

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY
AT A MEETING OF THE CALDERDALE PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE TOWN HALL, HALIFAX
ON TUESDAY 11 JANUARY 2011

PRESENT: Councillor R Pearson (Chair)

WYITA

K Watson

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

Andrew Booth	Andrew Rowe
Myra James	John Sheppard
Peter Melling	Peter Stocks
John Myddleton	John Whiteley

CALDERDALE MC

G Carter
B Collins
R Goldthorpe

Also in attendance:

M Knott	-	CentreBus
R Harris	-	First
D Haley	-	Northern

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Pearson and public representative, John Sykes.

9. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2010 be noted.

10. MEMBER FEEDBACK

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members of the feedback received at the meeting held on 8 October 2010 and to report the action taken.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

11. INFORMATION REPORT

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

Comprehensive Spending Review

It was reported that there would be significant reductions in capital and revenue funding for transport in West Yorkshire following the Comprehensive Spending Review and funding announcements for local government. Central government funding for local government was expected to reduce by around 25% over the next 3 years although the impact on different authorities varied considerably.

Metro Budget

The Committee was advised that just less than 50% of Metro's budget came through the District Councils. Discussions on the levy for 2011/12 had taken account of affordability in view of the funding reductions and Metro was making a wide range of efficiency savings, including reducing staff numbers.

Caldervale Line Study

It was reported that Metro was working closely with Calderdale and Bradford Councils who had jointly appointed consultants, Arup, to develop proposals for enhancing the Caldervale line. Improvements to the existing rail services would help connect people to jobs and local amenities and would support the strategic vision for economic growth. Addressing the current infrastructure constraints could reduce journey times, enhance service quality and simplify the timetable. Members asked that consideration be given to protecting the smaller rail stations on the line in any proposals as they had previously suffered loss of services due to timetable changes. The work being carried out would be fed into the Northern Hub work being led by Network Rail and it was hoped that the enhancements sought could be implemented through the Northern Hub scheme and the next Northern franchise.

Comment was made that increasing services on the Caldervale Line would affect Leeds Station which already had capacity issues. It was noted that the proposed East Leeds Parkway scheme which would have helped to address these problems had been put on hold by the new Government.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)

It was noted that the Government had approved the setting up of a new LEP which would be a partnership of both public and private sector organisations. Metro and city region partners were developing the arrangements for the LEP

and it was anticipated that it would commence in early 2011. The new LEP, which would be private sector led, would be required to endorse city region bids prior to submission to Government.

Disruptions Due to Bad Weather

The Committee discussed the severe disruptions to bus and rail services in Calderdale during the recent bad weather. Members thanked the operators and Metro for the efforts made to retain as many services as possible and keep passengers informed during that time.

Metro and operators had reviewed processes following the bad weather early in 2010 and systems had been put in place for operators to send regular updates to Metro which could then be used by MetroLine, travel centres and bus stations. Metro's PR team ensured that all disruption information was on the website within minutes and also used Facebook, Twitter and other mechanisms to disseminate information. It was recognised that any bus real time system would not be able to generate totally accurate predictions during severe disruption and it was hoped to be able to use screens in bus stations and shelters and SMS messages to provide more up to date information. It was noted that Metro continued to explore ways of improving information services and it was proposed to establish emergency teams which would supplement bus station staff to assist passengers when there was severe disruption in future.

Customer Feedback

The Committee was advised of the new Customer Feedback system which had been installed at Metro. The system would identify key areas for improvement, enable better information sharing with operators, provide feedback reports and ensure that all targets for response times were met. Initial implementation problems had been resolved and the system was now providing an enhanced customer service.

Smartcard Update

The Committee was updated on progress in respect of the development of a Smartcard ticketing scheme. The move to the use of Smartcards was dependent on operators equipping their buses with smart enabled ticketing machines and they were being encouraged to install these by the Department for Transport through enhanced Bus Service Operators Grant payments.

MetroCard Prices

It was reported that the prices of MetroCards and DayRovers (with the exception of the Metro Day ticket) had increased from 2 January 2011. Details of the increases were attached at Appendix A to the submitted report.

Members discussed the problem some bus passengers were experiencing when buying day tickets on bus. Concern was expressed that some drivers

were only offering to operator only own tickets which were then not valid on other operator's services. Mr Harris advised the Committee that all First's ticket machines were programmed to sell Metrocard day tickets and members were asked to provide details of instances where they had experienced a problem. Comment was made that not all passengers were aware of the different types of tickets available and it was therefore essential to have one simple ticketing system in order to encourage more people to use public transport. It was noted that a joint study was to be undertaken by Metro and the operators on integrated ticketing in the near future.

Members also advised that they were receiving comments about the cost of fares which had risen considerably over the last three years.

Service Changes

The Committee was advised that the next major timetable change would take place on the weekend of 29 January 2011. It was noted that these would be limited to minor timing changes to some of First's services in Calderdale and details would be set out in a copy of Metro's Changing Times leaflet which would be circulated to all PCC members in the near future.

Christmas/Boxing Day Services

It was noted that Metro funded the operation of services on core routes into Leeds and Huddersfield on 26 December 2010. Members asked for consideration to be given to providing more services on Boxing Day. There were many people who needed to get to and from work or visit friends or relatives in hospital etc. Comment was made that the reduced Saturday/Sunday service provided by operators meant that some areas did not have a bus service between Christmas and New Year. In response Mr Harris advised that it was not possible to cover all areas with the reduced level of service at this time.

Cable Theft

It was noted that the increased incidences of cable theft were having a major impact on the rail network and until the recent bad weather it had been the main cause of train delay and cancellation. It was believed that the increase in theft was due mainly to the rise in copper prices. Members were advised of the rail industry's efforts and actions to reduce the number of cable theft and vandalism incidents. It was reported that the Chairman of the Authority had written to the Magistrates Courts asking that the seriousness of the crime be reflected in sentencing.

Shelter Update (Clearchannel, Lighting Installation Programme)

It was reported that the project to provide advertising panels at over 1700 locations and low energy lighting at over 4,000 shelters was complete. The income generated from the advertising panels would contribute to the cost of maintaining all shelters and stops throughout West Yorkshire. It was noted

that the programme to replace life expired shelters continued across all West Yorkshire and 90 new shelters had been provided between April – December 2010.

Rail Issues

The Committee noted that total average loadings for the period May – December 2010 had shown an increase on Northern Rail services of 5.2% into and out of Leeds from the previous six month period. Members discussed the need for additional carriages and were advised that there was a shortage of rolling stock in a market that was heavily influenced by decisions made by the Department for Transport. The Government had confirmed 8 additional trains for the Northern Rail franchise to date, primarily operating in the North West of England. Any additional trains for West Yorkshire were subject to on-going commercial negotiations.

Members expressed concern regarding the frequent cancellation of the 1610 service from Leeds to Halifax and the lack of information provided on the platform at Leeds station at such times. It was noted that there were occasions when cancellations may appear on the information boards but there were no audio announcements and it was requested that rail staff be available on the platforms at such times.

Brighouse Bus Station Award

The Committee was advised that Brighouse Bus Station, which was officially opened in May 2009, was the runner up in the 'infrastructure' category at the UK Bus Awards held in December 2010.

No Smoking Policy

Councillor Pearson asked for clarification of First's no smoking policy for its employees. He reported an incident where a bus had been driven at speed to enable the driver to subsequently alight for a cigarette. Whilst smoking he took fares from passengers whilst standing outside the vehicle. The bus continued on its journey and then stopped further along the route to change drivers. However the bus was approximately 3 metres short of its official stop and the driver got off and had another cigarette whilst talking the relief driver. The new driver then moved the bus to the stop to collect the waiting passengers.

In response, Mr Harris advised that First did operate a no smoking policy but had to allow discretionary smoking breaks. However he accepted that incidents of the type reported were not acceptable.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

12. CONSULTATION ITEM – DEVELOPMENT OF THE WEST YORKSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 3 (WYLTP3)

The Committee was updated on the ongoing development work for the preparation of the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) 2011 – 2026 and the development of a 3 year Implementation Plan for 2011 – 2014.

Members were thanked for their input following the special joint meeting of all the PCCs in November 2010 and the key issues raised were outlined in the submitted report. The public consultation on the draft strategy had ended on 7 January 2011 and members received a presentation which provided them with a summary of the consultation feedback received to date.

It was reported that work with District partners and stakeholders was being undertaken to develop the first three year Implementation Plan for 2011-2014. The draft Implementation Plan reflected the reduced amount of LTP3 funding with future spending focussed on maintaining existing assets and reducing congestion to support jobs growth and carbon reduction in accordance with the themes in the draft strategy. The importance of the local tourism sector to the local economy was recognised in the strategy.

Members were advised that consultation on the draft Implementation Plan was scheduled from 24 January – 11 February 2011. The Implementation Plan would be published with the full West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 by 1 April 2011.

Members were thanked for their participation and were asked to forward any further ideas or comments to Metro on the questionnaire provided at the meeting or by email to erica.ward@wypte.gov.uk.

RESOLVED –

- (a)** That the approach set out in the submitted report for developing WYLTP3 be noted.
- (b)** That members' views be noted.