

AGENDA ITEM NO: 9

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE BUS WORKING GROUP HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS ON THURSDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2006

PRESENT: Councillor J Lewis (Chair)

Councillors G Phelps, D Schofield, C Townley and G Wainwright

Councillor P McBride (Observer)

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor K Rhodes.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Lewis declared a personal interest in Minute 11 - MyBus Update.

10. RELIABILITY AND PUNCTUALITY OF BUS SERVICES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the current levels of bus service punctuality and reliability and on the progress in establishing Performance Improvement Partnerships (PIPs) with bus operators.

Members were advised that Metro monitored the performance of bus services in West Yorkshire on an ongoing basis in order to ascertain the levels of performance and to ensure the satisfactory operation of tendered services.

It was reported that bus companies were in general failing to meet the target set out in the Metro's Bus Strategy, which was for 99.5% operation. Overall, performance had deteriorated slightly over the last year and was not uniform across West Yorkshire. The Working Group were advised that the key factors affecting poor performance included vehicle breakdown, traffic congestion and driver shortage, although action taken by the larger bus companies to recruit additional drivers had improved the situation in the latter months of 2005.

It was noted that the testing work was progressing to utilise data from the YourNextBus real time information system, which would offer a comprehensive sample of services and also enable analysis of poor performing routes to establish the cause for poor punctuality.

Members were given a progress report and timescale for the establishment of PIPS, which had been recommended by the Department for Transport to bring together all parties who could assist in improving bus service performance.

Members were also informed that an additional intensive punctuality monitoring exercise had taken place over a 10 week period between October-December 2005, which had observed departures at a wider range of locations throughout West Yorkshire. The key objective of this work was to develop baseline data for the Punctuality Improvement Partnerships.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a further report on target and action plans agreed by the Performance Improvement Partnerships be considered at a future meeting of the Working Group.

11. PROGRESS REPORT - MYBUS

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the MyBus project.

Members welcomed the Department for Transport's announcement for the funding of £7m in 2006/07 for Phase III of the project, which provides for the implementation of a further 60 buses. The Working Group also noted issues relating to:

- Progress on the implementation of Phase II.
- Development of Phase III.
- Monitoring of patronage on primary services.

It was reported that although patronage on most services was good, data had identified a number of schools where patronage was low. Marketing of these services was currently taking place in conjunction with the schools concerned. It was stressed that if this initiative failed to generate increased numbers the Working Group would need to consider their withdrawal and explore alternative journeys to utilise the buses.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the Department for Transport's announcement regarding Phase III funding be welcomed.
- (b) That progress on the implementation of Phase II and the development of Phase III be noted.
- (c) That the process for monitoring and managing primary services be noted.

12. BUS STRATEGY

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the Bus Strategy.

Members received a presentation on the Bus Strategy. It was reported that the formal consultation had been completed and that over 80% of the public and user/interest groups endorsed the Strategy and believed that the Strategy would make bus use simpler, services more reliable, increase patronage and improve access to key facilities such as hospitals, health centres, etc.

Further meetings had also taken place with the operators all of who supported the aims and objectives of the Strategy and most had expressed a preference for delivery through partnership arrangements rather than Quality Contracts.

Members also noted that a 'customer friendly' interactive version of the Strategy was being prepared, which would enable wider consultation on the document.

Comment was also made about the success of the Free Leeds City Centre bus service during its first few weeks of operation. Discussions were still ongoing with Leeds City Council and the business sector regarding the future funding of the service.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report and presentation be noted.
- (b) That the final Bus Strategy be considered by the Passenger Transport Authority in conjunction with the Local Transport Plan.

13. BUS SERVICES - AUDIT COMMISSION/NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE REPORT

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the recent Audit Commission/National Audit Office report on the provision of bus services in England.

The Group was advised that the report had made a number of recommendations for local transport authorities, many of which Metro had already adopted such as partnership working, tender batches with 5 year contract and joint procurement projects with SYPTE.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.