

Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme
Joint Committee Minute



Minute of Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee

6 October 2017

held in 131 St Vincent Street, Glasgow

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Minute of the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee held in 131 St Vincent Street, Glasgow on 6 October 2017

Present Councillors Martin Bartos (Chair), Ian Cochrane, Alan Lafferty, David Shearer and Andy Steel (substitute).

Attending Valerie Davidson, Treasurer/Secretary, Kirsten Gibson, Committee Support Officer, Martin Breen, Projects Support Officer and Elaine Walker, Financial Officer.

1. Interim Chair

In terms of Standing Order No.1.4.3, the Secretary took the chair at the commencement of the meeting pending appointment of a Chair.

2. Apologies

Apologies were submitted from Councillors Malcolm Balfour, Graham Hardie, Alan Moir, Jimmy Miller, Cathy McEwan, Jim Roberts and David Wilson.

3. 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.

4. Sederunt

The Secretary took a roll call for the purposes of the sederunt.

5. Appointment of Chair

Nominations were sought for the post of Chair.

Thereon, Councillor Ian Cochrane seconded by Councillor Andy Steel, moved that Councillor Martin Bartos be elected to the post of Chair and there being no further nominations, the Joint Committee agreed unanimously to appoint Councillor Bartos who took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

6. Minute of previous meeting

The minute of the meeting of 24 February 2017 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

7. Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee – briefing note

There was submitted and noted a briefing note (issued) by the Treasurer/Secretary

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- (1) outlining the terms, role and responsibility of the Joint Committee in relation to the policy and delivery of concessionary travel within the Strathclyde area; and
- (2) providing background information relating to the recent changes to the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme.

8. Revenue monitoring report as at 16 September 2017, Period 6

There was submitted and noted a report (issued) of 28 September 2017 by the Treasurer/Secretary,

- (1) reminding members that the Joint Committee had approved a revenue budget for 2017/2018 of £4.173m;
- (2) appending the revenue monitoring report for the period to 16 September 2017 (period 6);
- (3) informing members
 - (a) that, based on the information available to date, the forecasted revenue outturn was anticipated to be £4.070m which equated to a positive variance of £0.103m; and
 - (b) that the underspend against budget related mainly to savings generated following a fares increase applied in the first quarter of 2017; and
- (4) advising members that the budget would continue to be closely monitored to ensure that the forecasted position was achieved, noting that the service was demand led.

9. Annual Accounts 2016/2017

There was submitted and noted a report (issued) of 28 September 2017 by the Treasurer/Secretary appending the finalised and audited Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee financial statements for the financial year ending 31 March 2017.

10. 2016/2017 Annual Audit Report to members of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee and the Controller of Audit

There was submitted the External Audit Annual Report issued by Scott-Moncrieff, for the year ended 31 March 2017, which had been consolidated with the annual report for the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee and compiled in accordance with Audit Scotland's Code of Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and Ethical Standards.

After discussion and having heard Mrs Davidson

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- (1) in further explanation of the report which contained no recommendations for action; and
 - (2) commend Mr Wylie and his teams for their hard work and professionalism,
- the Joint committee noted the report.

11. Monitoring and performance costs for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 Q1 and7 Q2

There was submitted and noted a report (issued) of 26 September 2017 by the Treasurer/Secretary,

- (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) appending
 - (a) a timeline summary of Scheme changes to date; and
 - (b) details of Scheme patronage and reimbursement history;
- (3) informing members
 - (a) that although monitoring of the Scheme during 2016/2017 had shown no notable change in overall patronage totals from those in 2015/2016, reimbursement costs had increased slightly by 2%; and
 - (b) that although engineering works on rail and Subway, had impacted upon patronage and reimbursement totals for 2016/2017, overall patronage had shown that demand for concessionary travel remained strong with 4.82 million journeys being made;
- (4) advising members
 - (a) that although monitoring of the Scheme during the first two quarters of 2017/2018 had shown an increase of 6% in patronage and of 1% in reimbursement costs, the engineering works on both rail and Subway during 2016/2017 was reflected in the 2017/2018 increases when services were once again operating as normal; and
 - (b) that overall patronage figures for the first two quarters of 2017/2018 had shown demand for concessionary travel was increasing.
- (5) intimating
 - (a) that RET has now been fully introduced on all eligible ferry routes within the SCTS area since October 2015; and

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- (b) that whilst in previous years, the phased roll-out of RET had helped manage SCTS reimbursement to ferry operators, future reimbursement costs were now likely to increase as standard ferry fares increased; and
- (6) concluding
- (a) that although the SCTS fare increase applied in the first quarter of 2017 had helped manage Scheme costs, any future increases to standard fares on rail, Subway or ferry might result in increased reimbursement costs to the Scheme; and
 - (b) that officers would continue to consider ways in which the costs to the Scheme could be managed within budget projections.

12. Consultation on Free Bus Travel for Older and Disabled People and Modern Apprentices

There was submitted a report of 26 September 2017 (issued) by the Treasurer/Secretary

- (1) informing members that the Joint Committee had been invited to respond to the Scottish Government's Consultation on Free Bus Travel for Older and Disabled People and Modern Apprentices by 17 November 2017;
- (2) advising members that to ensure the scheme continued to remain affordable in the coming years the consultation had included the following proposed options relating to age eligibility:-
 - making no changes to the Scheme, leaving the eligibility rules as they are;
 - raising the age of eligibility for both men and women in one step from 60 to the (female) State Pension age at the time the change was made, thereafter keeping pace with further changes in the State Pension age, which was set to increase to 67 over the period 2026 to 2028; or
 - raising the age of eligibility for men and women progressively towards the State Pension age by annual increases of one year or half a year to the age of eligibility, taking longer to get there but lessening the impact on the expectations of individuals close to 60;
- (3) explaining that the consultation also included proposals for the introduction of free bus travel for those aged under 21 or on a Modern Apprenticeship Scheme and the introduction of disabled companion cards for children under the age of 5;
- (4) providing further detail on the key issues contained within the consultation, together with the key elements of the Joint Committee's proposed response; and
- (5) recommending that the Joint Committee approve the draft elements of the Joint Committee's response as detailed in the report.

After considerable discussion and having heard Mrs Davidson and Mr Breen in further explanation and in answer to members' questions, the Joint Committee approved the recommendation at (5) above, taken into account comments made by members.

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12. Travel Card Unit Update Performance and Key Issues

There was submitted and noted a report (issued) of 26 September 2017 by the Treasurer/Secretary

- (1) informing members of the current progress and performance of SPT's Travel Card Unit;
- (2) advising member
 - (a) that the migration of the NEC estate from OneScotland (CMD7) cards to mygovscot and SaltireCard (CMD2) had now been completed; and
 - (b) that some enquiries continued to be received from cardholders whose data was not matched and therefore did not receive a replacement card during the migration project;
- (3) providing details of the number of incoming calls answered by the Unit for 2017/2018 to date (including comparison figures for previous years);
- (4) highlighting the fact that call handling volumes had returned to manageable levels following a surge in queries towards the completion of the card migration programme; and
- (5) appending a table detailing National \Entitlement Card cardholder volumes for the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme (SCTS) area as at May 2017.

After discussion and having heard Mrs Davidson advise members to contact her direct if they wished to visit the Concessionary Travel Unit at Buchanan Bus Station, the committee noted the report.