

AGENDA ITEM NO: 8

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY/ DISTRICT COUNCILS

AT A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION LIAISON GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON MONDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2005

PRESENT:	Councillor D Blackburn	-	(Chair)
	Councillor M Bower	-	WYPTA
	Councillor C Greaves	-	WYPTA
	Councillor S Khan	-	WYPTA
	Councillor P McBride	-	WYPTA (Observer)
	Councillor M McCabe	-	Bradford MDC
	Councillor S Bentley	-	Leeds CC
Officers in Attendance:	N Parker	-	Education Leeds
	P Oldroyd	-	Calderdale MBC
	K Ellis	-	Wakefield MDC
	R Smith	-	Wakefield MDC
	N Holt	-	Metro
	A Pilling	-	Metro
	J Bennett	-	Metro
	R Chaplin	-	WYPTA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Kershaw (Wakefield) and P Phillips (Calderdale) and Ms L Dobie (Kirklees).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2005 be approved.

4. SCHOOL BUS TENDER RESULTS 2005

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the results of tenders sought for 'big bus' schools transport services in West Yorkshire for the 2005 -2006 school year.

It was noted that the level of competition had been good with 16 operators bidding for work. Contracts were awarded to 7 existing operators and one new schools service operator. Members were advised that although the total annual cost of the awards had risen, it included the provision of new services at South Leeds and Mount St Mary's Roman Catholic High School. The costs of the additional new services would be met in full by Education Leeds, which would result in the comparable total annual costs being reduced by 3.4%.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

5. CHANGES TO THE TIMING OF THE SCHOOL DAY

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the results of requests received for changes to the timing of the school day at various schools throughout West Yorkshire.

It was reported that, in most cases, Metro had received early notification of requests for changes which had allowed for full consultation with the schools, operators and LEAs and thereby enable the changes to be accommodated. Members were advised that the timing of the school day would play a significant role in facilitating the implementation of Metro's MyBus Yellow Bus scheme. In order to maximise the utilisation of vehicles, it would be necessary for some schools, particularly primary schools, to change the time of their school day and it was hoped that the level of co-operation from each LEA would continue to secure the success of the project.

RESOLVED -

(a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the LEAs work with Metro to secure changes to the timing of the school day at schools where this would facilitate the implementation of the MyBus Yellow Bus schemes.

6. SCHOOLCARD PRICING 2005

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the arrangements for the pricing of SchoolCard for the 2005/2006 academic year.

It was reported that the operators had agreed to index link the increase in the price of SchoolCard and the notional countywide average card cost would therefore increase by 3.7% to £363.00 for 2005/2006. The proportion each LEA would pay had been redetermined to take account of changing travel patterns.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

7. CONCESSIONARY PHOTOCARDS FOR 11 YEAR OLDS

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress in promoting the use of PhotoCards to young people.

It was reported that pilots were being undertaken with a small number of secondary schools to assess the viability of schools issuing PhotoCards directly as part of the admissions process for Year 7 pupils and the results would be reported to the next meeting of the Liaison Group. The LEAs were asked to consider the possibility of issuing PhotoCard application forms to young people via the secondary schools admissions process. It was noted that information was being given to Year 6 primary school pupils and it was suggested that application forms could also be distributed at the information meetings parents and pupils attend prior to commencing secondary education.

Members noted that because not all young people would have obtained a PhotoCard by the start of the school year, Metro had secured operator agreement to a month's amnesty until the end of September.

RESOLVED -

- (a)** That the report be noted.
- (b)** That the LEAs consider the viability of issuing PhotoCard applications as part of the LEA admissions process.
- (c)** That a report be prepared for the next meeting of the Liaison Group on the results of the pilot scheme regarding the viability of schools issuing PhotoCards as part of the admissions process for Year 7 pupils.

8. VETTING OF PCV DRIVERS

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress with the implementation of Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for drivers of school buses.

It was reported that following the last meeting of the Liaison Group, meetings had been held with local operators and North Yorkshire County Council. North Yorkshire County Council had expressed their willingness to act as an 'umbrella body' for Metro and West Yorkshire operators which would include the administrative process of sending off forms and assessing the impact of a disclosure on a person's suitability for a post.

The Liaison Group noted the desirability of utilising an umbrella body and also that one body should be responsible for the whole of West Yorkshire to ensure consistent standards. However it was recognised that there could be an authority within West Yorkshire who could take on the function and LEAs

would be contacted in the near future to ascertain their interest in undertaking this role.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That LEAs approach Metro if they are willing and able to provide the umbrella body function for the vetting of West Yorkshire drivers.

9. MYBUS PHASE 1 EVALUATION

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on Phase 1 of the Yellow Bus project (now known as *My Bus*).

It was noted that Phase 1 of *My Bus* had been completed which involved the design and implementation of the service to utilise 30 vehicles across West Yorkshire in the 2004/2005 academic year.

Members were advised that 25 vehicles were operational and the remaining buses would be used to deliver the scheme at Prince Henry School in Otley which had been postponed until September 2005 to allow essential access works to be carried out at the school.

The Liaison Group noted the success of Phase 1 in reducing the level of road network usage by attracting users to the *My Bus* services and encouraging a mode shift away from the car. The scheme had been strongly supported by children, parents and head teachers and the *My Bus* drivers felt that working on the scheme had improved their job satisfaction and radically improved school transport.

Members congratulated officers on the success of the scheme.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

10. MYBUS PHASE 2 UPDATE

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress made in implementing schemes in Phase 2 of the *My Bus* yellow bus scheme.

Members noted the list of schools to be served in Phase 2 of the scheme using 60 vehicles to be procured within the 2005/2006 financial year. Metro had sought to procure a low floor vehicle both for Phase 2 services and ultimately to replace the high floor vehicles used in Phase 1. Delivery of the first of the new vehicles would be in the Autumn and it was expected that these would become operational after the October half term at Bingley Grammar School.

The Liaison Group noted that the Phase 2 services had been tendered as one Batch to allow smaller operators to tender for clusters of services around one or more schools, but also to allow the larger operators to tender for most or all of the services if they wished. Operators had been invited to attend a seminar in June to disseminate information and encourage new operators to tender, thereby increasing competition. Members noted that competition had been good, with bids received from 11 operators. Contracts had been awarded to First, CT Plus and Teamdeck with one tender yet to be awarded.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

11. ADDRESSING BEHAVIOUR ISSUES ON SCHOOL BUSES

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on steps taken to resolve behavioural issues on school buses.

Members were advised of the initiatives aimed to address the problem of poor behaviour on school buses which included the provision of bespoke school services with CCTV, dedicated drivers and, for yellow bus services and other boarding card services, registers of users. The SAFEMark award was being implemented where yellow buses were being introduced and also at schools where behaviour on buses was a cause for concern. It was reported that a trial was being carried out with Education Bradford which ensured that holders of SchoolCards, Boarding Cards and Concessionary PhotoCards were aware that they could be withdrawn for a specified period of time if the holder was found to be misbehaving. If the trial proved successful, Metro proposed to work with other LEAs to take a similar approach.

It was noted that consultations had also been held with the Police about the possibility of using Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to travel on buses where persistent problems were reported. Metro was developing a funding bid for 8 PCSOs to be deployed across the County and, if successful, 50% of the funding would be met by the Home Office and 50% contributed jointly by Metro and local operators. A report on the outcome of the bid would be prepared for the next meeting of the Liaison Group.

It was noted that operators were being urged to use their Inspectors to check tickets on school buses and to ensure that all incidents were reported to the Police in order that they are recorded and registered as a crime.

RESOLVED -

- (a)** That the report be noted.
- (b)** That a report on the outcome of the funding bid be prepared for the next meeting of the Liaison Group.

12. THE SAFEMARK AWARDS SCHEME PROGRESS REPORT

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress on the development of the SAFEMark Awards Scheme in West Yorkshire.

Members noted the schools currently participating in the scheme and noted that an additional 27 secondary schools would begin working on the SAFEMark award in the new academic year.

It was reported that a School Travel information leaflet had been produced by the West Yorkshire School Travel Advisors Group. The SAFEMark team were working closely with the School Travel Advisors in each district to further develop the practical aspects of integrating the school travel planning and SAFEMark processes.

Junior SAFEMark workshops had been held during June and July in each district and a teaching resource, 'Step Up', had been developed for schools unable to attend the workshops. A Junior SAFEMark leaflet had also been produced to provide a step by step guide to using public transport. The SAFEMark team was working with District Council staff to integrate the messages of Junior SAFEMark into ongoing safety education projects.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

13. EDUCATION TRANSPORT – SERVICE MONITORING

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the appointment of an Education Transport quality and safety monitoring team.

It was reported that the Passenger Transport Authority had approved the introduction of a new three person team, which in addition to maintaining current systems would monitor key performance indicators such as punctuality, CRB checks (ensuring operator compliance), the correct use of safety equipment (seatbelts etc), contract compliance (vehicle capacity etc) and general quality issues (driver appearance, vehicle cleanliness etc). The new team would commence during September and their initial work would be focussed on the development of new systems and processes and the establishment of effective working partnerships with other monitoring agencies. It was anticipated that the full monitoring programme would be implemented in January 2006.

RESOLVED -

(a) That the report be noted.

(b) That a progress report be prepared for the next meeting of the Liaison Group.