

Joint Tyne Bridges Committee

18 December 2015

(12.00 pm - 12.30 pm)

Meeting held Committee Room, Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne

Present:

Councillor: G Bell (Chair)

Councillors: G Allison, D Down (Newcastle City Council), J McElroy and B Coates (Gateshead MBC)

IN ATTENDANCE

A Swan	Newcastle City Council
N Burn	Gateshead Council
J Miller	Democratic Services

10 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED – that Councillor Bell be appointed Chair of the Committee for the 2015/16 municipal year.

11 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED – that Councillor McElroy be appointed Vice- Chair of the Committee for the 2015/16 municipal year.

12 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Graham and Fairlie (Newcastle) and Councillors Hamilton and McClurey (Gateshead)

13 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE

The membership of the Committee for the 2015/16 municipal year was noted.

14 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 19 MARCH 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15 JOINT TYNE BRIDGES REVENUE BUDGET

Submitted: Report by Head of Highways and Local Services, Newcastle/ Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, Gateshead (previously circulated and copy attached)

The committee considered the report which set out details the expenditure for 2014/15, reviews the expenditure for 2015/16 and recommended a budget for expenditure on the Joint Tyne bridges for 2016/17.

In response to a query it was noted that funding for lighting of the bridges was not covered by the Local transport Plan and would need to be part of a capital bid.

The Chair commented that in times of financial constraint for local authorities it was important to explore all avenues to create a revenue stream for the bridges.

RESOLVED – that:-

- i. The expected expenditure for 2015/2016 is £52,998 compared with a budget provision of £46,375 be noted.
- ii. The programme of maintenance and repair works to be carried out in 2016/17 be approved.
- iii. A budget provision of £53,535 for 2016/2017, as detailed in paragraph 5 and Appendix A of the report be approved.

16 JOINT TYNE BRIDGES CAPITAL BUDGET

Submitted: Report by Head of Highways and Local Service, Newcastle / Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, Gateshead (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

The committee considered the report which outlined the progress made on the planned 2015/16 Capital works programme for the Newcastle and Gateshead Joint Bridges and recommended a Capital budget to be expended on the Joint Bridges in 2016/17.

Tyne Bridge repainting

In response to a member's query as to whether budget provision for the inspection of the Tyne Bridge proposed for 2016/17 should take place sooner, it was explained that the funding stream for repainting the bridge was 2-3 years down the line so it was felt that it would be appropriate to carry out the inspection in 2016/17.

The repainting would be funded by a Capital grant via a Tyne and Wear wide bid, which the government may say should be submitted via the North East Combined Authority.

Swing Bridge

In response to a query as to whether because of their poor condition any work was proposed on the staithe on the Swing Bridge, it was explained that any such work

would be the responsibility of the Port of Tyne Authority, who had taken measures to stop unauthorised access to the bridge but were not proposing any other works.

Members asked if the officers could contact the Port of Tyne authority to find out if it was proposed to undertake any survey or inspections on the condition of the staithe.

Members commented that the deterioration in the condition of the staithe was a heritage issue and may be something that the Tyne and Wear Preservation Trust or other heritage organisation may be interested in.

RESOLVED – that:-

- i. The progress made on the planned Capital works programme funded by the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for 2015/16 be noted.
- ii. The programme of planned Capital works to be carried out in 2016/17.
- iii. A Capital budget provision of £195k to be funded by the Local Transport Plan for 2016/17 be approved.
- iv. Officers contact the Port of Tyne Authority in relation to Member's concerns regarding the deteriorating condition of the staithe.

17 **TYNE BRIDGE**

The Chair raised the following two issues in relation to the Tyne Bridge: _

Birds nesting on Tyne Bridge

The Chair reported that he was aware that two applications for Listed Building Consent had been received in relation to providing some form of deterrent to on the Tyne Bridge to prevent birds nesting on the bridge. He commented that there was a need for any such decisions to be taken jointly by the two local authorities. Officers advised that even if Listed Building Consent was granted, the permission of the owners would also need to be sought. Members queried what processes were in place to allow such decisions to be taken.

It was **RESOLVED** – that officers clarify the decision making process in relation to such issues affecting the bridges.

Raising revenue from the Tyne Bridge

Within the context of the difficult revenue budget positions of both councils and the need to start planning for the future, members discussed the suggestion of the Chair of the need to become more commercial in obtaining revenue from the bridges, for example, selling advertising space on the Tyne Bridge with any monies raised being used for the benefit of the bridges. In discussion it was pointed out that there were a number of broader issues that needed to be taken into account in terms of advertising such as the integrity of the bridge and the fact that it was an iconic structure. Concerns had been raised by tourists who had wanted to photograph the Tyne Bridge without any advertising on it. A member suggested that consideration should be given to toll charging as a way of raising revenue from the bridges.

The Chair asked that officers for both Newcastle and Gateshead look at the legislation in relation to advertising on the Tyne Bridge and where any decisions in relation to any proposals to move towards becoming more commercial in terms of raising revenue from the bridges would be taken.

Officers undertook to follow up on these issues, advising that the decision to allow anyone to attach anything to the bridges would need the permission of the owners, and such decisions would have to be agreed by both Cabinets, rather than by this Joint Committee.