

Transport Committee

13 December 2018

Present: Councillor L Robinson, Chair
Councillor G Friel, Deputy Chair

Councillors R Abbey, D Baum, S Foulkes, H Howard,
J Jackson, P McKinley, N Nicholas, M O'Mara OBE,
G Pearl, G Philbin, K Roberts, J Stockton, C Rowe,
H Thompson, J Williams and F Wynn

64. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Dodd, Paul Hayes, Susan Murphy and Anthony Lavelle.

The Chair informed the Committee that Councillor Norman Keats had stepped down from the Transport Committee with immediate effect and on behalf of the Committee thanked him for his attendance, commitment and support to the Transport Committee.

The Chair also informed the Committee that Councillor Dot Johnson had been nominated to take Councillor Keats place on the Committee and subject to the approval of the Combined Authority would join the Committee at its next meeting on 10 January 2019.

65. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Steve Foulkes declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 9 – Petitions and Statements by virtue of being one of the petitioners.

66. **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Transport Committee held on 1 November 2018, be approved as a correct record.

67. **Presentation - Merseyrail Update**

The Committee received a presentation from Mr Andy Heath, Managing Director of Merseyrail.

The presentation focussed on the following: -

- Delivering for passengers since 2003;
- Award winning network;
- New State of the Art Trains;
- Journey Times;
- Rolling Stock Design;
- Operational Readiness;
- Platform Upgrade Work;
- Industrial Relations;
- Future Ticketing;
- Local Communities;
- Rail Industry Challenges; and
- The Williams Review.

Members thanked Merseyrail for a number of recent successes including the Giants weekend and the work done on the Wirral Slab-tracks and Liverpool Lime Street and also expressed their appreciation for the staff at Merseyrail for dealing with the passengers during the difficult period and all the recent changes.

Members enquired about the upgrade to the platforms and the possibility of increasing the number of short-forms during peak hours with the pending new trains and if anything could be done to reduce the single and return fares across the network.

Andy Heath informed the meeting that there were a number of challenges with the current fleet and getting the remaining trains through the Train Reliability Improvement Programme (TRIP) to increase and improve reliability, mainly due to the age of the trains. Merseyrail had collaborated with Stadler to introduce the TRIP programme in order to improve reliability. He also stated that the network had the cheapest rail-fares in the country and discussions were taking place nationally about fares and fare structures including the single and zonal fares.

Members discussed the reduction in fares for young people and ensuring rail tickets be reduced in the New Year for up to 19 year olds and enquired about how "fare evasion" was being tackled.

Sarah Sperring, Head of Marketing for Merseyrail informed the Committee that there had been an increase in under 18s using the network and with the introduction of the identification scheme to improve usage. She also stated

that the network was looking at reducing the paper tickets in the future and that a scheme would be introduced in 2019 for the 16-26 age range.

Andy Heath commented that a survey had recently been commissioned involving 40,000 passengers which highlighted that 4% of passengers already use ticketless travel that contributes to the perception that passengers are evading fares. However, staff have been instructed across all the stations to keep the gates closed and to check tickets. He assured the Committee that lots of processes were in place to manage gates and tickets, but there were particular challenges in certain stations e.g. Central Station in the City Centre.

Members enquired about smart and ticketless ticketing and the focus of Merseyrail relating to tickets in the future and if any improvements were being made for the autumn and winter to keep the lines cleared.

Andy Heath informed the Committee that moving to smart ticketing would be expensive and challenging, not just for Merseyrail, but the entire network rail and that moving to ticketless would be done in two phases in 2020 and 2022 with a commitment and more collaborative approach with Transport for the North and Merseytravel. He also commented that Merseyrail had a multi-purpose vehicle that works for 12 weeks between October and December normally once a day jet washing rail heads and applying a modifier. Trains were also fitted with sanders and sand boxes which were checked regularly to ensure the lines were clear and the sand boxes were filled.

Members enquired about trains for the future relating to the environment and the climate and bidding processes for hydrogen and whether Merseyrail were prepared for any flooding on the lines as a result of heavy rainfall.

Andy Heath informed the Committee that the new trains would have regenerative braking which would reduce carbon footprint and that Merseyrail had an environmental code that all staff adhered to. He further stated that station lighting would be replaced with LED lighting which would be funded by Network Rail and there were a number of other initiatives that Merseyrail were involved in which would be shared with the Committee. He also stated that there was already good drainage on the network and officers were aware of areas that were likely to flood with heavy rainfall.

The Chair enquired about proper bus and train integration and the views of Merseyrail relating to franchising and the different models for bus operators in the City Region.

Andy Heath informed the Committee that “door to door” journeys were a challenge with trying to integrate the transport system across the region and planning journeys. The trains were mainly on time, but it was a challenge for the bus network to be integrated into the rail network given all the logistical issues, but discussions were being held. He commented that he welcomed

any ideas to improve the transport links and integration across the region and that franchising was a good idea.

The Chair enquired about the festive period and late night services and whether it was being looked at to be implemented again in the future.

Andy Heath stated that the Boxing Day services from a commercial perspective was not profitable, but recognised the value to the City Region and that it was being looked at for the future, but would not be repeated this year due to works. He also stated that late night trains were a bit more difficult and had more issues to deal with including the risk to the travelling public and possibly one boarding point and regulating who got on the train or not, but again it was not commercially profitable.

The Committee noted the presentation and thanked Andy Heath and Sarah Sperring for attending the meeting and wished Merseyrail and its staff a Merry Christmas.

68. **Quarter 2 Merseytravel Financial Monitoring and Corporate Plan Performance Report 2018/19**

The Committee considered a report from Mick Noone (Director of Integrated Transport) and Sarah Johnston (Head of Finance) in relation to an overview of financial corporate and operational performance of Merseytravel for Q2 (July to September) 2018/19.

Sarah Johnston explained the financial performance and highlighted the budget that was approved together with the operation of the Transport services and the reserves.

Mick Noone explained the key performance indicators and highlighted the revised outputs and priorities and the actions currently underway to improve the priorities.

Members enquired about the further demands to be placed on the reserves in accordance to paragraph 4.15.

John Fogarty, Director of Corporate Services informed the Committee that there were some outstanding legal land issues to be resolved and there was a degree of exposure, which could not be quantified and the financial position could be adversely affected in major schemes.

Members enquired about the bus hub objections referred to in Priority 3, paragraph 3d and the cycling data in KPI 2.

Mick Noone informed the Committee that he would confirm what the objections were and that cycling data was a real challenge to acquire as the

cycling counters were not reliable and improvements were being made to collecting cycling data.

Members enquired about the Newton Le Willows station and where things were up to.

Shane Fitzpatrick, Senior Head of Service Operations informed the Committee that Newton Le Willows would be having a “soft opening” with a ticket office in the first/second week of January, having had some recent issues.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and any further information be provided upon request as appropriate.

69. **Multi-Operator Ticketing Scheme - Product and Pricing Update and Proposals**

The Committee considered a report from Gary Evans relating to specific scheme arrangements, product and price changes for all Merseytravel pre-paid tickets and highlighted the following: -

- The Merseytravel Multi-Operator Ticketing Scheme is owned by the Combined Authority and administered by Merseytravel;
- It is structured as a voluntary partnership under powers granted by the Transport Act 2000;
- The scheme ensures that there is a legal local ticketing offer that can be used on more than one operator and more than one mode in the interest of providing customers with affordable transport tickets;
- All proposed increases were on average within the RPI increase of 3.2% subject to “rounding down” rules; and
- The report does not relate to the Solo Bus only pre-paid ticket product.

The Chair commented that price increases were always a challenge and over the last 10 years it has increased with the rate of inflation. However, it has always been better value in comparison to other CA's and cities around the country.

RESOLVED that the Transport Committee approves that the annual price recommendations for the Merseytravel Multi-Operator Ticketing Scheme products, to be fully implemented by the 3 January 2019 (or August 2019 for Term time tickets) for Trio, Railpass and Saveaway tickets as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

70. **Transforming Cities Fund Update**

The Committee considered a report from Mick Noone, Director of Integrated Transport that provided an update on the progress of the Transforming Cities Fund programme, following the first commissioning round launched in July 2018.

Mick Noone provided the Committee with an update and highlighted the following: -

- Paragraph 1.3 made reference to the Lead Portfolio Officer for Transport and Air Quality, but it should correctly read “ Lead Portfolio Member for Transport and Air Quality;
- The three proposals agreed for commissioning include: -
 - Funding for the launch of a smart ticketing portal and new ticketing media as a successor to “Walrus”;
 - Support for a new, low carbon and low emission vessel (s) to replace the ageing Mersey Ferries; and
 - Match funding in respect of the priority European Regional Development Fund Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) programme of green travel routes for cyclists.
- £500k of development funding has been made available in the current financial year to allow Merseytravel to accelerate scheme development work on behalf of the Liverpool City Region and four bids have been received: -
 - Transforming Commuter Bus Corridors
 - A Liverpool City Region Cycle and Walking Network
 - Liverpool City Region Mass Transit Options; and
 - Hydrogen fuelling options to promote take-up of alternative fuels
- Other initiatives to be explored include: -
 - A surface or underground access system linking Liverpool South Parkway to Liverpool John Lennon Airport.
 - The potential devolution of Merseyrail Infrastructure.
 - Introducing digital railway technology on the Merseyrail network to improve journey time reliability, safety and public information.
 - Urban Traffic Control Technology to improve journey time reliability and punctuality whilst at the same time reducing delays and air pollution.

Members enquired if a scrappage scheme, electric charging pods and drone delivery could be looked at and incorporated into one of the proposed schemes given that electric vehicles and reducing carbon and emissions are being considered.

Mick Noone informed the Committee that the entire purpose of report was to highlight the transformative nature of the proposed schemes and nothing should be ignored. By definition the schemes have to be transforming and this would be taken into account.

Members commented that to spend £172m in four years would be difficult and it was not about taking decisions quickly, but rather ensuring the democratic processes and decision making were monitored and that the Committee were kept informed of the decisions either before it was made or after it was taken.

Mick Noone informed the Committee that though delegated authority was being sought for the Director of Policy and Commissioning and the Lead Portfolio Member for Transport and Air Quality, the decisions and approval of schemes would only be taken by the Combined Authority.

Members suggested that the schemes should be transformational, creative and innovative, with opportunities to alleviate any revenue implications on the budget.

The Chair recommended that a briefing session be arranged in the New Year to discuss and propose schemes for the Transforming Cities Fund.

RESOLVED that the Transport Committee: -

- a) Notes the progress to date with the development of the first tranche of Transforming Cities Funding;
- b) Recommends to the Combined Authority at its next meeting on the 11th January 2019 that commissioned “calls” for the Transforming Cities Funding be delegated to the Director of Policy and Strategy Commissioning in conjunction with the lead Portfolio Member for Transport and Air Quality in the interests of effectiveness and efficiency;
- c) Agrees that further updates on future commissioning rounds and on emerging schemes and priorities are provided at regular intervals; and
- d) A Member Briefing Session be arranged in the New Year to discuss and propose schemes for the Transforming Cities Fund.

71. **Public Question Time**

The Committee received two public questions from Mr Andrew Wennell who was in attendance and was provided an opportunity to ask his questions to the Committee as follows: -

Question 1

If you are on things like DLA or PIP as it is known these days on the higher rate for mobility and you may have other disabilities like myself who is registered blind you might not be able to apply for the Mersey Tunnel discount because you might not always be driven in the same vehicle. This is not a single occurrence it happens with other locations on a similar schemes

(like Mersey Gateway bridge) where they say you can only change the vehicle registration on the account once every 6 months. So to me it feels like yes we tick all the other boxes to apply for the exemption but now yes there is another barrier to cross. What can both Merseytravel and Halton Council do in relation to this issue?

The Chair thanked Mr Wennell for submitted his question and for attending the meeting and informed him that a formal response would be provided within 10 working days.

Question 1

Over the Christmas and New Year period some bus operators are running a Saturday bus service on Thursday 27th & Friday 28th December 2018. To my knowledge if you run a Saturday service the rules & regulations should go with it like using your concessionary travel pass all day long. Can this be confirmed that this is true or is it still only valid after 09:30 like during the normal week?

The Chair thanked Mr Wennell for submitted his question and for attending the meeting and informed him that a formal response would be provided within 10 working days.

72. **Petitions and Statements**

Petition submitted by Councillor Steve Foulkes

The Chair advised the Committee that a petition with approximately 198 signatures has been submitted by Councillor Steve Foulkes of Wirral Metropolitan Council on behalf of residents in response to the comments and heartfelt needs of his community as follows: -

“Whilst the constituents are thankful to the immediate response to the Avon Bus crisis the remedy still leaves them disappointed. The 492/495 still does not run in the evening or on a Sunday leaving large areas isolated in Noctorum and beyond. The design of the Estate means most of the elderly accommodation is the furthest away from the 437-route mentioned in correspondence from you. Finally Sunday is not a special day anymore in Retail and the care industry where many of our constituents earn their living. Evenings now leave them unable to engage in Leisure, Work and Social activities. Under the current regulations we have not even been told what the cost of subsidy would be to make this a viable service and that this part of the service was never offered for tender. We would ask you to do all in your power to alleviate this awful position for our Residents.”

The Chair confirmed that a formal written response would be provided to the petitioner within 10 working days following the meeting.

73. **Any Other Urgent Business Approved by the Chair**

There was no other urgent business.

CHAIR

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