

NTCMA/NECA Order – Transport Functions

Policy Note

Introduction

Following the announcement of the ‘minded to agree’ devolution deal for the North of Tyne area in the Autumn Budget, the seven North East Local Authorities and the North East LEP have been considering the detail of the joint transport arrangements and the necessary framework to ensure continued partnership working in the region.

This policy note sets out the thinking regarding the North East Transport Joint Committee (NETJC) arrangements.

Statement of overall purpose and outcome

The seven local authorities have produced a framework for collaborative working moving forward. This begins with an overall commitment that the two Combined Authorities (CAs) will work together constructively; will continue partnership arrangements at relevant geographies; and will unequivocally support the North East LEP and the SEP.

Specifically in regards to transport there is agreement that

- Governance arrangements in regards to transport to be based on those already in place
- A strengthened executive (officer) function for transport will reflect the strategic importance of transport to the North East and support the transparent decision making for the NETJC.
- There is a clear distinction between the role of the NETJC and that of the individual Local Highways Authorities.
- LTP Funding and Highways Maintenance funding to continue to be directed to each of the Local Authorities

Transport Framework

Through the Order, the two CAs will be statutorily joined by the NETJC, which will be the construct through which the two CAs will exercise their transport functions. The TJC will be able to delegate authority to:

- NETJC Tyne and Wear Sub-committee
- The Counties of Durham and Northumberland

North East Transport Joint Committee (NETJC) - The Order will create a **NETJC** with a power to create subcommittees and the power to delegate to those subcommittees, officers or other Authorities as it considers appropriate for the effective discharge of the current NECA transport functions and responsibilities. The NETJC will be made up of 7 (4 NECA leaders; 3 NTCMA representatives). The NETJC will discharge the current NECA leadership Board transport functions (including settling levies (x3), tolls, budget, strategy and policies).

NETJC (Tyne and Wear) Sub-committee. Will discharge the current ITA functions (transferred to NECA under section 6(2)A of the NECA Order) and the other roles of the current Tyne and Wear sub-committee.

Durham and Northumberland: Operational transport functions will be delegated to Durham County Council and Northumberland County Council in relation to their respective areas (as currently exists within NECA)).

Scrutiny and Audit: As per the draft scheme joint arrangements between NECA and NTMCA will be established to provide for the scrutiny and audit of the responsibilities of the NETJC. The joint arrangements will provide for an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and an Audit Committee comprising Elected Members from the constituent authorities of both NECA and NTMCA.

Executive Function: The NETJC will be supported by an officer core which will be directed by and accountable to the committee. There is a general agreement that the staffing arrangements (relating to Transport Strategy and Policy) should be strengthened in due course to create more capacity and expertise. The NETJC will consider the most appropriate staffing arrangements once the committee is established.

Accountable body: One of the CAs will be the Accountable Body for the NETJC and this decision will be made by the NETJC once established.

Funding:

- **LTP Integrated Transport Block Funding.** The NETJC will continue (as currently in NECA) to passport the LTP Integrated Transport Block funding to local authorities. This funding will be the amount specified for Durham, Northumberland and Tyne & Wear by the DfT minus any agreed top slice to fund the regional transport team. The NETJC may only change these arrangements with the express agreement of the constituent authority(s) where the change is proposed (Durham in Durham, Northumberland in Northumberland and all 5 Local Authorities in Tyne and Wear).
- **Highways Maintenance Block Funding** - note this is currently paid direct to individual local authorities. Subject to the national funding and distribution arrangements remaining as at present, the Maintenance Block Funding will continue to be paid directly to individual local authorities in the North East.

Drafting Consequences

The order will need to:

- Acknowledge the principle of strengthened arrangements between the seven local authorities
- Establish the arrangements for the NETJC on the basis set out in the scheme in respect of remit, composition, quorum, decision-making, ability to delegate functions and establish subcommittees, audit and scrutiny.

