

**WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**

**AT A MEETING OF THE WAKEFIELD PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE  
COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, WAKEFIELD  
ON THURSDAY 17 JANUARY 2008**

**PRESENT:** Councillor K Rhodes (Chair)

**WYPTA**

M Walker

**PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES**

Christine Carter

John Churms

Michael Dalton

Barbara Darlison

Derek Farren

Brenda Fruish

Dennis Pattinson

**WAKEFIELD MDC**

R Halliday

**Also in attendance:-**

G Cooper - Arriva Yorkshire

D Haley - Northern

**8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G Phelps (WYPTA), Councillor D Hopkins (WMDC) and public representatives P Blackburn and K Watson.

**9. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2007 be approved.

**10. MEMBER FEEDBACK**

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members of the feedback received at the meeting of the Committee held on 11 October 2007 and to report on action taken.

Members were reminded that individual detailed matters could be raised with Metro officers and the operators at the end of the meeting.

**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 Wakefield District.

### **Bus Services Changes**

Members were advised that the next major timetable change would take place on the weekend of 26/27 January 2008, although the Wakefield area would see only very minor timetable changes. A copy of Metro's Changing Times leaflet had been sent to all PCC members and further copies were available at the meeting.

### **Boxing Day Bus Services**

It was reported that Metro had funded the pilot operation of daytime bus services on core routes into Leeds and Huddersfield on Boxing Day providing access to shops in the two busiest retail areas and links to local hospitals. Initial indications were that the services had proved to be very well used carrying approximately 35,000 passengers. The Authority would consider repeating the services for Boxing Day 2008 and would also investigate expansion to other areas.

### **Concessionary Permit Issue**

It was reported that over 290,000 application forms for the English National Concessionary Scheme pass had been received in readiness for the introduction of the new national scheme in April 2008. The new smartcard passes and information on how to use them would be sent out to applicants in March 2008.

### **Yorcard Roll Out**

It was reported that opportunities to roll out the pilot smartcard scheme to other areas throughout the Yorkshire and Humber region were being investigated. Metro was working with other authorities and operators to develop a strong business case.

Comment was made that to assist in developing a strong business case for the roll out of smartcards, Metro should also look at schemes in other areas of the country where smartcards were successfully operating.

### **Real Time Information Update**

It was reported that over 2 million text requests had been received to date, with approximately 4,500 text messages being sent each day giving information about departures from West Yorkshire bus stops. It was also

noted that following vandalism to electronic displays, a protective cover had been developed and it was hoped that the roll out of displays would resume during February 2008. The scheme was receiving positive feedback from customers.

### **MyBus**

The Committee were advised that all of the 150 MyBuses were operational and a project evaluation report was currently being prepared. The Rt Hon David Blunkett MP had recently visited Metro to look at the scheme and feedback from him and fellow Yellow Bus Commissioners had been extremely positive. It was reported that Metro were proud to have won the Accessibility category at the recent UK Bus Awards for the MyBus project.

Councillor Rhodes congratulated Metro on receiving the UK Bus Award and commented that it was very well deserved.

### **Driver Training – Mobile Training Unit**

The Committee was advised that Metro had joined forces with Huddersfield College and Aberdeen Skills and Enterprise Training (ASET) to provide the NVQ Level 2 qualification in PCV Driving (Bus and Coach). Metro had created a mobile training unit equipped with PCs to enable the fully flexible training package to be delivered at remote sites.

### **IIP Champion Status**

It was reported that Metro had recently received IIP Champion status which is only awarded to a select number of organisations that demonstrate excellence in their people development practices.

### **Wakefield Rail Stations**

#### **Kirkgate**

It was reported that the first phase of a proposed package of improvements at Kirkgate started in early December 2007 in preparation for the refurbishment of the existing engineering depot.

The Committee were informed that a working party, chaired by Metro and including representatives from Network Rail, the Railway Heritage Trust, Northern and Wakefield Council, had been considering a 'master-plan' for the long-term redevelopment of the station and its immediate environs and had also been examining what funding opportunities there may be to support development at Kirkgate station.

It was reported that Metro and Northern had been lobbying Network Rail and were hopeful that investment for Kirkgate station would be included within the Northern Rail 2009-2014 National Stations Improvement Programme funded by the Department for Transport and due to be announced shortly.

## **Westgate**

It was reported that Network Rail was carrying out initial work on the proposed redevelopment of Westgate station. The proposals included a new station building, forecourt and multi-storey car park. Consideration was also being given to a proposal to increase the operating flexibility of the station by changing the layout of the track and signalling and extending the existing platforms. Network Rail proposed to co-ordinate the two schemes and initial scoping work on the track and signalling was due to be completed in spring 2008. Dependent upon a positive business case for such alterations, Network Rail would examine all available funding opportunities.

### **New Buses on 110 Service**

The Committee were informed that Arriva Yorkshire was shortly to introduce 16 new vehicles on Service 110 between South Wakefield and Leeds (an investment of £2.8m).

It was reported that the new low floor double deck vehicles previously used on the 110 service would be redeployed on services between Cleckheaton and Leeds.

**RESOLVED** - That the report be noted.

12. **CONSULTATION ITEMS -**
- (a) Bus Passenger Representation**
  - (b) Promotion of Public Transport to Non-Users**
  - (c) Information at Bus Stops**
  - (d) Consultation on Bus Service Changes**

### **Bus Passenger Representation**

The Committee were given a short presentation on the Department for Transport's proposals to introduce a bus passenger watch dog to represent bus passengers' interests at a national level. The DfT had issued a consultation paper which was available on their website. The consultation would run until 17 March 2008 and members' views were sought on the proposals.

Members discussed the proposals and the consensus of opinion was that there should be one body to represent both bus and rail interests. It was felt that because the integration of all modes of public transport was paramount, it would be dysfunctional to have separate watch dog organisations for bus and rail.

Comment was also made that any such body should be suitably structured to receive input from all levels – local, regional and national.

It was noted that Metro's response to the DfT would be influenced by the comments received at all of the Passenger Consultative Committees and further details would be reported to the next meeting.

### **Promotion of Public Transport to Non-Users**

It was reported that Metro's programme of market research had indicated that the level of satisfaction with public transport information was much higher amongst public transport users than amongst non-users. Members were advised of the work currently being undertaken to promote public transport which included the travel plan scheme, residential MetroCards for new housing developments and new media opportunities, eg website, Metro Messenger, realtime displays, electronic maps etc. Members were asked for any ideas or suggestions on how Metro could raise awareness and target information to non-users.

The Committee considered that more effort should be put into advertising the product itself. This could be done by letting the consumer try the product free of charge, for example bus and rail operators could introduce a free travel day once a month.

With regards to providing MetroCards for residents on new housing estates, comment was made that this was of little value when the estates themselves did not have the benefit of a bus service in the first place.

The Committee considered that in the first instance the product itself needed to be right and that people would only convert to public transport if the total travel experience met expectations. Therefore, reliability/punctuality, comfort, accessibility, capacity, etc were all crucial elements in attracting and retaining passengers.

### **Information at Bus Stops**

The Committee was given a short presentation on the provision of information at bus stops and members views were sought on how this could be improved.

It was reported that Metro was to provide additional timetable displays at bus stops which would include improved information and maps. Members were advised of the trial in Leeds of displaying service numbers on some shelters and of proposals to add the 'H' symbol where hospitals were served.

Comment was made that to provide only stop numbers would be a waste of resources because of the frequent services changes, but that destination information was extremely useful. It was, however, considered that stop numbers were useful where there were a number of stops/shelters grouped together.

It was suggested that "where to catch your bus" type maps would be useful.

## **Consultation on Bus Service Changes**

It was reported that passengers had asked for more advance notice of changes to bus services. It was noted that Metro currently published new timetable leaflets, amended the bus stop displays and provided information through Metroline and the website shortly before any changes were made. Members were asked for any ideas or suggestions on how to improve passenger awareness of forthcoming bus service changes.

It was noted that the Changing Times leaflet was a summary of changes which gave people advance warning and alerted them to get new timetables. It was suggested that the Changing Times leaflet and new timetables should be made available on relevant bus services and that new timetables should also be available in bus stations and travel centres in good time for the changes taking place.

The Committee were advised that earlier notification and publicity was dependent on the co-operation of the operators and Metro was keen to pursue the development of a consultation protocol prior to the registration of service changes.

Comment was made that making timetables available too early prior to changes taking place caused confusion as passengers would pick up the new timetable but not necessarily take notice of the date it came into effect.

Members were thanked for their suggestions to all the consultation items and asked to forward any further ideas or comments on the questionnaire provided at the meeting.

**RESOLVED** - That PCC members' comments and views be noted.