

AGENDA ITEM No: 16(b)

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE TENDERED SERVICES WORKING GROUP HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE ON MONDAY 12 MAY 2008

PRESENT: Councillor T Brice (Chair)

Councillors C Campbell, D Congreve, G Phelps and G Wainwright

106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

107. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2008 be approved.

108. AWARD OF CONTRACTS FOR TENDERED BUS SERVICES - BATCH 462

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the award of tenders for the operation of bus services in the Wakefield area, which were currently operated by Arriva under emergency contracts.

It was reported that the services had been provided to maintain links to Badsworth, parts of Upton and the Broad Lane area of South Elmsall and links between Overton and Leeds. It was recognised that the loss of these services would severely impact on access to employment/social inclusion and, therefore, Arriva had been awarded an emergency contract to continue their operation until 27 July 2008.

Members were informed that tenders had recently been invited to operate the services as follows:

X16 (one trip per day in each direction between Overton - Netherton - Leeds Monday to Friday)

486 (an hourly service between Ackworth - Broad Lane - South Elmsall between 0700 and 1800 hours Monday to Saturday)

It was reported that Godsons had submitted a cost effective bid to operate Service X16 and Arriva had offered a competitive price per annum to maintain Service 485 as a through service from Wakefield utilising a low floor accessible vehicle. It was recognised that whilst Arriva's bid was not the

cheapest it did retain the necessary through link to Wakefield and included an enhancement in vehicle quality. It was, therefore, agreed that Arriva's and Godsons' bids be accepted.

RESOLVED - That the award of contracts to Arriva and Godsons, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted as consistent with the Authority's policies for the provision of local bus services.

109. BUS SERVICE 586

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on actions taken following the retirement of the operator (J & R Travel) of tendered Service 586.

Members were advised that J & R Travel's contract to operate the service was due to expire in July 2008, but the operator had finished operation on 30 March 2008 due to ill health. Arrangements to secure a replacement service had not been made due to lack of notification by the operator and, therefore, the service did not run on 1, 4 and 5 April 2008.

It was reported that in order to avoid further inconvenience to passengers interim arrangements had been made with Mike's Minibuses to operate a taxibus service for two weeks from 8 April 2008. It was noted that Keech of Hebden Bridge had now been appointed to operate the service from 22 April 2008 at the current tender price per week until termination of the contract at the end of July 2008. This service would be reviewed as part of the wider review of Taxibus services in the area.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the award of an emergency contract to Mike's Minibuses for a taxibus to provide an interim free taxibus service following the unexpected withdrawal of Service 586 be noted.
- (b) That the award of an emergency contract to Keech for the operation of Service 586 between 2 May 2008 and 25 July 2008 be noted.

110. BRADFORD FREECITYBUS - AWARD OF CONTRACT

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the award of a contract for the operation of the Bradford FreeCityBus.

Discussions had been held with First Bradford regarding the operation of Bradford FreeCityBus with regard to operational costs and the possible impact of the service on the company's commercial services in the area. Members were advised that First had offered to operate the service at an annual cost of £214,600 utilising 3 Optare Solo vehicles Monday to Saturday on a ten minute frequency. It was noted that the cost per mile of the service was less than

those of the other free bus services operating in Leeds, Huddersfield and Wakefield. The bid was realistic when compared with those schemes where competitive tenders had been sought.

It was, therefore, agreed to award a de minimus contract to First on a six month trial period from September 2008 to March 2009, with an option to agree a further contract for up to five years on the same cost basis if the trial proved successful. The costs of the trial would be met by Metro and then jointly funded with Bradford Council if the trial was successful.

RESOLVED - That the award of contract to First for the operation of the Bradford FreeCityBus, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted as consistent with the Authority's policies for the provision of tendered services.

111. COLNE VALLEY TAXIBUS UPDATE

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on actions undertaken following discussions at the last meeting of this group regarding the operation of taxibus services in the Colne Valley.

The Group had agreed not to renew the contract for taxibus services due to poor patronage. This decision had attracted local criticism and representations had been received to retain the service. At the last meeting it was, therefore, agreed that arrangements for the Wilberlee school pupils be extended to provide a demand responsive service for residents living in areas not served by other regular bus services. This provision would be on a temporary basis until the end of July 2008 in order to allow further investigation of funding to support a longer term service.

It was reported that discussions had now taken place with Mount Taxis to provide an interim taxibus service in the Colne Valley utilising an eight seater minibus from 28 April 2008 until 25 July 2008. On this basis, members were advised that an emergency contract had been awarded to the operator.

Following ongoing discussions with Kirklees Council, the Group was advised that 6 months funding had been made available from July 2008 to enable a wider joint investigation of alternative future solutions.

RESOLVED - That the award of an emergency contract to Mount Taxis for the operation of an interim taxibus service in the Colne Valley between 28 April 2008 until 25 July 2008 be noted.

112. LOCAL BUS SERVICES - KIRKLEES DISTRICT

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the award/extension of various contracts for the operation of local bus services in the Kirklees District.

Holme Valley

Members were advised that of the passengers surveyed only 12 had used Services H8 and H9 because they had no access to alternative bus services. This represented less than one passenger per trip, which did not meet Metro's criteria for financial support. Despite the poor patronage there was strong local support for its continuation. Developer funding also provided for a modified service to encompass the local hospital and elderly person complex. It was noted that a revised price per annum had now been secured from the existing operator for the proposed route. Kirklees Council had also agreed to fund the net cost of the service after the developer contribution for a six month period to January 2009, in order to allow a review of the new route and investigate longer term options.

Colne Valley

As detailed in the previous item, an interim agreement had been made with Kirklees Council to fund a taxibus service in Colne Valley following the end of the current emergency contract with Mount Taxis. The funding would be effective from the end of July 2008 to the January 2009 service change date. Metro had also agreed to contribute a small amount of funding towards maintaining the service. Revised contract arrangements to facilitate the six month extension would be the subject of negotiation with Mount Taxis.

Members commended the work undertaken to secure the service. However, they emphasised the requirement to make clear to passengers that the service was provided on a 'use it or lose it' basis. The Group also recommended that the decision be promoted locally.

South East Kirklees

The success of the Christmas link between the Denby Dale area and Barnsley last year had provided a new impetus for the provision of a regular service. Investigations had now taken place with Stagecoach, who operate other services within South Yorkshire to/from Barnsley. In order to restore the cross-boundary link, it was proposed to extend one of the company's existing routes between Barnsley and Kexbrough to cover the Skelmanthorpe and Denby Dale areas. In this respect, Stagecoach had agreed to provide the link on an hourly basis Monday to Friday at a total cost of £102,000. Members noted that Metro and Kirklees Council would jointly fund the cross-boundary service on a six months trial basis to January 2009.

The financial implications concerning the contract awards were outlined in Table 1 of the submitted report.

RESOLVED - That the action in respect of contracts, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.