

AGENDA ITEM NO: 6

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY / DISTRICT COUNCILS

AT A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE LIAISON GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2009

PRESENT: Councillor T Leadley (Chair)

Councillors S Khan	-	WYITA
G Lowe	-	WYITA
Z Ali	-	Bradford MC

Officers in Attendance:

P Oldroyd	-	Calderdale MBC
C Perkin	-	Leeds CC
D Atkins	-	Wakefield MDC
N Holt	-	Metro
A Pilling	-	Metro
S Wainwright	-	Metro
R Chaplin	-	WYITA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Brice (WYITA), A Denham (Kirklees), S Bentley (Leeds), S Balfour (Wakefield) and N Parker (Education Bradford).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Gwen Lowe declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6, Communications Progress Report.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2009 be approved.

4. YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRATEGY

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive which provided an update on delivery of the Young People's Strategy.

It was reported that Metro's Youth Transport Forum had met on five occasions and positive feedback had been received on a range of transport issues. A Young People's Communication and Liaison Co-ordinator had

been appointed on a six month fixed term contract to develop a robust consultation mechanism with a cross section of young people.

Members were advised that a Young People's conference had been arranged for 14 October 2009. It was hoped that this would attract up to 30 delegates from each district and would provide an opportunity for young people to discuss public transport issues relevant to them. The conference would include six workshops, all run by representatives of the Youth Transport Forum, and feedback would be presented to the next meeting of the Group.

It was reported that the consultants' final report regarding ticketing initiatives was expected in the near future. Metro was liaising with the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to seek to develop new ticketing products to resolve the inflexibility of the SchoolCard product. It was recognised that this could be difficult to deliver without further pressure from bus operators to increase the cost of SchoolCard.

Members noted the progress of actions contained in the Strategy which were scheduled to be delivered during the 2009/10 academic year. Details were attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report. Progress was difficult due to limited available staff resources.

RESOLVED - That progress in delivering the Strategy be noted.

5. EDUCATION TRANSPORT SPECIAL NEEDS AND INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress made in relation to SEN Transport and Independent Travel Training.

It was noted that Metro was working closely with the district LEAs on the development of an initiative to improve the quality of the lives of children with special needs. The key component of the initiative was the development of independent travel training which aimed to provide pupils with new skills to build their confidence to enable them to travel independently. This not only gave the pupils greater choices in terms of education, training and future employment but lead to a reduction in home-to-school transport costs and vehicle requirements for the LEAs.

It was reported that Metro had attended meetings with the Regional Travel Trainers Group. The Independent Travel Trainers had attended the recent Mybus driver conference. This had provided the opportunity for them to meet operators and drivers and share issues relating to independent travel by SEN children. The Independent Travel Trainers were to be invited to run a workshop at the next Mybus conference.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That progress on the development of partnership working with the Independent Travel Trainers be reported to the next meeting.

6. COMMUNICATIONS PROGRESS REPORT

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members of progress with the SAFEMark Award scheme and the work of the Metro Schools Communication Team.

It was noted that the communications strand of the Young People's Strategy included the delivery of the Junior and Senior SAFEMark schemes, marketing of Mybus services and maintenance of the GenerationM website.

Members noted the schools which had been targeted to work through the senior SAFEMark award during the 2009/10 academic year. It was reported that a strategy for communicating with parents of pupils moving from junior to high school was also being developed. Metro was working with the LEA Admission Officers to explore opportunities to provide public transport information via existing mailings and other channels. It was noted that a further source of information could be via secondary school prospectuses and this would be investigated further for the 2011/2012 intake.

With regard to the GenerationM website, members noted that during March – July 2009 the number of new users had significantly increased compared to the same period in 2008. The website had been updated to provide bespoke information on passes and services at each school and during August it was used to market the MetroActive campaign. The site had provided an additional resource for customers and relieved the pressure for Metro staff dealing with telephone queries during the September peak. Metro was undertaking a review of the site during the Autumn to investigate ways of attracting returning users. It was suggested that consideration be given to providing information on commercial bus services as well as school specific services. It was noted that SchoolCard application forms could be downloaded from the site although it was not yet possible to apply for them on line. It was hoped that this could be addressed in the future.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

7. EDUCATION TRANSPORT MONITORING – PROGRESS REPORT

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive which provided an update on progress made in relation to the monitoring of school bus, Mybus and taxi services. Members were also briefed on progress with the Electronic Data Capture project for monitoring services and the

development and implementation of a penalty points system for managing operator performance.

Members noted the summary of monitoring activity which had taken place during the 2008/2009 academic year. As a result of the monitoring and associated partnership work with VOSA and district licensing authorities, 33 Formal Warning Investigations had been instigated resulting in the issue of 18 Formal Warnings.

With regard to the Electronic Data Capture project, it was noted there were still some software issues which continued to delay the implementation of the programme. It was expected that these should be resolved in the near future and the testing phase would be completed before Christmas 2009, allowing the system to be fully introduced in January 2010.

It was reported that a penalty points scheme had been developed and would be piloted on Calderdale and Wakefield taxi and minibus services after the October half term holiday. Operators would be advised on a monthly basis of the number of penalty points they had attracted and the financial penalties they would have incurred had it been a contractual arrangement. If the pilot proved successful it would be included in Metro's Conditions of Contract for the 2010/11 academic year. A progress report would be prepared for the next meeting.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the progress of Metro's monitoring team be noted.
- (b) That progress on the trial of the penalty points system be reported to the next meeting.

8. SCHOOL BUS ISSUES

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive which reported on school bus tender results, changes to the timings of the school day and type of school, SchoolCard pricing, policy and procedure for pupil allocation, the MetroActive marketing campaign and Agency Agreements.

Changes to Timing of the School Day

Members noted the requests for changes of timing to the school day in each District which were outlined in the submitted report. Any additional costs arising from the changes were being met in full by the schools or their LEA. The Liaison Group discussed the issue of some schools choosing to become academies. In many cases this had resulted in changes to the timing of the school day and as the schools operate as autonomous units and are outside LEA control, they are not obliged to comply with the statutory consultation and notice arrangements.

MetroActive – update

It was reported that positive feedback had been received about the MetroActive campaign held during August. In order to evaluate its effectiveness, Metro was analysing its own survey data and seeking further passenger and financial information from operators. It was hoped that this exercise could be repeated in future years but this would be dependent upon the agreement of bus operators.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.