

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

**AT A MEETING OF THE WAKEFIELD PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, WAKEFIELD
ON THURSDAY 10 APRIL 2008**

PRESENT: Councillor G Phelps (Chair)

WYPTA

J S King
K Rhodes
M Walker

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

Pauline Blackburn	Derek Farren
John Churms	Brenda Fruish
Michael Dalton	Dennis Pattinson
Barbara Darlison	

WAKEFIELD MDC

B Smith

Also in attendance:-

G Cooper	-	Arriva Yorkshire
S Anguige	-	Arriva Yorkshire
D Haley	-	Northern Rail

13. MR K WATSON

The Chair advised the Committee of the sad death of public representative and Deputy Chair, Mr K Watson. He paid tribute to Mr Watson for his hard work and dedication to the Committee, which had spanned 8 years. In remembrance of Mr Watson members of the Committee held a minute's silence.

14. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

RESOLVED - That Mr D Pattinson be elected as Deputy Chair of the Committee.

15. COUNCILLOR STANLEY KING

The Chair advised the Committee of Councillor King's forthcoming retirement from the Passenger Transport Authority and Bradford Council in May 2008. He and the Committee thanked Councillor King for his hard work and valuable contributions to the meetings and wished him well for the future.

In response, Councillor King thanked everyone for their help and assistance and added that it had been a great pleasure to serve on the Authority.

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Hopkins (WMDC) and Ms C Carter (public representative).

17. MINUTES

Further to Item 9 - Minutes - Councillor B Smith advised that his apology for absence had not been noted. The Chair assured Councillor Smith that the minutes would be amended to reflect his absence.

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2008 be approved.

18. MEMBER FEEDBACK

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members of the feedback received at the meeting of the Committee held on 11 October 2007 and to report on action taken.

With regard to the consultation items presented to the previous meeting, the following further comments were made:

Role of the Bus Watchdog - Clarification was sought on a recent Department for Transport announcement that stated that a Bus Watchdog would be set up as part of the Passenger Focus Group. Officers confirmed that an announcement had been made by the DfT, however, full details were not yet known. Details of the announcement would be reported at the next meeting of the Committee.

Promotion of Public Transport to Non-Users - It was suggested that one area that could be addressed was the issue of comfort whilst travelling on bus services.

Members were reminded that individual detailed matters could be raised with Metro officers and the operators at the end of the meeting.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That at the next meeting the Committee be advised of details concerning the DfT's recent announcement to set up a Bus Watchdog as part of the Passenger Focus Group.

19. INFORMATION REPORT

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

Wakefield Kirkgate Rail Station

Members were advised that Network Rail was to commence construction of a new modern building to provide replacement staff facilities following demolition of old redundant buildings to the east of the main station building. It was reported that the Station Working Group had now agreed a development brief for the station building. This was presently with Network Rail in order that potential interest from commercial developers might be sought by them.

With regard to the painting of the Kirkgate railway bridge, Network Rail had confirmed that there was no funding to facilitate the repainting of the bridge through its bridge painting programme.

Comment was made on when it was likely that improvement works would commence to the station. Mr Haley of Northern Rail explained that it was anticipated works could commence late 2009. However, this was dependent resolving listed building issues and securing partnership with a developer.

Mr Farren asked that remedial works to resolve the leaking ceiling to the entrance of the station be undertaken. Mr Haley confirmed he would pursue the issue.

Transfer of Tendered Bus Service Contracts

The Committee was informed that several contracts for the operation of evening/Sunday services in South East Wakefield and between Wakefield and Huddersfield had been transferred between Stagecoach and Arriva Yorkshire. In South East Wakefield hourly services between Pontefract, Hemsworth and South Elmsall would operate. However, this had resulted in the loss of cross boundary evening/Sunday services, as Stagecoach would only operate their Barnsley services as far as Hemsworth and South Elmsall. Between Wakefield and Huddersfield via Horbury evening/Sunday services would be provided by Arriva and most daytime services continued to be operated by Stagecoach on this corridor.

Councillor King asked if arrangements could be made with both companies to ensure that bus drivers were aware of the need to co-ordinate departures for passengers changing buses at Hemsworth or South Elmsall. Mr Pearson confirmed that such arrangements had been discussed with both companies and would reinforce them on behalf of this Committee.

Hemsworth Bus Station

It was reported that Tesco's developers had commenced work on the site and were currently working on the provision of the library, school and new road infrastructure. The developers were presently reviewing the entire development programme, with the intention of opening the bus station during Summer 2008. In this respect, Metro had requested of the developers a detailed programme to be made available as soon as possible.

Castleford Interchange

The Committee was informed that design drawings, specifications and contract documentation would be completed by late April 2008 and that drawings had also been issued to Network Rail for approval due to the close proximity of the operational railway. Consultation continued with highways officers and train/bus operators regarding the scheme's development and implementation and work would be phased in order to maintain access to the long stay car park and platform. The existing bus station would remain in use until the Interchange was completed.

The construction start date was dependent on site assembly, property relocations, Network Rail agreements and full DfT funding approval for the scheme. However, subject to the above, it was anticipated that first stage construction would commence early 2009.

New Rail Station Prioritisation

It was reported that following the last review of proposed new rail stations for West Yorkshire, new guidance had been published, which focused on four key criteria areas: operational, engineering, business case and policy fit.

Members' noted that due to increased passenger demand, limited infrastructure, rolling stock capacity and increased station construction costs there was a need to refresh the list of previously identified sites in RailPlan 5 along with any new suggested sites. Consultants had been commissioned to undertake the work across West Yorkshire and, as part of the study, they would assess each proposed station site against the DfT's criteria of policy fit, station demand, technical/operational feasibility, accessibility and capacity. It was anticipated that the study would lead to a new prioritised list of potential new rail station sites and was expected to be completed by Summer 2008.

Councillor Walker requested confirmation on whether Crigglestone rail station had been included on the list of potential sites.

Information at Rail Stations

The Committee noted the details of a scheme to provide improvements to passenger information at all stations within West Yorkshire. The scheme would replace the existing system with a central, co-ordinated system based in Leeds. The new system would also co-ordinate audio and visual

information. Existing television style screens, at those stations so equipped, would be replaced with modern, DDA compliant, flat screens and a small number of these stations would also receive additional new screens to improve access to information. It was expected that the scheme would be installed and commissioned by Spring 2009.

Help Points at Rail Stations

Members were advised that help points were a franchised commitment and Metro had formally raised with Northern the serious issue of the station help points being out of order. Metro had asked for a position statement and action plan to urgently address the problem.

Tram-Train Trials

It was reported that a 'tram-train' was to be trialled on the Penistone Line for the first time in the UK. The trial would commence in 2010 for a two year period and would look at the environmental benefits, operating costs, technical suitability and popularity with passengers.

MyBus Update

The Committee was advised that all of the 150 Mybuses were now in operation across the districts. The scheme was commended at achieving a high level of mode shift from car users to bus users, particularly at primary schools. It was reported that the results/feedback of the scheme would be presented at a conference in May, in order to share best practice with other stakeholders, such as PTEs, local authorities and operators.

Metro was presently reviewing the whole fleet to determine if further efficiencies could be made as well as considering how to implement the benefits of the project to other schools tendered services.

Summer Seasonal Bus Services

The Committee was advised of a number of additional/enhanced bus services, which would commence operation during the Summer and provide access to rural areas of West Yorkshire. It was noted that the services would assist families, tourists and walkers and provide additional travel opportunities to those living in the countryside.

April Bus Service Changes

It was reported that the next major bus timetable change occurred on the weekend of 26/27 April 2008. The impact of the changes were summarised to members and it was confirmed that details would also be sent out to members very shortly via a copy of Metro's Changing Times leaflet.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

20. **CONSULTATION ITEMS -**
(a) **Metro Messenger Service Development**
(b) **Bus Service Operators' Grant**
(c) **New Concessionary Entitlement**

Metro Messenger Service Development

The Committee were given a short presentation on the Metro Messenger service and members' views were sought on the current service and how it could be further developed.

Bus Service Operators' Grant

It was reported that The Department for Transport (DfT) were currently consulting on options for change to the current arrangements for bus subsidies, in particular the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG). Members were given a short presentation and were advised that a summary would be sent to all PCC members for further consideration. Members were requested to forward to Metro any comments on the consultation by 30 April 2008.

Members expressed a view that all the bus subsidy should be determined locally rather than nationally in order that it was targeted at meeting particular local needs.

New Concessionary Entitlement

Members were aware of the new rules for concessionary travel entitlement, which became effective on 1 April 2008. They were given a presentation detailing what Metro had done to date to communicate information and were asked for any ideas or suggestions on how further marketing and communication could be carried out.

Future Consultation Item : Cross Boundary Services

Members were advised that the issue of cross boundary services within an integrated transport authority area would be discussed as a consultation item at a future meeting of the Committee.

Members were thanked for their suggestions to all the consultation items and asked to forward any further ideas or comments on the questionnaire provided at the meeting.

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