

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY/DISTRICT COUNCILS

AT A MEETING OF THE ADULT SERVICES LIAISON GROUP  
HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON  
MONDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2008

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

|             |            |   |                |
|-------------|------------|---|----------------|
| Councillors | C Greaves  | - | WYPTA          |
|             | D Robinson | - | WYPTA          |
|             | D Clamp    | - | Bradford MC    |
|             | B Metcalfe | - | Calderdale MBC |
|             | A Cooper   | - | Kirklees MC    |

**Officers in attendance:**

|              |   |             |
|--------------|---|-------------|
| G Wainwright | - | Kirklees MC |
| N Holt       | - | Metro       |
| F Whitehead  | - | Metro       |
| R Chaplin    | - | WYPTA       |

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Armitage (Leeds), C Tennant (Wakefield), G Hyde (WYPTA) and P Wadsworth (WYPTA).

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no personal or prejudicial interests declared by members at the meeting.

**3. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2008 be approved.

**4. METROLOCAL UPDATE**

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress with the MetroLocal services.

Members were advised that the MetroLocal was an off peak bus service which enabled people access to local shops and facilities which were not served by mainstream bus services. The services were linked to home to school transport to maximise the efficient use of vehicles and improve the quality of transport for special educational needs children.

It was reported that the first phase of the pilot scheme had been introduced in December 2007 with 3 buses providing 7 services and members noted the routes which were outlined in the submitted report. The buses provided home to school transport for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) between 0730 and 0930, then operated registered local services within communities until 1430 after which the vehicles provided return transport from school.

The Liaison Group were advised that feedback had been favourable with increasing passenger numbers each week. Fewer passengers had used the services in Newsome, Dalton and Almondbury and these routes were altered in Summer 2008 to take passenger observations into consideration in an attempt to attract more passengers. Members considered options for promoting the service. It was reported that a house to house leaflet drop was being organised and Metro had attended local community forums and other events to promote the services to the target groups. It was suggested that local health services should also be contacted.

It was noted that 4 further services had recently been introduced in the Dewsbury area and discussions were in progress with Area Committees in Batley, Birstall and Birkenshaw with a view to launching further services there in October 2008. The capital costs of the pilot scheme had been met by the MyBus project and the revenue costs were being met by Kirklees Council.

It was reported that a full scheme review would be undertaken after approximately 2 years in order to accommodate the proposed changes to the registration of AccessBus. A progress report including patronage figures would be prepared for the next meeting of the Group.

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

## **5. ACCESSBUS DEVELOPMENT**

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on progress with the AccessBus service.

### **Service Registration**

It was reported that options for the future of the AccessBus service had been considered by the Authority's Bus Working Group as continued expansion of the service in its current form was not feasible or affordable. An alternative strategy had been agreed whereby MetroLocal services would be developed in parallel with AccessBus to provide a service for those people who were unable to use mainstream bus services.

Members were advised of recent changes in the regulations governing bus services. As a result of the changes, it was proposed to convert the AccessBus service to a registered bus service from October 2009 which would bring financial benefits in the form of Bus Service Operators Grant. It was noted that it would be necessary to amend the concessionary fare

scheme to ensure that all eligible passengers were allowed free travel for trips before 0930 on the AccessBus service only. A progress report would be prepared for a future meeting of the Group.

### **Replacement Vehicles**

It was reported that the 19 of the low floor minibuses used for the AccessBus service were approaching the end of their working life which was approximately 8 years. Tenders had been invited to meet a specification which would enable the vehicles to be used on MetroLocal services if necessary. The Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) had approved a phased programme of vehicle replacement between Spring 2009 and Spring 2011 within the agreed capital programme.

### **Accessible Transport Booking & Information System**

It was noted that tenders had been invited for a new AccessBus booking system which would support the current operation and enable expansion to allow data communications and future requirements. The PTA had approved the capital expenditure and work was ongoing to replace the existing system in 2009.

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

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

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

It was reported that the number of passenger journeys undertaken in the 12 month period up to 31 July 2008 was 530,824 which represented an increase of almost 2% on the previous period. The total number of customers registered to use the service was 16,797 and at 31 July 2008, 7212 users had either made a journey within the last 3 months or registered within the last 6 months.

The Liaison Group was advised that a low percentage of registered users were from minority ethnic groups and members discussed ways in which this could be addressed. However it was noted that the demand for travel on AccessBus was continually increasing and spare capacity was extremely limited. It was reported that Metro held meetings and carried out consultation with a "Critical Friends Group" and a report on their work would be prepared for a future meeting.

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

## **7. CONCESSIONARY PASSES**

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive which provided an update on the English National Concessions Scheme (ENCS) pass issue.

The Liaison Group was advised that over 340,000 ENCS passes had been issued and approximately 1,500 new applications were being processed each week. There was an ongoing publicity campaign reminding people of the need to obtain a new ENCS pass by 30 September 2008.

It was reported that there were concerns regarding post offices not sending validated forms promptly to Metro for processing and a letter had been sent to all West Yorkshire post offices reminding them to forward application forms on a daily basis.

Members were also advised of a review to be carried out by the Department for Transport (DfT) of the administration and reimbursement arrangements for concessionary travel by seniors and disabled persons.

It was noted that the Ministry of Defence had published a cross-Government Command Paper recognising the contribution that service personnel made to the country. This included a paragraph on concessionary travel, stating that by April 2011 the statutory bus concession in England would be extended to include service personnel and veterans under the age of 60 who had been seriously injured in service.

### **RESOLVED -**

- (a)** That the report be noted.
- (b)** That the meeting consider any opportunities for collaboration arising from the use of ITSO smartcards for passes and from Metro's procurement of a web-hosted card management system.