

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Tuesday, 2 September 2008 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors McDermott (Chairman), Harris, McInerney, Polhill, Swain and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Gerrard, Nelson and Wharton

Absence declared on Council business: Councillor D. Cargill

Officers present: L. Cairns, G. Cook, B. Dodd, C. Hall, M. Noone, D. Parr, M. Reaney and P. Watts

Also in attendance: H. Bassford

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION AND RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

**EXB34 MERSEY GATEWAY TOLLING/SILVER JUBILEE BRIDGE
ROAD USER CHARGING ORDER - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment regarding the Order being promoted by the Council under Section 168 of the Transport Act 2000 to secure powers to promote the elements of the Mersey Gateway Project (the "Project") that related to the Silver Jubilee Bridge ("SJB"), in particular to authorise the imposition of charges upon vehicles using the SJB. The report outlined the next steps required to make an Order to impose such charges.

In accordance with Section 170 of the Transport Act 2000, the Council commenced consultation on 30th May 2008 in relation to the proposed road user charging scheme and the proposed A533 (SJB) Road User Charging Scheme Order, the objection period for which expired on 18th August 2008. Details of the consultation, together with representations received and the responses to these representations, were outlined for Members' consideration. It

was noted that the responses to the consultation could be broken down into a number of broad types, which included support; opposition to charges/tolls in general on the SJB and/or Mersey Gateway Bridge; questions as to the legality of the proposals; suggestions that the SJB should not be the subject of charges; and suggestions for discounts or exemptions for tolls for certain groups.

It was reported that without charges/tolls the Mersey Gateway project was not deliverable. Furthermore, the option of tolling the Mersey Gateway Bridge but leaving the SJB without charges was not a viable option. However, Members agreed that the proposed discount scheme should make provision for public transport to be exempt from tolling. In addition, there would be discounts for residents, which would be addressed at the stage at which the concession for the construction and operation of the Mersey Gateway project was let.

The Board considered each of the representations made in response to the consultation, together with the officers' comments, outlined at Annexe 4 to the report. In particular, it was noted that:

- the "do nothing" option would ultimately result in the SJB being congested at all times – this would be compounded by the maintenance work required on the bridge over the forthcoming years – whereas implementation of the project would result in free movement across the bridge;
- the Mersey Gateway project was comprised of a series of initiatives including a Sustainable Transport Policy;
- the traffic model took account of the value people placed on their time;
- people within deprived communities who did not have access to cars would not be tolled to cross the bridge if they were using public transport;
- it was intended that the revenue from the tolls would ultimately benefit public transport;
- older people of pensionable age would have access to free public transport;
- building a new bridge would have regenerative benefits to the area;
- the new bridge would be self-financing through tolls and PFI (Public Finance Initiative) Credits;
- the views of the shadow local authorities in Cheshire, which may differ from the existing authorities', had also been sought;
- the question of whether or not tolls/charging would

cease when the bridge had been paid for was one for the future as this situation would not apply within the next 30 years;

- officers were working with Warrington Borough Council to assist their understanding of the traffic model and whether any measures would be necessary;
- any impact on the Great Sankey area was expected to be very limited;
- there was an ability to increase tolls over the life of the concession, which was intended to address the impact of inflation; and
- rather than being divisive, the new bridge would ensure ease of travelling within the Borough, particularly in view of the Sustainable Travel Policy that was being developed.

It was confirmed that discussions with consultees such as Warrington Borough Council and Mersey Travel would continue, and objectors would have the opportunity of raising issues again at the Public Inquiry stage.

Reason(s) for Decision

The recommended decisions were required to support the delivery of Mersey Gateway.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Alternative options for securing the powers to construct, maintain and operate, including tolling, the Mersey Gateway project had been assessed and rejected.

Implementation Date

The recommended decisions were required to be made as soon as possible in order to enable all relevant applications, orders and other processes relating to the Mersey Gateway project to be conjoined. This required the charging order to be made.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of the report and the annexes to the report be noted and regarded in considering whether to make a road user charging order in respect of the SJB;
- (2) the consultation responses received in relation to tolling and road user charging be considered and

taken account of;

- (3) subject to resolution (4) below and such amendments as may be made as a result thereof, that in accordance with sections 168 to 170 of the Transport Act 2000 the Operational Director and Monitoring Officer (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources) (the "Operational Director"), in consultation with the Leader and Chief Executive, be delegated the power to make the A533 (Silver Jubilee Bridge) Road User Charging Scheme Order in the form annexed to the report at Annexe 3; Operational Director
- (4) the Operational Director, in consultation with the Leader and Chief Executive, be delegated the power to make amendments to the proposed Road User Charging Scheme and the proposed Road User Charging Order to address matters arising from the report, discussions with objectors and other third parties, including Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority and the Department for Transport prior to making the A533 (Silver Jubilee Bridge) Road User Charging Scheme Order; Operational Director
- (5) that when made the A533 (Silver Jubilee Bridge) Road User Charging Scheme Order be submitted to the Secretary of State for confirmation;
- (6) the Operational Director, in consultation with the Leader and Chief Executive, be delegated the power to make amendments to the proposed River Mersey (Mersey Gateway Bridge) Order, the subject of an associated application under the Transport and Works Act 1992, to achieve a sufficient degree of uniformity between the proposed Road User Charging Order and that other Order; Operational Director
- (7) officers be authorised to take such steps as are necessary or expedient for the discharge of the above matters, including settling, agreeing and approving the terms of necessary documentation; and
- (8) it be determined that the proposed discount scheme in respect of SJB and Mersey Gateway should make provision for public transport to be exempt from tolling on SJB and Mersey Gateway.

MINUTES ISSUED: 15th September 2008

CALL IN: 22nd September 2008

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no

later than 22nd September 2008

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Meeting ended at 1.07 p.m.

