

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE ON FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2005

PRESENT: Councillor K Hussain (Chair)

Councillors D Blackburn, M Bower, R Downes, C Greaves, K Iqbal, J Jarosz, S Khan, S King, J Lewis, M Lyons, P McBride, G Phelps, J Prestage, K Rhodes, D Schofield, C Townley, P Wadsworth, G Wainwright, M Walker and A Wallace

65. PAKISTAN EARTHQUAKE

The Chair thanked PTA members and all Metro staff for their generous donations in aid of the Pakistan earthquake.

66. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R Downes.

67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

68. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2005

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2005 be approved and signed by the Chair.

69. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE TENDERED SERVICES WORKING GROUP HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER AND 2 NOVEMBER 2005

Members were given an update in the light of the decisions taken by the Working Group and the last PTA meeting on the free city centre shuttle bus.

Members were reminded that the award of the contract for the service was approved by the Working Group on 28 September 2005 but the vehicle purchase was subsequently deferred by the PTA at its meeting on 30 September 2005 pending further information with regard to:

- Identification of other spending options
- Examination of ideas in other city/town centres
- Opportunities for partnership funding to be examined

Since that time it was reported that investigations into alternative proposals had failed to identify any other practicable schemes of the same magnitude that would not involve recurring expenditure and that the replacement of withdrawn services which were outside existing tendered services would involve expenditure without any future funding. Similar schemes for other centres were the subject of ongoing work with District partners, an example of this being the Bradford Minitram trial.

Discussions had been held with Leeds City Council and the business organisations with regard to the future funding and whilst Leeds City Council were sympathetic and had requested a formal request the business sector had suggested using Section 106 monies following the scrapping of the Leeds Supertram scheme. Although opportunities to use these were being examined, it was explained that it would clearly need careful consideration in the context of alternative proposals for Leeds.

The Director General commented that from the debate he believed that there was a strong desire to proceed with the City Centre bus and he remained optimistic that an agreement between Metro, Leeds City Council and other partners could be reached on the long term funding. He suggested that, subject to the PTA's agreement, a report be submitted to the Tendered Services Working Group regarding the commencement of a 6 month pilot scheme and for the Appointed Members to consider the terms of the agreement, including the purchase of the buses.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the minutes of the meetings of the Tendered Services Working Group held on 28 September and 2 November 2005 be noted.
- (b) That with regard to the Leeds City Centre Connect bus service, the Tendered Services Working Group be asked to consider the arrangements for the introduction of a 6 month pilot scheme together with future funding options and that the decisions taken by the Working Group be endorsed at a meeting of the Appointed Members.

70. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RAIL WORKING GROUP HELD ON 4 OCTOBER 2005

The Authority made comment regarding the ongoing problems with the reliability and punctuality of rail services throughout West Yorkshire. They particularly expressed their deep concern regarding the deteriorating performance from March to August 2005 even though guarantees had been previously given that improvements would be made. Members expressed concern that Northern's failure to provide significant investment for additional capacity and as a consequence it would continue to cause severe overcrowding in West Yorkshire especially at peak times.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the minutes of the meeting of the Rail Working Group held on 4 October 2005 be noted.
- (b) That a letter be sent to the Secretary of State for Transport expressing the Authority's deep concern regarding rail services in West Yorkshire and that if improvements are not made consideration be given to imposing fines or withholding public money from the franchise.

71. PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

With regard to minute 3 of the Kirklees Passenger Consultative Committee concern was expressed regarding accessibility issues at a number of rail stations across West Yorkshire. In response, the Authority was informed that Metro was carrying out an appraisal of a number of stations to improve accessibility. It was also noted, however, that it was the responsibility of the owner/operator to carry out any work required. Metro was seeking to accelerate accessibility work through the development of partnership investment schemes and was continuing to lobby for funds from the "Access For All" initiative.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the minutes of the meeting of the Leeds Passenger Consultative Committee held on 10 October 2005 be noted.
- (b) That the minutes of the meeting of the Calderdale Passenger Consultative Committee held on 11 October 2005 be noted.
- (c) That the minutes of the meeting of the Kirklees Passenger Consultative Committee held on 12 October 2005 be noted.
- (d) That the minutes of the meeting of the Bradford Passenger Consultative Committee held on 14 October 2005 be noted.
- (e) That minutes of the meeting of the Wakefield Passenger Consultative Committee held on 20 October 2005 be noted.

72. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN STEERING GROUP HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2005

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Local Transport Plan Steering Group held on 24 October 2005 be noted.

73. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN FUNDING WORKING GROUP HELD ON 28 OCTOBER 2005

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the European Funding Working Group held on 28 October 2005 be noted.

74. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FACILITIES WORKING GROUP HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2005

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Facilities Working Group held on 7 November 2005 be noted.

75. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Authority considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the release of capital expenditure funded through the Local Transport Plan.

RESOLVED - That the release of the expenditure, as set out in Section 2 of the submitted report, be approved.

76. BUS STRATEGY

The Authority considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the completion of the formal consultation exercise and proposals for further work regarding Metro's Bus Strategy.

It was reported that it was a statutory requirement for Metro to prepare a revised Bus Strategy as part of the 2nd Local Transport Plan and that the Bus Strategy would be the basis for any application for a Bus Quality Contract.

Members noted that the draft Bus Strategy, which was approved by the PTA for consultation during the Summer, had been completed and that the exercise had shown a strong overall response for the Bus Strategy although bus operators had expressed some reservations on matters of control relating to branding, compensation, complaints and integrated network. They also considered that the Bus Strategy, if amended, could be delivered through partnership arrangements and did not consider bus quality contracts as the best way forward.

Comment was made that a PTA Seminar would be held to consider the core elements of the Strategy and that the outcome of those discussions would be used as the basis for further discussions with the operators on the implementation of the Strategy (eg. partnerships or quality contracts and further final consultation with bus passengers).

RESOLVED –

- (a) That progress on the development of the Bus Strategy be noted.
- (b) That arrangements be made to hold a PTA Seminar on the Bus Strategy.

77. REGIONAL ISSUES

The Authority considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on regional, pan-regional and sub-regional issues including:

- Northern Way
- City Region
- Regional Spatial Strategy
- Regional Transport Board and Regional Funding Allocations

Members expressed their reservations regarding the role, remit and membership of the Regional Transport Board, particularly the accountability, lack of transparency, additional bureaucracy and the distinct lack of any process for the two largest LTP partnerships in the region to contribute directly to decision making.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That representations be made to the Regional Assembly and the Government Office requesting PTA membership on the Regional Transport Board.

78. SUPERTRAM

The Authority considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the Leeds Supertram funding decision and associated implications.

Members expressed their deep disappointment at the decision taken by the Secretary of State for Transport to cancel the scheme, particularly because of the enormous amount of work that had been undertaken with the support and knowledge of the Department to reduce the overall cost of the project. It was their view that the decision showed the Government's lack of any clear policy on transport or on the development of the cities and regions outside London and the South East. They also highlighted the Department's failure to provide the necessary investment in high quality public transport in Leeds which could affect the future economic growth in Leeds and West Yorkshire.

The Director General explained that the project was cancelled on the grounds of costs, risk to the public sector and value for money. He made reference to the Government's statement and indicated that Metro's presentation of costs was not seriously misleading as quoted and was consistent with Department for Transport Guidance, which they had accepted previously.

The Director General advised Members of the work that would have to be undertaken to wind up the project including land issues and the urgent need to implement short term improvements and review the medium to long term aspirations.

Comment was made that from discussions between Metro, Leeds City Council and key partners, it was vital that a meeting should be arranged with the Department for Transport to seek their commitment to address the transport needs in Leeds. Members noted that, subject to funding, a number of short-term solutions were being progressed as quickly as possible.

Strategic work would also be carried out using extensive data held by Metro and Leeds City Council and conclusions from other studies such as park and ride, the work on Supertram alternatives, the Yorkshire Bus Initiative and initial work on the prioritisation of ftr routes would be also be used.

Members were informed that a seminar would be arranged in the near future to consider a strategy for the future transport needs of Leeds. A Joint Members Forum would also be established to include Members and Officers from Metro and Leeds City Council.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a Seminar be held to discuss how to bring forward public transport proposals to address the present and future needs of Leeds and West Yorkshire in the context of the decision to cancel the Supertram Project.

The following items were placed on the Agenda at the request of Councillor Mick Lyons in accordance with the Authority's Standing Order 3(3).

79. SUPERTRAM STATEMENT

Councillor Lyons introduced the item regarding the Government's announcement by the Transport Minister to cancel the Supertram scheme. He indicated that it was essential for Leeds and West Yorkshire who deserved a 21st Century transport system and that the decision taken seriously threatened the city's success and put its future prosperity at serious risk. By refusing to fund Supertram, the Government was placing the region at a big disadvantage for further investment opportunities, particularly when billions had been allocated for transport schemes in London and the South East. He said it was impossible for the people of Leeds and West Yorkshire to see the Supertram decision as anything other than an injustice in the Government reneging on its 2001 commitment to provide funding.

RESOLVED - That a letter be sent to all West Yorkshire MPs asking for their support in condemning Alistair Darling's announcement.

80. SECURITY – METRO STAFF

Councillor Lyons introduced his item asking for the Authority to congratulate front line staff at Metro, bus and rail operators, British Transport Police and Securitas staff on the professional and attentive manner in which they had

responded to the situation following the London bombings and that the Authority should continue to give them their full support during these very difficult times.

RESOLVED - That a letter passing on the Authority's thanks and appreciation be sent to all front line staff who had continued to provide services to passengers.

81. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - That the press and public now be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that if they were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information defined in Part 1 (paragraph 9) of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972.

82. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE AT HEMSWORTH

The Authority considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive providing information on the proposed development site at Hemsworth incorporating a new bus station and seeking approval for the disposal of 3 small areas of land currently in the Executive's ownership to the developer.

It was reported that Metro had been working with Wakefield MDC and the developer on a scheme to provide a new supermarket, school and library. A key part of the scheme was to close the existing bus point which was required for access to the development and for its replacement with a bus station.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the conclusion of negotiations, the disposal of land identified in figure 1 of the submitted report be approved.