

Minute of Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee

14 June 2013

held in Consort House, Glasgow

contact officers:

Valerie A Bowen phone: 0141 333 3130
Kirsten Clubb phone: 0141 333 3576

Minute of the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee held in Consort House, Glasgow on 14 June 2013

Present Councillors John Bruce, Tony Buchanan, Gilbert Davidson, Kaye Harmon, (Chair), Jackie Hendry, Eileen Logan, David McBride, Nan McFarlane, John Semple and David Wilson.

Attending Valerie Davidson, Treasurer/Secretary and Kirsten Clubb, Committee Clerk.

1. Apologies

Apologies were submitted from Councillors Bobby McDill and Alan Moir.

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

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The minute of the meeting of 25 January 2013 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

4. 2012/2013 Abstract of Accounts

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There was submitted and approved a report (issued) of 28 May 2013 by the Treasurer requesting that the Joint Committee agree that the draft abstract of accounts appended to the report for the financial year ending 31 March 2013 be submitted to the Controller of Audit.

5. Revenue monitoring report as at end of period 2, 25 May 2013

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There was submitted and noted a report (issued) of 28 May 2013 by the Treasurer

- (1) reminding members that the Joint Committee had approved a revenue budget for 2013/2014 of £4.558m;
- (2) appending the revenue monitoring report for the period to 25 May 2013 (period 2);
- (3) informing members that, based on the information available to date, the forecasted revenue outturn was anticipated to be on budget; and
- (4) advising members that all budget lines would continue to be closely monitored to ensure that the forecast was achieved.

6. Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme: Update on 2013/2014 changes and monitoring of performance and costs

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With reference to the minute of 25 January 2013 (page 1, paragraph 4) when the Joint Committee had

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- (1) considered a report on the implementation of the agreed changes to the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme for 2012/2013 to ensure the long term financial sustainability of the Scheme, and
- (2) agreed, inter alia, that the basic concessionary fare on all modes be increased by 10p single and 10p return during the next financial year at the effective fare implementation date for each mode,

there was submitted a report (issued) of 20 May 2013 by the Treasurer/Secretary,

- (a) appending
 - (i) a summary of key changes to the Scheme which had been undertaken since 2009; and
 - (ii) a history of the patronage and Scheme costs which illustrated that whilst demand for the Scheme remained strong, reimbursement costs had been reduced from a projection of over £5m per annum, to under £4m in the past two years;
- (b) informing members that officers had now progressed an increase to the basic concessionary fares by 10p on all modes other than the Subway, with changes being implemented in conjunction with the participating operators;
- (c) advising members that although the basic concessionary fares for rail and ferry had now been increased for 2013/2014 within the Strathclyde area, no comment could be made at this stage on the eventual overall impact on operator reimbursement; and
- (d) explaining
 - (i) that the increase to SPT Subway concessionary fares from 90p single and £1.30 return for 2013/14, had been scheduled for September 2013, in order to aid smooth transition to smartcard ticketing;
 - (ii) that any change to the standard Subway fares in 2013/14 would impact on the average Subway reimbursement per trip; and
 - (iii) that no comment could be made at this stage on the eventual overall impact on operator reimbursement.

After considerable discussion and having heard Mrs Davidson in answer to members' questions, the Joint Committee

- (A) agreed
 - (I) that a further update and monitoring report focusing on the impact of the 2013/2014 fares increase would be provided to the next meeting of the Joint Committee; and
 - (II) that further options would be explored in relation to the provision of concessionary travel for young persons resident on Scottish islands ; and
- (B) otherwise, noted the terms of the report.

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7. Concessionary Travel for eligible veterans

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With reference to the minute of 25 January 2013 (page 1, paragraph 4) when the Joint Committee had agreed that a report be prepared outlining what other organisations provided in relation to concessions for veterans, there was submitted and noted a report (issued) of 5 June 2013 by the Treasurer/Secretary

- (1) providing detail on concessionary travel benefits available for eligible veterans in Strathclyde, which included discounted rail, Subway and ferry travel and in addition free local bus travel provided nationally; and
- (2) explaining that the concessionary travel benefits available in Strathclyde were comparable with other parts of the UK, with the exception of London where travel benefits, available to all eligible UK veterans were significantly enhanced under a unique funding and operating environment.

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

- (a) agreed that the Secretary should write to the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) regarding an extension to their scheme to include eligible veterans across the UK; and
- (b) otherwise, noted the terms of the report.

8. Annual Internal Audit opinion and report 2012/2013

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There was submitted and noted a report (issued) of 23 May 2013 by the Treasurer/Secretary,

- (1) explaining that as Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee shared many common systems, a joint internal audit plan had been compiled for the two organisations and approved at the Partnership's Audit & Standards Committee on 23 March 2013;
- (2) informing members that the main objective of the plan was to provide an assurance service which assessed the effectiveness and efficiency of the Partnership and Joint Committee systems for internal control, including consultancy services and fraud related work;
- (3) appending all assurance engagements completed in 2012/2013, together with the levels of assurance assigned to each engagement; and
- (4) concluding that it was the opinion of the Audit and Assurance Manager that reasonable assurance could be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the Partnership and Joint Committee's framework of governance, risk management and control in the year 31 March 2013.

9. Status report on performance of Travel Card Unit

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There was submitted and noted a report (issued) of 28 May 2013 by the Treasurer,

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- (1) informing members of the performance of SPT's Travel Card Unit and on-going associated issues;
- (2) appending a table detailing National Entitlement Card cardholder volumes for the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme (SCTS) area as at 28 January 2013;
- (3) providing details of the number of incoming calls and calls answered by the unit for 2012/2013, including comparison figures for previous years; and
- (4) explaining
 - (a) that the SCTS criteria for the Disabled National Entitlement Card would change from October 2013, following the Scottish Governments' decision to use the Daily Living Component of the new Personal Independence Payment or Attendance Allowance; and
 - (b) that although that change would result in a small increase in the number of people eligible,. SPT officers would monitor the changes in cardholders and applications and provide feedback on any issues to the Joint Committee.