

AGENDA ITEM No: 9.

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE CALDERDALE PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE TOWN HALL, HALIFAX ON TUESDAY 11 JULY 2006

PRESENT: Councillor G Wainwright (Chair)

WYPTA

S King
T Swift

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

James Calland
Vic Duke
Howard Maude
Lesley Mackay

Peter Melling
Peter Stocks
John Sykes
John Whiteley

CALDERDALE MBC

K Watson

Also in attendance:

D Squire	-	Arriva
N Walsh	-	Halifax Bus Co
C Goulthorpe	-	First
I Taylor	-	T&GWU (First)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Tony Blackman, Halifax Joint Committee.

The Committee asked that their concerns regarding the lack of representation at meetings be forwarded to Northern.

2. MINUTES

Further to minute 16, East Coast Mainline, Councillor Watson advised the Committee that Network Rail had carried out a timetabling exercise and confirmed that there were sufficient paths for additional GNER rail services to Leeds.

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2006 be approved.

3. MEMBER FEEDBACK REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising them of the feedback received at the meeting of the Committee held on 4 April 2006.

Members were thanked for providing their views on how bus companies and Metro could address instances where buses failed to stop for passengers.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

4. INFORMATION REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on information regarding current developments and issues affecting the Calderdale District.

PTA Membership 2006/7

It was reported that at its Annual Meeting held on 23 June 2006, the PTA had elected Councillor Stanley King as Chairman and Councillor Ryk Downes as Vice Chairman. The District Council Spokesperson for the Calderdale area would be Councillor Geoffrey Wainwright.

A PTA Year Book incorporating details of its members and useful contact numbers would be distributed to all PCC members in the near future.

Service Changes

It was reported that the next major timetable change would occur on 22 July 2006 and copies of Metro's Changing Times leaflet were available at the meeting.

Day Tripper Services

Members were advised of the seasonal day tripper services which would be subsidised by Metro and provided from 24 July to 2 September 2006. The services would provide the opportunity for days out at popular West Yorkshire tourist attractions including Service 906 which would provide links from Hebden Bridge to Hardcastle Crags and Widdop reservoir.

Concessionary Fares Scheme

It was reported that free bus travel arrangements for seniors and people with disabilities would be introduced nationally from 2008. Further details of the scheme will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee. The Committee congratulated Metro on the leaflet they produced regarding the new scheme.

Rail Station Access

Members welcomed the launch of the Department for Transport's 'Railways for All' initiative which was aimed at improving the accessibility of rail stations over a period of 10 years. The £370 million funding provision was split into two parts, £35 million per year for improving access at the busiest stations and £7 million per year, the majority of which would be available for 'Small Schemes' funding.

It was noted that the PTA were keenly aware of the issues regarding accessibility at some local rail stations and they would continue work in partnership with Northern Rail in an attempt to alleviate some of the problems. Significant problems existed at many stations and further significant Government capital investment was required to deliver an accessible railway network.

Real Time Update

The Committee were updated on the YourNextBus real time information system which was the most used bus real time system in the UK. Members noted that 6 electronic real time information displays would be installed during the summer as part of a trial to assess their technical performance.

Members expressed concern that equipment issued on some buses caused problems when journeys could not be tracked.

Yellow Bus

It was reported that the Yellow Bus initiative had received a 'Working Together' award at the national Public Servants of the Year Awards. Members were advised of progress with the second phase of the project and it was reported that the Department for Transport (DfT) had agreed funding to cover Phase 3.

New Bus Lane Schemes on the A629 Halifax-Huddersfield Corridor

Members were updated on the bus priority schemes for the A629 Halifax – Huddersfield route.

With regard to the Ainley Top Bus Lane, it was reported that detailed design would commence in the near future and it was anticipated that the scheme would be implemented by the end of the current financial year. An evaluation exercise would be carried out in order to assess scheme performance and collate an analysis of user views and perceptions.

It was reported that Calderdale Council's Cabinet had recently agreed the proposals for the development of a new Halifax bound bus lane on Stainland Road.

Hebden Bridge Update

It was noted that following public feedback regarding the April service changes in the Hebden Bridge area, a new timetable would operate from 24 July 2006 to include trips to and from Eaves on Monday to Saturday. The Committee welcomed the restoration of services to Eaves but commented that Fairfield would still only have market day services one day a week and this would affect many elderly people who were reliant on public transport.

Bus Window Advertising

Public representative, Lesley Mackay, had requested that the issue of bus window advertising be discussed. Members commented that the advertising on some vehicles reduced the quality of the journey for passengers when they could not see out of the windows. It was reported that the bus companies arranged the advertising themselves and the placing of advertisements on windows was not prohibited by the safety standards imposed. However, the vehicle did have to satisfy the standards in respect of the driver's visibility.

Passenger Information at Rail Stations

Councillor Watson reported that the information system at Brighouse Rail Station had been unreliable for some time. It was noted that the system was the responsibility of Northern and it was hoped that the problem would be resolved in the near future.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

5. CONSULTATION ITEMS -

- (a) Bus Timetable Leaflets**
- (b) Departure Stand Information at Bus Stations**
- (c) Visual Environment at Rail Stations**

Members views were sought on the format of Metro produced bus timetables, the possible replacement of departure stand information at bus stations and improving the visual environment at rail stations. A questionnaire was circulated at the meeting and members were asked to forward their suggestions to Metro.

Bus Timetable Leaflets

Members were given a presentation on Metro's production of timetable leaflets. It was noted that Metro's Information Strategy stated that there should be a printed timetable leaflet for all bus services and some operators, such as Arriva and Keighley & District Travel, produced their own. However Metro produced leaflets for other services to ensure that comprehensive information was available to customers for all services.

It was reported that Metro currently produced 3 million printed timetables a year and there had been a further 3 million timetables downloaded from the Internet. The format of the timetable leaflets was being reviewed and members' views were sought on their legibility, content, format and cost implications.

Members considered that the timetables were easy to read and comment was made that the road by road information was useful although the inclusion of maps would also be beneficial. It was suggested that a route map could be included with street names. Comment was made that prior to service changes being introduced, the Internet versions for the new timetables were not easy to find on the website and Metro would investigate how this could be made more user friendly.

Departure Stand Information at Bus Stations

It was reported that Metro was considering options for the provision of departure stand information at bus stations. Members were advised that currently the information was in the form of illuminated signs and fixed signage with service numbers above the departure stands although the use of electronic signs was being considered.

Members were shown examples of the types of displays that could be provided and they welcomed the proposal to install them at departure stands. It was intended that the new displays would have the capacity to provide realtime information in the future although further work was needed in developing suitable software before this could be achieved. Members were supportive of this development.

Visual Environment at Rail Stations

Members were advised of a recent national report published by the National Audit Office which had highlighted the poor standard of facilities and visual appearance of rail stations across the country.

It was reported that Metro had a programme of improvements set out in the Local Transport Plan 2 and RailPlan 6 documents but members' views were sought for any West Yorkshire stations that would benefit from a more immediate 'face lift' to address issues of poor or run-down appearance.

It was noted that minor improvements could include the pruning of vegetation, new signage, lighting and repainting and members were asked to make suggestions to Metro of any West Yorkshire stations which could benefit from such work. Comment was made that it would be beneficial for shelters at some rail stations to have doors although the problems with vandalism were recognised.

RESOLVED - That PCC members' comments and views be noted.