3);
- (4) informing members
- (a) that in relation to the current year, the revenue forecast outturn was anticipated to be £4.180m, an underspend of £0.149m, which related to a reduction in the amounts being reimbursed to Operators and savings generated through the further rollout of the Road Equivalent Tariff (RET);
 - (b) that as at 31 March 2016, the residual local scheme held reserves of £1.667m; and
 - (c) that based on the forecast outturn at period 11, there would be an addition to reserves of £0.078m in 2016/2017;
- (5) explaining that the proposed 2017/2018 budget reflected:
- forecast patronage in line with scheme trends;
 - revised operator reimbursement levels net of forecast fare increases, based on 2016/2017 actuals together with RET savings;
 - increased concessionary fares; and
 - the on-going pressures which faced local authorities who had to reduce their overall expenditure;
- (6) informing members that, as Concessionary fares had not been increased during the last three financial years, despite increases to standard operator fares which affected the level of re-imburement, it was proposed that basic concessionary fares should be increased in 2017/2018, with effect from 3 April 2017, as detailed in the table below:

Service	Current		2017/2018	
	Single	Return	Single	Return
Standard	£0.90	£1.30	£1.00	£1.40
Ferry over 10 nautical miles	£1.80	£2.60	£2.00	£2.80

- (7) recommending that the Joint Committee :
- (a) note the forecast outturn for 2016/2017;
 - (b) approve the increase in concessionary fares for 2017/2018; and

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- (c) approve the proposed budget of £4.173m for financial year 2017/18.

After discussion and having heard Mrs Davidson in further explanation and Mr Breen provide further context to the report by way of a presentation, the Joint Committee approved the recommendations at (7) above.

7. Update report on Concession Travel Card Unit Activities

There was submitted a report (issued) of 6 February 2017 by the Treasurer/Secretary,

- (1) reminding members that SPT's Travel Card Unit had supported the NEC Programme Office (NECPO), Transport Scotland and the 12 unitary local authorities in the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme in the rollout of the new national entitlement cards. This had involved confirming the addresses and entitlement of approximately 250,000 cardholders and the re-issue of replacement cards to ensure that cardholders were able to access the national bus scheme as well as the local scheme;
- (2) intimating that the replacement project had ensured that the vast majority of card holders cards had been replaced, thus allowing continued travel;
- (3) providing details of the number of incoming calls answered by the Unit for 2016/2017 to date (including comparison figures for previous years), together with information on NEC disabled applications/renewals and kiosk assistance during November and December; and
- (4) highlighting the fact that call volumes for periods 1- 10 in 2016/2017 had increased by 17%, notably higher than in 2015/2016.

After discussion and having heard Mrs Davidson in further explanation, the Joint Committee noted the report.

8. Scottish Government's intention to consult on potential changes to the National Concessionary Travel Scheme

There was submitted a report (issued) of 15 February 2017 by the Treasurer/Secretary,

- (1) intimating
 - (a) that recent media reports had quoted the Scottish Minister for Transport and the Islands, Humza Yousaf MSP, as saying that he would like to see the extension of the national concession scheme to include modern apprentices and those on jobs grants; and
 - (b) that the transport minister had stated also that the Government would have to look at the "long-term sustainability" of offering all those over 60 free national travel;
- (2) advising members that, following the announcement in December of Scotland's draft budget which had outlined a reduction of £10m in the national concessionary travel scheme budget for 2017/2018, media reports had suggested that changes to the scheme might also include an increase to the eligibility age for concessionary travel;

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- (3) reminding members
 - (a) that in April 2010, changes had been applied to the National Concessionary Travel Pass in England which had seen the eligibility age changed to mirror the state pension age and this had been applied in a phased manner between 2010 and 2015; and
 - (b) that the eligibility criteria for the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme currently mirrored that of the national concessionary travel scheme in Scotland; and
- (4) concluding that, whilst at this stage, no further details had been given regarding the Scottish Government's intention to consult, members were asked to be aware that any changes to the national scheme could impact on future eligibility criteria for the Strathclyde scheme.

After consideration and having heard that members would be kept informed as to the progress of any consultation as further information emerged, the Joint Committee noted the terms of the report.