
MEETING	URGENCY COMMITTEE
DATE	17 JULY 2006
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS STEVE GALLOWAY (EXECUTIVE LEADER, IN THE CHAIR), HORTON (AS SUBSTITUTE FOR POTTER), MERRETT, REID AND WALLER
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR POTTER

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests which they might have in the business on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Urgency Committee, held on 9 March 2006, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

4. LEEDS CITY-REGION

Members received a report which described the progress made in relation to the emerging City-Region debate and in particular the Leeds City-Region and sought approval for continued membership of a City-Region Congestion Partnership, which had been set up to investigate the issue of congestion on a regional basis, and the submission of a pump priming bid to the Department for Transport's Transport Innovation Fund.

The reason that the report was considered at an Urgency Committee was that the pump priming bid had to be submitted to the government by the end of July 2006.

The report explained that the City-Region Development Programme, originally published in 2005, was currently being revised with a view to submitting it to government at the end of the year, in time for it to be considered within the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review scheduled for 2007. The Development Programme focused on three key areas: housing, innovation and connectivity. The latter was the most

developed area, with a 25 year vision emerging for transport across the region based around the following themes:

- Highways: additional capacity to alleviate bottlenecks;
- Rail: electrification, additional capacity, better frequencies / journey times, tram-train;
- Bus: quality and access improvements, Bus Rapid Transit;
- Complementary solutions: strategic park & ride, interchange.

The next stage was to undertake consultation on the draft vision, after which a final version would be prepared.

It was recognised that the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) would be a key source of funding to implement the Transport Vision. The City-Region had come together under the banner of a “Congestion Partnership” to formulate a bid to access pump priming funding as part of the TIF initiative. These funds would allow studies and related feasibility work to take place to develop a better understanding of the current and future impacts of congestion on economic performance and the respective roles of investment, transport management and demand management in tackling congestion problems. The outcomes of these studies would inform the development of a full TIF bid in the future.

Members expressed support for the principle of regional co-operation and a strong preference for a voluntary federation rather than an elected mayor for the City-Region. Some Members expressed concern regarding the length of time it had taken to formally report the issues relating to the City-Region and highlighted the need for accountability and transparency. It was proposed that future developments be reported to an appropriate Council body and that the minutes of the City-Region Leaders’ meetings be made available to Members for information.

Members emphasised that the funding from the pump priming bid would be used to carry out modelling work to assess the effects of various mechanisms for managing congestion, that the Council was not committed to any particular outcomes and that it could withdraw from the Congestion Partnership at any stage. In particular they emphasised that congestion charging was not necessary in York at the current time. The need for transparency was reiterated in relation to the work of the Congestion Partnership and the need for public debate and understanding as progress was made was also highlighted.

Advice of the Urgency Committee

That the Executive Leader be advised:

- (i) That the emerging debate on the City-Region be noted and further reports be received at future critical stages where issues require decisions;
- (ii) That the continued membership of the Congestion Partnership be approved and the submission of a pump priming Transport Innovation Fund bid based upon the City-Region be approved in principle;

- (iii) That future developments relating to the City-Region be reported to an appropriate Council body and the minutes of the City-Region Leaders' meetings be made available to Members for information.

Decision of the Executive Leader

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Urgency Committee as set out above be accepted and endorsed.

- REASON:
- (i) To keep Members informed of the developments in relation to the City-Region and provide the opportunity for them to consider emerging issues and options which affect the City and where decisions will need to be made;
 - (ii) To play an active part in the development of congestion management in the City-Region and locally, and to access funding for the development of a full Transport Innovation Fund bid in the future;
 - (iii) To ensure accountability and transparency, and to facilitate public understanding and debate regarding congestion management.

COUNCILLOR S F GALLOWAY
Executive Leader, in the Chair

The meeting started at 4.30 pm and finished at 4.55 pm.