

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY
AT A MEETING OF THE WAKEFIELD DISTRICT LIAISON COMMITTEE
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, WAKEFIELD ON
THURSDAY 14 JULY 2011

PRESENT: Councillor H Hudson (Chair)

Councillors	T Brown	-	WYITA
	J Lewis	-	WYITA
	D Hopkins	-	Wakefield MDC

Officers in Attendance:

	J Ward	-	Wakefield MDC
	J Henkel	-	Metro
	N Wallace	-	Metro
	J Nutter	-	Metro
	A Shearon	-	WYITA

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Y Crewe, A Garbutt and J Williams and K Bloomfield (WMDC).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no personal or prejudicial interests declared by members.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2011 be noted.

4. LTP2 UPDATE – BUS AND RAIL PERFORMANCE

The Liaison Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive which provided an update on trends in the performance of bus and rail services.

Bus Reliability and Punctuality

It was reported that the average bus service reliability (% of services operating) in 2010/11 to date was 98.64% which remained below the Local Transport Plan target of 99.5%.

Bus Patronage

It was reported that although bus patronage was expected to decline by approximately 0.5% across West Yorkshire, there had been significant local variances in the district figures for 2010/11. Compared with the 2009/10 data, Wakefield had a marked increase of 4.9% which could be attributed to the fact that Arriva had focussed on keeping fares and networks stable during 2010.

Wakefield FreeCityBus

It was reported that Wakefield MDC had requested information on the future funding of the Wakefield FreeCityBus. Members were informed that the Authority would need to look closely at its financial strategy before any decision could be made about future funding. Members discussed the position with regard to the Leeds FreeCityBus which was now operating on a fare paying basis, however it was felt that this would not work for the Wakefield service as passenger demand for the service was far less than for the Leeds service.

Rail Performance

Members were provided with details of rail performance for the period 1 May 2010 to 28 May 2011 which were outlined in the submitted report. It was noted that apart from a small decline in period 1, performance had continued to improve since the severe winter. However strengthening provision had fluctuated and Northern had been asked to look at fleet availability as routine maintenance and repairs on units had impacted on results in period 1. Metro would continue to press Northern to improve strengthenings.

RESOLVED - That the current performance of bus and rail services be noted.

5. LTP3 UPDATE

The Liaison Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive which provided updates on the delivery of the MyJourney West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2011-26, the Bus Strategy and progress on the development of Quality Contracts in West Yorkshire and the possible devolution of rail powers to the local level.

LTP3

It was reported that following publication of the LTP3 further engagement/consultation was planned for October 2011 on the draft targets and indicators, the proposed hierarchy of routes and users and a new RailPlan to accompany the LTP3. These would be presented in draft to the next meeting and members' input would be sought.

District Implementation Plan

It was noted that District Councils were in the process of developing Local Implementation Plans to accompany the main West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan and that the Wakefield plan was currently being developed.

Delivery Progress

Members noted the delivery progress of the LTP three year Implementation Plan which was attached at Appendix A to the submitted report.

Castleford Interchange

Members were given an update on the position regarding Castleford Interchange. It was reported that further to the unsuccessful bid for Round 1 funding from the Regional Growth Fund, work had been carried out to develop a bid for Round 2 funding. Unfortunately, feedback from officials indicated that the bid would not be successful. Therefore, it was proposed to develop an improvement scheme for Castleford Interchange to be funded by the LTP and other local sources. A further report would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

North Wakefield Gateway

Members were informed that final approval had been given to proceed with the scheme and works were currently being tendered. It was hoped that the package of works, including a bus lane in front of County Hall and along part of Leeds Road and Northgate, would commence early in September 2011.

Pontefract Monkhill Rail Station Masterplan

It was reported that the Local Development Framework (LDF) had highlighted Pontefract Monkhill rail station as being in need of investment to encourage greater use of rail, particularly as there was to be significant new housing in and around Pontefract.

Metro and Wakefield Council had developed a Masterplan document setting out a framework for development of the station. Rail industry partners and local stakeholders had been consulted on the plan and had expressed support for it. However, concern had been expressed by the Pontefract Civic Society who felt that the plan was not ambitious enough in terms of car parking and did not provide for a through road from the station to Ferrybride Road. Members commented that they also felt that the plan should provide for more than 47 car parking spaces if at all possible.

It was stressed that encouraging more passengers to travel by rail to/from Pontefract was of critical importance in making a case for station investment at Monkhill and Metro had therefore formally asked Northern Rail to consider improving the service frequency to half hourly.

Members were asked to consider the Masterplan and to provide feedback within the next two weeks.

Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF)

The Committee was advised that Metro, on behalf of the West Yorkshire LTP Partnership, had submitted two bids to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. Both bids aimed to support economic growth and help to reduce carbon emissions. The Department for Transport had just announced that the first bid, which sought to extend the Travel to Work and Travel Plan Network projects for a further 3 years, had been successful. A decision on the second bid was expected at the end of July.

Bus Strategy, Quality Contracts

Members were updated on the approach to bus quality contracts and the partnership offer made by the Association of Bus Operators in West Yorkshire (ABOWY). It was reported that although the offer had considerable merit it did not meet the ITA's requirements in respect of integrated ticketing and was also unable to address the Competition Commission's concerns regarding market concentration.

It was reported that the ITA had reaffirmed their interest in Quality Contracts and Metro was continuing to undertake technical work on the development of a Quality Contract scheme. However, it was intended to await the Competition Commission's final report before considering proceeding to the next formal step in the process.

McNulty Review on Rail

The Liaison Committee noted the key findings of the McNulty Review report and the recommendations of relevance to West Yorkshire which were outlined in the submitted report. It was noted that the recommendations represented a significant shift in approach that had the potential to dramatically improve the way railways were operated.

Members were informed that the Government were to ensure that the recommendations for reform contained in the McNulty report were included in new rail franchises which was particularly relevant for West Yorkshire as new franchises for Northern, Transpennine Express and East Coast would be let in the next two years.

Rail Devolution

Members were given an update on the devolution of rail powers to the local level. It was noted that the Passenger Transport Executive Group (PTEG) had been leading work to establish the vision for urban railways in the UK. Metro and the other Northern PTEs had developed a set of devolution options that would need to be in place in time for the next rail franchises in the North and work would continue with partners across West Yorkshire to progress this.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the progress on delivering LTP3 be noted.
- (b) That Members provide any feedback on the Pontefract Monkhill Masterplan within the next two weeks.
- (c) That the Bus Strategy update and progress on developing Quality Contracts be noted.
- (d) That the update on the devolution of rail powers to the local level be noted.

6. AREA BUS NETWORK REVIEWS

The Liaison Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on Metro's programme of Area Bus Network Reviews.

It was reported that over the next two years, Metro would be undertaking a programme of Area Bus Network Reviews in each District in order to achieve significant savings in the budget for tendered services.

It was proposed that the Wakefield review would be undertaken in two stages:

- All Wakefield services (excluding City Services) - Summer/Autumn 2011 for change in April 2012.
- Wakefield City Services - Summer/Autumn 2012 for change in April 2013.

The Liaison Committee noted the approach to the reviews, which aimed to develop a bus network which met the objectives set out in the Local Transport Plan 3 and ensured that Metro obtained value for money from the services it funded. The reviews would include a retendering exercise which aimed to reduce spending and a similar consultation exercise to that used during the LTP3 consultation would be adopted, obtaining the views of local people in each district through the internet, social media and some consultation events.

Members were asked to feed back their views on the proposed programme and key questions to be considered in the reviews. A review project team had been established including officer participation from the District Councils and reports would be prepared for future meetings of the Committee as the reviews progressed.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the process to be undertaken in the Area Bus Network Reviews as detailed in the submitted report be endorsed.

- (b) That progress reviews detailing the process and outcome of the Area Bus Network Reviews be provided to a future meeting.
- (c) That members' views in relation to the review process be noted.

7. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT ISSUES

The Liaison Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the priorities for Metro and the Wakefield MDC Education Authority (LEA) in managing home to school transport over the coming year.

Members were advised of the long standing formal agreement between Metro and Wakefield LEA and details of the agreements were outlined in the submitted report.

It was noted that Metro had always exercised a close value for money scrutiny of the home to school services it provided and, in view of the current economic climate, it was vital that Metro and Wakefield MDC mitigated the impact of funding cuts. They had worked closely together to manage any cost growth in the coming academic year and Metro would support and advise Wakefield on any proposals to alter eligibility policy in order to secure cost savings. In order to maximise the benefits from competition, Metro intended to co-ordinate the procurement of many school bus service contracts in Wakefield as part of the Area Bus Network Review. Discussions were also in progress with operators with regard to the young person's concessionary travel scheme which was a major area of discretionary spending for Metro where economies needed to be made to address the reduction in funding.

The Liaison Committee was advised of the current process for issuing passes to young people to prove their eligibility for concessionary fares. In order to progress towards a smartcard ticketing scheme in West Yorkshire, it would become necessary to produce the passes electronically on smartcards and it was hoped that Metro could collaborate with LEAs and schools to support the process through data sharing to enable the distribution of smartcards.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the shared priorities between Metro and Wakefield MDC for 2011/12 be endorsed.
- (b) That Metro and Wakefield MDC collaborate on sharing data to enable the distribution of smartcards to young people.