

AGENDA ITEM NO 8a

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE TENDERED SERVICES WORKING GROUP HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE ON TUESDAY 4 DECEMBER 2007

PRESENT: Councillor T Brice (Chair)

Councillors C Campbell, P McBride, G Phelps and G Wainwright

61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED - An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Congreve.

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

63. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2007 be approved.

64. UPDATE TO MINUTE 57 (5 NOVEMBER 2007 MINUTES) - SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING FOR TENDERED BUS SERVICES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive concerning the amendment to the de minimis contract for the operation of Service 78, as detailed in minute 57 of the meeting of the Tendered Services Working Group held on 5 November 2007.

At the previous meeting Members had noted the award of a de minimis contract to First for the operation of an hourly off peak Service 78 between Colton and St James' Hospital on a 'use or lose it' basis for one year. It had also been noted that the withdrawal of Service 58 earlier in the year, which operated between St James' Hospital, Woodhouse Ridge and the city centre, had resulted in significant public concern.

In an effort to resolve these concerns discussions had been held between Metro and First to combine the two issues into a single off peak service. This would operate as Service 78 between Colton - Cross Gates - Seacroft - St James' Hospital - Woodhouse - city centre. Members commended this option as it would address the links to the city centre from Woodhouse Ridge, as well as restoring links to the hospital. Members noted that the additional costs of

running the service would be met from the budget identified for supplementary tendered bus services.

RESOLVED - That the amendment of the de minimis contract for the operation of Service 78 to operate between Colton - Cross Gates - Seacroft - St James' - Woodhouse - city centre be noted.

65. AWARD OF BUS SERVICE CONTRACTS - LEEDS

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive concerning the award of contracts for local bus services tendered under Batch 444.

It was reported that the Batch comprised of services operated by First, which included Service 66 (Tyersal - Pudsey - Troysdale - Armley - Leeds), Service 67 (Bramley - Old Farnley - Leysholme - Armley - Leeds) and Service 80 (Tyersal - Farsley - Pudsey). Following a recent accessibility and passenger usage assessment of these services, Services 66 and 67 had met Metro's criteria for passenger use. However, Service 80 averaged 3.5 passengers per trip most of whom travelled to/from Pudsey from Farnley and the Thorpe Road estate. In this respect, it had been agreed that tenders be invited for a revised route for Service 80 link within the Pudsey area, including connections to Morrison's supermarket, Bramley rail station and Pudsey. Members were advised that First had submitted a bid to run the revised route. Service 80 would operate between Farsley Gardens - Thorpe Estate - Pudsey - Bramley, as well as covering Service 67's route north of Bramley centre. First's proposal also included the operation of Service 67 between Leeds and Bramley only, which would resolve the reliability and punctuality problems on this route. Links between Farsley and Pudsey would also be enhanced by extending frequent Service 16 to Pudsey. This extension would commence from January 2008.

Members also noted proposals to use developer funds from the residential development at Pollard Lane, Bramley, to extend Service 80 to the site as an off peak service to interchange with core bus routes at Bramley centre and Bramley rail station. This extension was subject to the resolution of bus access to the site, which was presently being addressed with Leeds City Council.

It was, therefore, proposed that contracts be awarded to First on the basis of their submitted bid and to revise the network and award supplementary contracts as and when the Pollard Lane access issue had been resolved. Details of First's proposed tender award was outlined in Appendix 1 of the submitted report for Members' information.

RESOLVED - That the award of contracts for tendered bus service Batch 444 be noted.

66. AWARD OF BUS SERVICE TENDERS - KIRKLEES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the award of contracts for local bus services in the North Kirklees area tendered under Batch 435. These were due to expire at the end of January 2008 and were presently operated by Arriva.

It was reported that a review of the Batch had identified that 7% of the current services would be withdrawn, as they did not carry sufficient passengers to meet Metro's criteria for support. A further 10% would also be withdrawn from the Batch due to usage exceeding Metro's criteria, as fares revenue was enough to sustain commercial operation.

Members were informed that Arriva had submitted tenders to operate the services and that their tender price represented a 10% reduction in the cost of the Batch arising from the reduction in tendered mileage. However, the revised price represented a 9% increase in the cost per mile, compared to the current Confederation of Passenger Transport indicator of 6% over the 12 months up to June 2007.

In addition to the tender submission, the Working Group also noted that Arriva had proposed a number of service changes in North Kirklees, including the withdrawal of the commercial Service 225 between Cleckheaton and Halifax. As this withdrawal would greatly effect communities between Cleckheaton and Brighouse, an alternative hourly service pattern had been agreed with Arriva to operate between these communities on a tendered basis at an additional cost.

Members noted that the final price for Batch 435 following adjustment to accommodate the withdrawal of Service 225 resulted in a 6.5% reduction in current costs, representing a 9% increase in the current average over the Batch. In this respect, details of the tender prices and recommended schedule of contract awards was outlined in the Appendix to the submitted report.

RESOLVED - That the award of contracts for tendered bus service Batch 435 be noted.

67. SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING FOR TENDERED BUS SERVICES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on supplementary funding for tendered bus services from the approved budget for 2007/08 for the Bradford and Kirklees areas.

It was reported that the approved budget had identified funding for additional tendered bus services to address the recent reduction in the bus network. These services would be provided on a 'use it or lose it' basis and funding

would be allocated for the promotion and marketing of them. Members were informed of the criteria that had been approved to ensure the service proposals resulted in a positive impact on the delivery of Local Transport Plan targets.

Bradford Proposal

It was reported that work had commenced on an off peak hourly service between Shipley and Bradford Royal Infirmary operating Monday to Saturday from 9.30 am until 4.30 pm, incorporating the Windhill, Manningham Lane Surgery and Heaton areas. It was proposed to secure the service from First under a de minimis contract for a period of 12 months commencing in January 2008. Members noted that continuation of the service after this date would be considered utilising the adopted performance criteria for the supplementary services outlined in the submitted report.

Kirklees Proposal

The Working Group was advised that discussions had been held with Arriva in respect of enhancing Monday to Saturday evening service frequencies to Dewsbury District Hospital from the North Kirklees area. It was proposed to run additional early evening trips on Service 268 (Cleckheaton - Dewsbury) and Service 281 (Thornhill - Dewsbury - Batley - Birstall), thus enhancing existing commercial frequencies.

It was, therefore, proposed to award a de minimis contract to Arriva for the enhancement of evening service frequencies to Dewsbury District Hospital for a period of 12 months from January 2008. Again it was noted that continuation of the service after this date would be considered using the adopted performance criteria for the supplementary services outlined in the submitted report.

Members were advised that proposals were currently being developed in the Calderdale district, in particular with reference to improving access to Halifax Hospital and Calderdale College.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the award of a de minimis contract to First for the operation of a service between Shipley and Bradford Royal Infirmary be noted.
- (b) That the award of de minimis contract to Arriva for the operation of additional early evening trips on Services 268 and 281 be noted.

68. BUS SERVICE 284

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the withdrawal of Service 284, which had until recently been supported by developer funding.

Members were advised that Service 284 operated hourly between Dewsbury, Batley, Birstall Shopping Park, Gomersal and Heckmondwike. The commercial service operated by Arriva had been extended to include Birstall Shopping Park utilising funding secured from the developers of the site by Kirklees Council. It was noted that the tendered services contract for the service had expired in October 2007. Following a recent review of patronage Arriva had made the decision to withdraw the service from the end of January 2008 due to low passenger usage. Members were advised that most of the service's route would be covered by other services and that the shopping park would remain linked to Batley and Heckmondwike by Service 229 when Service 284 was withdrawn.

It was further reported that withdrawal of the service would regrettably result in areas such as Batley Carr, parts of Fieldhead Lane and Oxford Road (Gomersal) not being served by bus services, as passenger usage in these areas was also very low.

In view of the above, it was recommended that no further action be taken to retain the service, as it did not meet the Authority's criteria for support.

RESOLVED - That no further action be taken to retain Service 284.

69. BUS SERVICE CHANGES IN THE HOLME VALLEY

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the proposed bus service changes in the Holme Valley and also the award of an emergency contract for the provision of a minibus service to alleviate travel issues in the area.

As reported to previous meetings, local ward members and Parish councillors had been consulted by First on proposed changes to the Holme Valley bus network in August 2007. It was reported that despite initial endorsement of the proposals significant public concern had been raised and local/Parish members had requested that services remain unchanged. In this respect, First had agreed to defer the changes until December 2007 and to modify their proposals to meet some travel demands in the morning peak period. These amendments were outlined to Members in the submitted report. First had, however, rejected requests to retain the status quo, as they considered the current network was unsustainable with declining passenger numbers generating significant annual losses.

It was noted that the new network withdrew services along Sheffield Road between New Mill and Jackson Bridge and direct bus links between Scholes, Hepworth and Jackson Bridge to New Mill. Consideration had been given to providing this link using the tendered Holme Valley minibus network operated by Stotts. However, as the Holme Valley minibus network was jointly funded by the Holme Valley Parish Council, any amendments would require their agreement.

Members were advised that, whilst a review of the minibus service patterns was undertaken, it was recommended that a 'use it or lose it' service be provided on an emergency basis for the next 6 months. In this respect, an half hourly circular service comprising Holmfirth, Hepworth, Jackson Bridge, New Mill and Holmfirth had been developed, which would be operated by Stotts for the six month trial period.

Members encouraged the Parish Councils to support publicity about the operation of the new service to encourage passenger usage.

RESOLVED - That the award of an emergency contract for the operation of minibus services in the Holme Valley be noted.

70. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED - That the next meeting of the Working Group be rescheduled to take place on Wednesday 9 January 2008 at 2.00 pm.

71. CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR WISHES

The Chair wished everyone a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. He and Members also gave thanks to Metro officers for their hard work during the past year.