

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 4TH OCTOBER, 2005**

Present: Councillor C. Patching (Chair)
Councillors R. Burnip, P.J. Campbell,
J. Haggan, T. Longstaff, W.R. Peardon,
and Mrs. B.A. Sloan

Also present: Councillor D. Myers - Executive Member for E-Government and
Scrutiny Liaison
Councillor D.J. Taylor-Gooby

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs. S. Mason.

2. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 13th September, 2005, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

3. THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE held on 20th September, 2005, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted

RESOLVED that the information contained within the Minutes, be noted.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

5. PPI FORUM - DISTRICT OF EASINGTON - TEES REVIEW PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROJECT

The Chair welcomed Mr. Tom McCully from the PPI Forum and explained that Mr. Fishwick had been unable to attend. He added that a copy of the PPI Forum report on the Tees Review Public Transport Project was attached for information.

Mr. McCully explained that the report had been produced in August 2004. A further report was currently being prepared for 2005. There had been very little change in improvement from the previous year in Easington although Durham Bus Station had improved and a lot of the services in Durham were much better and more reliable. He felt that Peterlee had been let down by a poor service and cleanliness of buses.

The Chair explained that a number of residents, particularly in the south of the District, had existing issues around transport which could be made worse as a result of the move to Centres of Excellence that would be based in Borough Hospitals. This would mean travelling much further.

Mr. McCully explained that there were two main bus companies. One was very good and the other had a poor standard and improvements had been concentrated in Durham City. In some areas of Easington District, there were no bus shelters or signs and people did not know which side of the road to wait for the bus and Durham

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County Council did not have much influence with the bus companies following deregulation.

Mr. McCully explained that with new buses, the steps dropped for access for pushchairs and wheelchairs. Since Durham City had been upgraded, the old buses had been transferred to Peterlee Depot. He added that the Traffic Commissioners had not become involved and did not know why Arriva had not been taken to task to improve their services. Go Northern was a very good bus company and provided good standards of service and cleanliness.

Mr. McCully explained that an explorer ticket could be purchased for £6.50 and the patient attending the hospital would have the money refunded if they could not afford to pay. Interchangability between bus companies would help a lot people. A lot of people have given up on the bus companies and asked a neighbour or friend to take them to hospital. The 'Choose and Book' system would give patients more choice but a lot of people would be restricted through poor transport.

Mr. McCully explained that bus timetables were constantly changing and bus companies had to give six weeks notice for a change in service but he was aware that some companies had reorganised their bus schedules and implemented them within two weeks.

A Member explained that he had attended a presentation two weeks ago by the Ambulance Service when it had been explained that a lot of people chose to go to hospital in an ambulance which put an extra strain on resources. There were only forty vehicles for the whole of Northumbria and Durham.

The Chair explained that the NHS made it difficult for people to keep appointments by the way they were issued. The NHS needed to be smarter at scheduling appointments.

Councillor D.J. Taylor-Gooby explained that he was the Council's representative on the Health Scrutiny Committee at County Hall who were looking at transport. With regard to the presentation from the Ambulance Service, he explained that if Cleveland joined the Northumbria and Durham Region it would make it easier for patients in the south of the County. There was a scheme in operation in Northumberland where there was co-ordination of all forms of transport and Social Services and volunteer drivers became involved. He added that there needed to be more imaginative solutions for transport as it could possibly be cheaper to pay for a taxi than to have a bus service in operation.

Mr. McCully explained that the PCT had promised to deliver on transport and he would be looking to the PCT for this. The PPI Survey had been for awareness raising. Once the current report was finalised, a copy would be provided to the District Council.

The Chair thanked Mr. McCully for his attendance.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.