

The Region's Transport Authority

Meeting: West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority

Subject: Minutes

Date: Monday 12 April 2010 at 11:00am

PRESENT: Councillors Clarke (Chairman), Mills (Vice-Chairman) Adams, Alden, Choudhry, Cotterill, Crookes, Davis, Hartley, Horton, Hughes, Hunt, Huxtable, Lal, Lines, Linnecor, Longhi, McNicholas, Mattu, Richards, Sidhu, Ward, Wilkes and Williams.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Hughes (Independent Member and Chairman - Standards Committee)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cotterill, Jones and Pears.

277/09 Chairman's Remarks

(a) Expression of Thanks

The Chairman expressed his personal thanks to members of the Authority and all Centro staff for the commitment and effort they had demonstrated during the past year and the achievements they had collectively made.

278/09 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2010 were confirmed, and signed by the Chairman, as a correct record.

279/09 Matters Arising

(a) Network Rail - Tipton Station (minute no. 221(a)/09)

Councillor Horton noted that he had not yet received a copy of a briefing note from the former Rail and Rapid Transit Director providing further information on plans for extending platforms at railway stations. The Chief Executive reported that he understood that this briefing note had been issued, but would ensure that a further copy was sent out to Councillor Horton later that day.

(b) Snow Hill Second Access Update (minute no. 221(b)/09)

Councillor Horton noted that a members' site visit to the Snow Hill Second Access scheme had not yet been undertaken. The Chairman confirmed that he would be in a position to announce the date of the members' site visit at the Authority's AGM to be held on 28 June.

(c) Integrated Public Transport Prospectus (minute no. 228/09)

Councillor Horton noted that further detailed discussion would be useful regarding the nine 'absolute priorities' identified to support national, regional and sub-regional imperatives within the Integrated Public Transport Prospectus. The Chairman agreed with this, and suggested that these discussions would be held after the Authority's AGM on 28 June.

(d) Walsall - Wolverhampton Railway Service (minute no. 234/09)

Councillor Rowley noted a recent story in the Express & Star newspaper suggesting that the Walsall - Wolverhampton railway service was due to commence within the next few months. The Chairman considered that this news story was misleading, as he had not suggested that the service would be resumed within such a short time frame.

Councillor Huxtable reported that Centro was speaking with train operating companies, particularly London Midland, with a view to the service being restarted. He would ensure that Councillor Horton was invited to attend the next quarterly meeting held between Centro and London Midland, where the issue would be discussed again.

280/09 Correspondence/Petitions

(a) Councillor Hartley - Bus Service no. 126

Councillor Hartley submitted a petition regarding bus service no. 126 requesting that National Express West Midlands re-routed this service to use Upper Dean Street to serve the markets area. The petition had previously been submitted to a meeting of Birmingham City Council. Councillor Hartley also noted that a similar petition had been submitted regarding bus service no. 66 and the changes to that route, which meant that it also no longer served the markets area of the city.

RESOLVED that the petition be noted and referred to National Express West Midlands for their consideration and response.

281/09 Pension Fund Committee

The minutes of the Pension Fund Committee held on 15 March 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that there being no matters requiring the approval of the Authority, the minutes of the Pension Fund Committee held on 15 March 2010 be noted.

282/09 Capital Projects Committee

The minutes of the Capital Projects Committee held on 8 March 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that there being no matters requiring the approval of the Authority, the minutes of the Capital Projects Committee held on 8 March 2010 be noted.

283/09 Performance Monitoring and Business Improvement Committee

The minutes of the Performance Monitoring and Business Improvement Committee held on 8 March 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that there being no matters requiring the approval of the Authority, the minutes of the Performance Monitoring and Business Improvement Committee held on 8 March 2010 be noted.

284/09 Standards Committee

The minutes of the Standards Committee held on 15 March 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that there being no matters requiring the approval of the Authority, the minutes of the Standards Committee held on 15 March 2010 be noted.

285/09 Transport Strategy Committee

The minutes of the Transport Strategy Committee held on 22 March 2010 were submitted.

In respect of minute no. 268/09 ('Bus Shelter Appeals Sub-Committee'), Councillor Hughes explained that a procedure for public speaking at meetings was already in place which was enabling members of the public to satisfactorily express their concerns regarding the siting of bus shelters.

RESOLVED that there being no matters requiring the approval of the Authority, the minutes of the Transport Strategy Committee held on 22 March 2010 be noted.

286/09 Capital Programme 2010/11

The Authority considered a report of the Finance and Planning Director seeking approval of the committed 2010/11 Capital Programme and to agree the process for prioritisation for the remainder of the programme.

The draft 2010/11 Capital Programme was submitted to the meeting of Transport Strategy Committee on 22 March 2010. Following comments from members to a number of projects within the programme, it was agreed to resubmit the Capital Programme to this meeting for approval.

The schemes included within the draft Capital Programme had been developed in line with the classification of the Business Planning priorities, which would help deliver Centro's world class public transport agenda.

The report included details of a supplementary Capital Programme in order to utilise available funding over and above that already committed. The schemes that could be funded as part of this supplementary capital programme would be reviewed and prioritised in accordance with the methodology outlined within the Gateway Review Process. During the course of this review, relevant Lead Members would be consulted, and the outcome of the review would be submitted to the next meeting of the Transport Strategy Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Horton, the Finance and Planning Director confirmed that the 'Failover West Bromwich' project related to an ICT backup system at West Bromwich bus station that would be used in the event of a major systems failure at Centro House.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the major schemes work previously approved by the Authority be noted;
- (2) the committed element of the Capital Programme be approved;
- (3) the process for prioritising the Supplementary Capital Programme be noted; and
- (4) a further report be submitted to the next meeting of the Transport Strategy Committee on the outcome of the prioritisation review.

287/09 Senior Management and Operational Arrangements Review

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Executive on the outcome of the review of senior management and operational arrangements, including enhanced arrangements for the Executive Board, and their alignment with ITA objectives and priorities.

The Chief Executive reported that he had previously committed to undertaking regular reviews of Centro's organisation and operational arrangements to ensure that it was fit for purpose and was aligned with the delivery of the Authority's objectives and priorities. The current senior management structure was approved by the Authority at its meeting on 11 May 2007.

The implications of the Local Transport Act, green agenda and the challenging economic environment meant that there were a number of new and different issues for Centro, reflected in the Authority's objectives and priorities. It was considered that a new structure would fit better with the changes in Centro's environment and enable the organisation to operate more effectively.

Councillor Sidhu enquired as to whether it would be more appropriate for all of Centro's Directors to be members of the Executive Board. The Chief Executive explained the dividing line of responsibility between the Executive and Operating boards, which would not exist if the membership of both groups was the same. However, the Passenger Services Director's membership of the Executive Board would ensure that it had a passenger focus, and would enable the Non-Executive Directors to directly challenge passenger-related matters. However, this would be kept under review to ensure it was the most appropriate arrangement.

Councillor Hunt sought clarification over Centro's second-tier office structure, particularly as these officers often met with Lead Members in respect of their portfolio responsibilities. The Chief Executive confirmed that it was a key responsibility of these officers to ensure that all members received the support and advice that they needed, and he would circulate a list of Lead Members and their corresponding Lead Officer contacts.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the need for, and purpose of, the revised senior level organisation structure be noted;
- (2) the revised organisation structure be agreed, and in particular:
 - (i) the deletion of the posts of Bus & Highways Director and Rail & Rapid Transit Director; and
 - (ii) the establishment of the post of Passenger Services Director;
- (3) the appointment of the Passenger Services Director to the Executive Board be approved;
- (4) the vacant role of Non-Executive Director be advertised, and a Member Working Group be set up to decide on the appointment; and
- (5) it be noted that the proposals in the report, and subsequent detailed organisation changes, would result in a cost saving in line with Gershon efficiencies (ie. 3%).

288/09 Approval for the Publication of the 2010/11 Travel Concession Reimbursement Arrangements

The Authority considered a joint report of the Bus & Highways Director and Finance & Planning Director seeking approval for publication of the Travel Concessions Reimbursement Arrangements for the period 1 April 2010 - 31 March 2011.

Centro published its last concessionary fares scheme on 1 April 2008. Since then, the Department for Transport had updated its reimbursement arrangements and it had been necessary to incorporate these changes into a revised scheme. The changes related to either administrative or reimbursement amendments, and the report provide further details on each of the changes that were being made.

In order to gain operator approval, Centro published a draft version of the 2010/11 concessionary fares scheme for operator consultation in November 2009. A seminar was also held in February 2010 to give operators the opportunity to comment on the proposals. Following operator feedback, a number of changes were made to the concessionary fares scheme to provide clarity and to respond to the concerns of operators.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the changes from the previous Concessionary Fare Scheme be noted;
- (2) the publication of the Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007) Travel Concession Reimbursement Arrangements be approved; and
- (3) the publication of the Transport Act 1985 Travel Concession Scheme be approved.

289/09 Stourbridge Interchange

The Authority considered a report of the Finance and Planning Director seeking approval of the proposals for the Stourbridge Interchange project as endorsed, and recommended for full approval, by the Capital Projects Committee at its meeting on 8 March 2010.

Stourbridge bus station was a facility wholly under the operational control of Centro and the existing infrastructure was in need of redevelopment to achieve the overall objective of providing a world class public transport interchange facility.

The proposed new layout of the bus station would comprise eight bus stands and two layover spaces, and a further bus stand adjacent to Stourbridge Town railway station on Vauxhall Road. The proposals would also include a further drop-off stop on Foster Street East. The passenger waiting/shelter areas had been designed to allow improved passenger circulation and would incorporate CCTV, help points, public address system, lighting, electronic pedestrian access doors and electronic passenger information.

Councillor Longhi confirmed that cycle-related issues would be picked up as part of the Gateway project review process.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the proposals for the development of Stourbridge Interchange, including the full implementation of the scheme, at a total budget of £6,892,000, be approved;
- (2) the legal actions required be approved, and the Principal Solicitor be authorised to complete any necessary agreements, licences and consents on Centro's behalf;
- (3) the timescale for the implementation of the proposals be noted; and
- (4) it be noted that, in accordance with the Gateway management process, this scheme would be monitored by the Capital Projects Committee.

290/09 Coventry - Nuneaton Line Upgrade

The Authority considered a report of the Head of Rail and Rapid Transit Development on the submission of a Major Scheme Business Case to the Department for Transport for funding support for the upgrade of the Coventry to Nuneaton rail route, including the introduction of improved passenger services, by a partnership board comprising Centro, Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council.

The majority of the Coventry to Nuneaton Rail Enhancement Scheme was to be funded through the Regional Funding Allocation for major transport schemes, for which a Major Scheme Business Case submission was required. This was a three-stage approval process, and a stage one submission had been made to the Department for Transport in March 2010.

Development work by Centro, Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council had produced a preferred scheme which would provide for a new six-car station at Coventry Arena, a facing cross-over at Coventry Arena, a new three-car station at Bermuda Park, a new six-car bay platform at Coventry station, track and signalling upgrades on station approaches, platform extensions at Bedworth station and a doubling of the frequency of existing rail services between Nuneaton and Coventry. The total estimated cost of this scheme was £22.38m.

Councillor Williams welcomed these developments and thanked Centro for the work that had been undertaken to date.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the progress being made on developing this scheme, including the submission, by partners, of a Major Scheme Business Case to the Department for Transport, be welcomed;
- (2) the commitment of Centro to continue to work in partnership with Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council in developing and delivering this project as quickly as possible be confirmed;
- (3) it be agreed in principle that contributions to the scheme in excess of the £15.8m Regional Funding Allocation contribution would be funded equally among the partners; and
- (4) the initial revenue subsidy requirement that would be needed to support the proposed service enhancements be approved in principle.

291/09 Urban Challenge Fund

The Authority considered a report of the Policy and Strategy Director on the recent Department for Transport policy announcement of an Urban Challenge Fund, on proposed actions to respond to the Department for Transport and influence the development of the fund, and on measures taken to work in partnership with the West Midlands region.

In March, Sadiq Khan MP, Minister of State at the Department for Transport, announced that the Transport Innovation Fund and Sustainable Travel Cities project were to be replaced by a new Urban Challenge Fund.

The Department for Transport currently considered that this new fund should focus on using innovation in transport to generate 'triple wins' for the economy, environment and health. Key factors for a successful funding bid would involve innovative thinking, partnership working and creating alternative income streams.

Centro had been asked by the Department for Transport to respond to how the fund might operate by early June, and had been asked to do this with the wider region in order to develop a position for the West Midlands. It was anticipated that the Government would make a further announcement about the fund by the summer with further details of the scheme.

RESOLVED that

- (1) it be agreed that Centro develop a response to the Department for Transport supporting the Urban Challenge Fund;

- (2) it be noted that officers would engage with Department for Transport over how the fund would be designed to be of particular benefit to the West Midlands; and
- (3) a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Authority once the principles of a possible Centro bid to the fund had been developed.

292/09 Notice of Motion

The Authority considered a Motion submitted by Councillor Hartley. Following a full debate, Councillor Hunt moved an amendment to the Motion, the effect of which was that the Motion read:

"The Integrated Transport Authority notes with concern the changes, from 28 March, to the following bus routes in Birmingham:

- taking bus service no. 126 away from Upper Dean Street, the Markets and Digbeth Coach Station. Only one Broad Street service, no. 24, now goes to the Markets;
- taking the new bus service no. 80 from West Bromwich to Corporation Street along Smallbrook Queensway, instead of along Upper Dean Street, past the Markets and close to the Coach Station.

In the interests of social inclusion and access to cheap travel and shopping for neighbourhoods with low car ownership and high deprivation, the Integrated Transport Authority resolves to ensure access to the Markets and other vital city centre services for all users of bus services.

Noting the recent decision on the Metro extension, it therefore calls for Centro to work with Birmingham City Council to:

- (a) undertake a full and public review of city centre bus services and access, with seamless access to the Markets and Coach Station as a priority; and
- (b) find solutions to access and timetabling issues caused by congestion involving buses and the complexity of routes meeting in the city centre."

RESOLVED that the Motion, as amended, be adopted.

[The meeting ended at 12.25pm]

CHAIRMAN