

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY
AT A MEETING OF THE TENDERED SERVICES WORKING GROUP
HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE ON
MONDAY 2 OCTOBER 2006

PRESENT: Councillor C Townsley (Chair)

Councillors D Congreve, C Greaves and G Wainwright

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W S Hyde and G Phelps.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

26. MINUTES

RESOLVED -

- (a)** That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2006 be approved.
- (b)** That the minutes of the joint meeting of the Tendered Services and Bus Working Groups held on 14 September 2006 be approved.

27. RENEWAL OF BUS SERVICE TENDERS - WAKEFIELD/KIRKLEES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the renewal of tenders in the Wakefield and Kirklees districts.

It was reported that Batch 408 services were operated by Arriva and Stagecoach and that the contracts for these services were due to expire on 30 January 2006. In this respect, a request from Arriva to extend the current contract until 22 April 2007 to coincide with their business planning process had been accepted by Metro, as it would also enable further assessment of the batch including the continuation of the value for money and accessibility mapping appraisal and address any issues prior to inviting tenders.

Tenders for South Kirklees services would, therefore, be issued encouraging competition from smaller operators.

With regard to the Authority's '6 and 20' policy for tendered services, comment was raised whether in certain circumstances, especially in rural areas, the Authority should be more flexible in order to address the wider accessibility targets recommended in the Best Value Review of Accessible Transport. In this respect, it was commented that although the batch covered 56,432 miles only 3.6% mileage would be withdrawn due to low passenger use. It was suggested that the actual number of people affected would be a useful indicator when a decision has been made to withdraw mileage.

RESOLVED -That tenders be sought, as detailed in the submitted report, as being consistent with the Authority's policy for the provision of local bus services.

28. METROCONNECT 2 SERVICE - JUNCTION 31

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the performance review of the MetroConnect 2 Junction 31 service when the Urban Bus Challenge Funding expires in January 2007.

The Working Group were informed that continuation of the current stand-alone service was not cost effective and, therefore, could not be justified. However, local bus operators in the area had expressed some interest in integrating some well-used trips into their services in the Castleford and Normanton areas. It was, therefore, proposed to invite tenders for an hourly service operating from 0530 hours and 0900 hours and between 1600 hours and 1800 hours in a separate batch, which would be issued concurrently with the Batch 408 tenders in the Wakefield area. This would require the extension of the current contract to the April service change date, the costs of which could be met from the available Challenge Scheme funding.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That tenders be sought, as detailed in the submitted report, as being consistent with the Authority's policy for local bus service.
- (b) That the extension of the current contract for the MetroConnect 2 service to April 2007 be noted.

29. EDUCATION TRANSPORT DeMINIMIS - 2006/2007 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the following issues:-

- (i) The award of deminimis contracts in Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield districts in 2006/2007 academic year.
- (ii) The overall cost of schools transport provision in Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield districts for 2006/2007.

RESOLVED - That the award of deminimis contracts, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be noted as being consistent with the Authority's policy for the provision of education transport facilities.

30. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Working Group considered a recommendation to exclude the press and public from Agenda Item 8, which contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED - It was agreed that because the report contained commercially sensitive information on tenders received, which could also prejudice negotiations in the future, the public interest would be better served by maintaining the exemption and, therefore, the press and public should be excluded.

31. AWARD OF CONTRACTS - SERVICE 923

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the award of contracts for the operation of Service 923 between Otley and Wetherby.

It was reported that of the four tenders received the lowest had been submitted by Utopia Coaches who operated the existing contract. This would maintain the existing Monday to Saturday service. Utopia had also submitted a further option to operate the service using a low floor bus. This option was preferred as the additional cost of the procurement of the low floor bus could be met from the remaining monies in the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 Otley Rural Bus Challenge Scheme.

The Working Group were also informed that Utopia had expressed interest in extending the service from Wetherby to Tadcaster. Discussions had commenced with Northern Yorkshire County Council to explore the feasibility of this to obviate the need for Service 781 on the expiry of the existing contract in March 2007.

RESOLVED - That the award of a contract to Utopia Coaches be noted as being consistent with the Authority's policy for local bus service provision.