

AGENDA ITEM NO: 6

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY/ DISTRICT COUNCILS

AT A MEETING OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES LIAISON GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON MONDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2007

PRESENT: Councillor J Jarosz (Chair)

Councillors	D Schofield	-	WYPTA
	M Slater	-	WYPTA
	G Wainwright	-	WYPTA
	M Smith	-	Bradford MDC
	B Metcalfe	-	Calderdale MBC
	A Harrison	-	Leeds CC
	C Tennant	-	Wakefield MDC

Officers in attendance:	N Holt	-	Metro
	R Chaplin	-	WYPTA

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor K Hussain.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

10. MINUTES

Further to minute 4, Travel Training Update, it was noted that further information had been sent to the District Councils as requested. Members were advised that alternative means of continuing travel training services were being explored and would be reported to future meetings.

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

11. 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 CT Plus had taken over the operation of AccessBus in the Leeds area with minimal disruption.

Replacement AccessBus Vehicles

Members were advised that delivery of the remaining seven new vehicles was expected in April 2007 which would complete the fully low floor accessible fleet.

Taxi Services

The Liaison Group noted the pressure to use taxis and private hire vehicles to accommodate existing commitments and the increasing demand this had placed on budget resources. It was reported that following the introduction of new procedures during 2006, the number of taxi journeys had been reduced. Taxis would continue to be used for some journeys where the roads were inaccessible by the normal AccessBus vehicles.

Future Developments

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

Members welcomed the development of a pilot "Metro Local" concept, which would allow the enhancement of transport to/from school for SEN pupils as part of the MyBus initiative and off peak use to provide additional AccessBus capacity on a demand responsive basis. It was reported that the Department for Transport had agreed that the underspend from the MyBus scheme could be carried over into the 2007/08 financial year and be used to purchase up to 9 additional minibuses. It was proposed, subject to PTA approval, to launch the scheme in the Kirklees area in September 2007.

RESOLVED - That the report and presentation be noted.

12. 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 month period up to 31 January 2007 was 515,215, which represented an increase of 0.8% on the previous period. The total number of customers registered to use the service had also increased by 9% over the numbers registered at the end of January 2006. Members were advised that long term bookings were regularly reviewed in an attempt to obtain additional availability and to streamline the regular routes.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

13. 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 advised members of the outcome of First Group's appeal to the Secretary of State for Transport against the West Yorkshire Concessionary Travel Scheme's reimbursement arrangements.

It was noted that data for the period April to September 2006 showed a 21% increase in the number of journeys made by concessionary passengers since the introduction of free travel and a 32% increase in the number of permits issued up to November 2006 (an additional 15,700 permits).

Councillor Wainwright expressed concern about lack of clarity of additional funding allocated to District Councils through the Revenue Support Grant mechanism. Comment was made that the start time of 9.30 am for concessionary travel caused some problems for people who had early appointments at hospitals or health centres. It was noted that Metro was aware of the problem and had written to PCTs and hospital trusts to ask that they take travelling times into consideration when making appointments.

With regard to the First Appeal, it was noted that the Adjudicator had upheld one element of the appeal relating to the elasticity assumptions contained in Metro's reimbursement arrangements. As a result of this, Metro would have to make additional payments to First and recalculate concessionary travel payments for all operators at the end of the 2006/07 financial year. The outcome would have a significant impact on current and future budgets.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

14. 2008 CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL PROPOSALS

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on the proposals for a national free scheme for England from April 2008.

Members noted the summary of the 2008 scheme proposals outlined in the report and were advised that the DfT had established a number of Task Groups to advise on practical arrangements. It was reported that various options were being considered regarding the introduction of a new national smartcard for proof of entitlement. It was hoped this would assist in the wider adoption of smartcard ticketing systems.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.