

# **AGENDA ITEM NO: 7**

## **WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY/ DISTRICT COUNCILS**

### **AT A MEETING OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES LIAISON GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS, ON MONDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2006**

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Jarosz (Chair)

Councillors	K Hussain	-	WYPTA
	D Schofield	-	WYPTA
	M Slater	-	WYPTA
	G Wainwright	-	WYPTA
	B Metcalfe	-	Calderdale
	A Harrison	-	Leeds

<b>Officers in attendance:</b>	N Holt	-	Metro
	R Chaplin	-	WYPTA

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Smith (Bradford) and C Tennant (Wakefield).

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors K Hussain declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5, paragraph 2.7, AccessBus Update, and took no part in the discussion.

#### **3. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2006 be approved.

#### **4. TRAVEL TRAINING UPDATE**

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on the joint approach adopted by Metro and the District Councils to develop and extend a Buddying/Travel Training scheme in West Yorkshire.

The Group noted the work carried out by the Accessible Transport Officers which included supporting People In Action, working closely with the Travel Training Unit in Bradford, advising several authorities in setting up travel training arrangements and assisting in resolving specific complaints about bus

travel. The team were also meeting bus and rail operators to assist in the development of Disability Awareness within staff training programmes.

It was noted that the current Travel Training initiatives would operate until March 2007 and Metro was reviewing the value of the role with a view to the ongoing requirement for its services.

The Liaison Group were advised that Metro had written to all Social Services Departments in West Yorkshire advising them of the assistance the team could give to their authorities. Only Leeds and Bradford had responded positively. Members asked that further information be sent to the District Councils on the service Metro offered in order to encourage participation in the wider roll out of the scheme.

#### **RESOLVED -**

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That further information be sent to the District Councils in order to encourage participation in the wider roll out of the scheme.

### **5. ACCESSBUS PROGRESS REPORT**

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on issues and initiatives affecting the AccessBus service.

#### AccessBus Operating Contracts

It was reported that the Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield operators had agreed to extend their contracts to run the service until September 2007. However First, who provide services in Leeds, were unable to extend their contract beyond September 2006. CT Plus had been appointed to operate the service from October 2006 to September 2007.

#### Replacement AccessBus Vehicles

Members noted that the 8 new vehicles which provided low floor ramped access had entered service. The vehicles could accommodate 16 passengers, 3 of which could be in fixed wheelchairs. Concern was expressed that a number of AccessBus journeys, particularly in the Calderdale area, carried passengers to supermarkets outside the town centre which did not encourage residents to support their local economy.

#### Service Quality Monitoring

It was reported that tracking devices to assist in monitoring the operation of AccessBus services had been installed on the vehicles in Leeds. This had enabled improvements in the operation of vehicle schedules and in preparations for the transfer of contracts to the new operator.

## Review of AccessBus

Members were given a presentation on the options which were being considered regarding the future role and provision of AccessBus services.

The Liaison Group were advised of the results of the outcome of the modelling process which had been carried out in the Leeds area. The results had indicated that the increasing demand for the service could only be met by increasing capacity which would require additional funding.

It was reported that opportunities through wider integration of the service had been investigated including the operation of SEN transport in the Bradford and Wakefield areas. This option would allow for the enhancement of transport to school for SEN pupils as part of the MyBus initiative. The vehicles could then be utilised during the day and would provide extra AccessBus capacity on a demand responsive service.

Members were advised that there was currently available capital from the MyBus scheme and, with the Department for Transport's agreement, the funding could provide additional minibuses to run a trial in the Bradford and Wakefield areas. It was noted that this option required further investigation but if the pilot schemes were successful they would be cascaded to the other districts,

**RESOLVED** - That the report and presentation be noted.

## **6. CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME UPDATE**

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on the concessionary travel scheme following the introduction of free travel for the over 60s and certain categories of disabled people following its implementation on 1 April 2006. The report also provided details of the proposals for a national free travel scheme to be introduced in 2008.

Members were advised that details of the new arrangements had been widely publicised and, following feedback from customers, a new information leaflet had been distributed regarding the use of cross boundary services.

It was noted that initial data from operators and surveys indicated that there had been a 20% increase in the number of journeys made by concessionary passengers since the introduction of free travel. There had also been a 50% increase in the number of Concessionary Permits issued during the first quarter following the introduction of the new arrangements.

Members noted the summary of the 2008 scheme proposals outlined in the report but were advised that these could be subject to change as the DfT develop detailed implementation plans. It was noted that consideration would need to be given to the financial and practical feasibility of introducing a national concessionary smartcard as a proof of entitlement.

**RESOLVED** - That the report be noted.

## **7. ACCESSBUS PASSENGER STATISTICS AND TRENDS**

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the current trends in AccessBus usage.

It was reported that the number of passenger journeys undertaken in the 12 months period up to 31 January 2006 represented an increase of 1.5% on the previous period. The total number of customers registered to use the service had also increased by 1.5% from the previous year and it was noted that 28.5% (7,379) of the registered users had made a journey within the last three months or registered within the last six months. Members were advised that most of the journeys were subscription bookings with only 5% of journeys being ad hoc.

**RESOLVED** - That the report be noted.