

Minute of Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee

6 November 2015

held in Consort House, Glasgow

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Minute of the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee held in Consort House, Glasgow on 6 November 2015

Present Councillors Kaye Harmon (Chair), John Bruce, Tony Buchanan, Eileen Logan, Bobby McDill, Robert MacIntyre and John Wallace (substitute).

Attending Valerie Davidson, Treasurer/Secretary; Kirsten Clubb, Committee Support Officer; and Martin Breen, Planning and Projects Officer.

1. Apologies

Apologies were submitted from Councillors Jackie Henry, Alan Moir, Bobby McDill, Nan McFarlane and David Wilson.

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 13 February 2015 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

4. 2014/2015 Abstract of Accounts

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There was submitted and approved a report (issued) of 27 October 2015 by the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Support) recommending that the committee note the finalised abstract of the annual accounts for the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee for the financial year ending 31 March 2015 (appended to the report).

5. Revenue monitoring report as at end of period 7, 10 October 2015

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There was submitted and noted a report (issued) of 28 October 2015 by the Treasurer/Secretary

- (1) reminding members that the Joint Committee had approved a revenue budget for 2015/2016 of £4.482m;
- (2) appending the revenue monitoring report for the period to 10 October 2015 (period 7);
- (3) informing members that, based on the information available to date, the forecasted revenue outturn was anticipated to be £4.088m which equated to a positive variance of £393k;
- (4) explaining that the variance related to the reduction in the amounts being reimbursed to ferry operators and savings generated through the introduction of the Road Equivalent Tariff; and

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- (5) advising members that the budget would continue to be closely monitored to ensure that the forecasted underspend was achieved.

6. Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme: Update on monitoring and performance costs for 2015/2016 Q1 and Q2.

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There was submitted a report (issued) of 12 October 2015 by the Treasurer/Secretary

- (1) reminding members that it had been agreed that various changes which had been made to the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme to ensure the long term financial sustainability of the Scheme would be monitored and reported regularly to the Joint Committee,
- (2) informing members that monitoring of the Scheme for the first 2 quarters had shown that overall patronage levels had been maintained whilst there had been a reduction in reimbursement costs of 3%; and
- (3) appending
 - (a) a summary of key changes to the Scheme which had been undertaken since 2011; and
 - (b) a history of the patronage and Scheme costs;
- (4) outlining the further rollout from October 2015 of the Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) on the following ferry routes:-
 - Tarbert - Portavadie; Colintraive - Rhubodach; Wemyss Bay - Rothesay; Oban - Craignure; Oban - Lismore; Largs - Cumbrae; Lochaline – Fishnish; Tobermory - Kilchoan; Iona – Fionnphort;
- (5) explaining
 - (a) that the introduction of RET was likely to provide a reduction of scheme reimbursement costs on those ferry routes; and
 - (b) that officers would continue to monitor the impact of the introduction of the RET and update the committee as necessary in the future; and
- (6) advising members
 - (a) that although there had been no changes applied to the Scheme during 2014/2015, and whilst the fare change had helped broadly maintain reimbursement costs, SPT officers would continue to consider ways in which the costs of the Scheme could be managed in line with budget projections; and
 - (b) that any future increases to standard fares on rail, Subway or ferry might result in an increased reimbursement cost to the Scheme.

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

- (A) agreed that a further update and monitoring report informing members of the 2015/2016 year-end figures would be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee; and

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(B) otherwise noted the terms of the report.

7. **Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme: Scheme Guidance and Notes for Operators**

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With reference to the minute of the Joint Committee of 7 November 2014 (page 3, paragraph 10) when the committee had noted

- (1) revised Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Guidance and Notes for Operators effective from 1 January 2015 which
 - provided guidance and information relating to the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme (SCTS) for transport operators and eligible users who used the SCTS for rail, subway and ferry travel; and
 - covered a number of key areas relating to the SCTS including the administration of the Scheme, eligibility, extent of the Scheme area, information relating to travel (including rural zone travel), cardholder terms of use, operator responsibilities and reimbursement to operators; and
- (2) that although the scheme guidance refresh retained the same underlying principles of the Scheme and did not change any of the scheme rules, they would continue to be reviewed and amended as necessary,

there was submitted and approved a report (issued) of 18 October 2015 by the Treasurer/Secretary

- (a) appending comments received from a Community Council, together with SPT's response and recommendations; and
- (b) recommending that in light of the comments raised and the review of Scheme Guidance undertaken by officers, the following amendments be implemented with immediate effect:-
 - the removal of all references to National Rail Conditions of Carriage as detailed in the report; and
 - the removal of all references to the requirement for journeys to be continuous and include no break in journey.

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

- (i) noted the terms of the report; and
- (ii) approved the recommendation at (b) above.

8. **Regularity Audit of the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme**

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There was submitted a report (issued) of 26 October 2015 by the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Support)

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- (1) reminding members that the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme guidance and notes for operators had been updated and noted by the Joint Committee in November 2014, with an effective date of 1 January 2015;
- (2) detailing the findings of a regularity audit of the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme implementation;
- (3) explaining that the objective of this engagement was to review the arrangements of the updated SCTS following their implementation; and
- (4) advising members
 - (a) that some areas for improvement had been identified and seven recommendations had been agreed;
 - (b) that, key controls existed, and had been applied consistently and effectively in the majority of areas; and
 - (c) that reasonable assurance could be taken from those areas covered in the engagement.

After discussion and having heard Mrs Davidson in answer to members' questions, the committee noted the terms of the report; and

9. Appointment of Chair

The Chair advised members that this would be her last meeting as due to work commitments she was resigning from the post of Chair. She took the opportunity to thank members of the Joint Committee and officers of SPT for their hard work and the professionalism. Nominations were sought for the post of Chair. Thereon, Councillor Robert McDill, seconded by Councillor Robert MacIntyre moved that Councillor John Bruce be elected to the post of Chair and there being no further nominations, the Joint Committee agreed unanimously to appoint Councillor Bruce as Chair.