

Minute of Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee

15 February 2008

held in Consort House, Glasgow

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Minute of the meeting of the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme Joint Committee held in Glasgow on 15 February 2008

- Present** Councillors Robert Burrows (Chair), Ian Douglas (deputy); Jim McElhill, Duncan McIntyre, Alan Noon, Eddie Phillips and Alistair Watson.
- Apologies** Councillors John Campbell and Nan McFarlane.
- Attending** Valerie Davidson, Assistant Chief Executive Business Support/Treasurer.

1. Minute of previous meeting

The minute of the meeting of 6 September 2007 (issued) was submitted and approved as a correct record.

2. Vacation of Chair

At this point in the proceedings, Councillors Burrows and Phillips vacated the Chair and Councillor Watson took the Chair for the following item of business.

3. Councillors Remuneration Guidance

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There was submitted a report (issued) of 7 February 2008 by the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Support)/Treasurer

- (1) reminding members
 - (a) of the recent changes to the way in which elected members were remunerated as a result of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2004; and
 - (b) that guidance had been issued to all constituent authorities and joint committees on the application of the revised scheme;
- (2) advising members
 - (a) that the guidance stated that joint board convenors should receive remuneration which added to their basic salary equated to 75% of the Leader of a band A council, with Vice Chairs receiving 75% of that sum; and
 - (b) that the impact of this would be that the Chair of the Joint Committee be entitled to receive a total payment of £3,864 and Vice Chairs 75% of the Chair's remuneration (£2,898 per annum); and
- (3) informing members

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- (a) that the above guidance applied in the circumstances of the Chair and Vice Chair each receiving a basic salary; and
- (b) that where either or both received a senior salary then the higher salary applied and no further payment from the Joint Committee would be made.

After consideration, the committee

- (i) approved the payment of remuneration in respect of the Chair and Vice Chair positions in compliance with the guidance; and
- (ii) noted that the payment be applicable from the date of appointment.

4. Final 2005/06 scheme reimbursement

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There was submitted a report (issued) of 30 January 2008 by the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Support)/ Treasurer,

- (1) reminding members
 - (a) that 2005/06 was the final year of the wider Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme funded by the 12 constituent authorities and the Scottish Government, encompassing bus; and
 - (b) that the final claim related to this financial year was for a total of £7.692m;
- (2) informing members that the Scottish Government had now finalised closure of the scheme as it related to bus travel, including final reimbursement to Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme;
- (3) explaining that a final reimbursement of £7.230m had now been received from the Scottish Government which was £0.462m less than the final claim; and
- (4) recommending that in recognition of the finalisation of the scheme and receipt of the final reimbursement, that the balance of £0.462m be written out of the balance sheet, as the claim was now settled.

After consideration, the committee approved the recommendation at (4) above.

5. Revenue budget for financial year 2008/09

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There was submitted a report (issued) of 30 January 2008 by the Assistant Chief Executive(Business Support)/Treasurer,

- (1) informing members
 - (a) that the introduction of a Scotland-wide Bus Concession Scheme had a significant impact on the cost of the residual Strathclyde Scheme; and

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- (b) that with nearly two years of the residual scheme complete, the costs of the scheme had settled at just over £4m;
- (2) enclosing as an appendix to the report a proposed revenue budget for 2008/09 of £4.138m;
- (3) highlighting that the budget for 2008/09 included:-
 - a reduced administrative cost of supporting the residual scheme;
 - free travel on ferry services for ferry card holders;
 - ferry generation remaining at 40% for ordinary and companion concession passengers and 20% for 60 to 64 years old concession passengers; and
 - a fare of 40p per journey on the Subway and rail network within the terms of the scheme;
- (4) requesting that the committee consider the level of funding available from the 12 member authorities to support the residual scheme in conjunction with the level of reserves which were accumulated in support of the previous scheme;
- (5) recommending
 - (a) that reserves be utilised over the next financial period 2008/09 to 2010/11 to minimise the contribution from member authorities; and
 - (b) that in 2008/09 a draw of £1.612m be made from reserves resulting in a contribution of £2.526m across the 12 authorities; and
- (6) highlighting that constituent authorities were aware that drawing on the scheme reserves was not sustainable on an ongoing basis.

After consideration, the committee approved the recommendation at (5) above.

6. Revenue monitoring as at end of period 10 – 2007/08

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There was submitted a report (issued) of 30 January 2008 by the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Support)/Treasurer,

- (1) reminding members that the committee had approved a revenue budget for 2007/08 of £4.048m;
- (2) appending the revenue monitoring report for the period to 5 January 2008 (period 10); and
- (3) informing members that, based on the information available to date, an overspend of £100,000 was forecast at this stage which would be contained within the available resources.

After consideration the committee noted the terms of the report.

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7. Progress report on Internal Audit Plan 2007/08

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There was submitted a report (issued) of 29 January 2008 by the Assistant Chief Executive(Business Support)/Treasurer,

- (1) outlining the background to the audit process for the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme;
- (2) appending
 - (a) an internal audit plan for 2007/08 which had been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the United Kingdom issued in 2006 by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy;
 - (b) the status of each planned audit assignment; and
 - (c) a summary report and completed action plan on a review of the system for reimbursing operators;
- (3) explaining that copies of the full report for that review and other audit reviews completed during the current financial year were available from the Chief Internal Auditor; and
- (4) highlighting that progress in the delivery of the annual plan for 2007/08 was on target and would ensure that the anticipated annual internal audit coverage would be achieved.

After consideration, the committee

- (i) noted the terms of the report; and
- (ii) endorsed the planned actions contained in the report at 2(c) above.

8. Status report on the National Free Bus Travel Scheme for Older and Disabled People and the work of the Travel Card Unit at SPT

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With reference to the minute of the Joint Committee of 7 September 2007 (page 2, paragraph 6) when that committee had considered a report providing an update on the second year of the Scottish Government's National Free Bus Travel Scheme for Elderly and Disabled People launched in April 2006, there was submitted report (issued) of 29 January 2008 by the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Support)/Treasurer,

- (1) detailing the work of SPT's Travel Card Unit (TCU) in administering the issue of disabled cards and replacement cards for the elderly on behalf of the councils within the scheme area;
- (2) enclosing as an appendix to the report a breakdown of the types of card issued in each council area;
- (3) providing details on future proposals

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- (a) for the transfer of the administration of the issue of travel cards to constituent authorities; and
- (b) for wider use of the National Entitlement Cards;
- (4) explaining
 - (a) that although there still remained uncertainties on how quickly councils could develop smartcards and how the Travel Card Unit would fit into those plans, the general consensus was that the TCU delivered a good value for money service and one that most of the councils were not resourced to cover at present; and
 - (b) that the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme and the TCU remained a good example of a shared service and one that the Scottish Government were keen to promote under its efficient government initiative;
- (5) highlighting
 - (a) that it was SPT's intention to continue to work in partnership with councils to ensure that the citizens who were entitled to concessionary travel received it, whilst protecting the scheme from misuse; and
 - (b) that SPT would continue to cooperate fully with front line council staff to support and guide them until such times as the councils determine otherwise; and
- (6) outlining proposals for the future maintenance and development of the TCU.

After discussion, the committee

- (i) noted the terms of the report; and
- (ii) approved the maintenance and development of the TCU as detailed in the report.

9. Request to extend the 10 mile concession boundary

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There was submitted report (issued) of 16 January 2008 by the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Support)/Treasurer,

- (1) informing members
 - (a) that the current concession scheme allowed and funded a 40p flat fare for journeys within a 10 mile distance on the rail network; and
 - (b) that outwith that distance and within the Strathclyde area, the rail fare for concession cardholders was set at half price, with First ScotRail being reimbursed for concession travel on that basis, with the funding from the 12 councils; and
- (2) providing details of a recent request to extend the 10 mile rail concession boundary to allow the Bishopton - Glasgow route to be travelled at the concession fare.

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After discussion, and having heard Mrs Davidson in answer to members' questions, the committee

- (i) noted the terms of the report; and
- (ii) agreed that before any decision could be made, an impact assessment be undertaken and a report submitted to a future meeting of the committee with the results.