

AGENDA ITEM NO: 9(d)

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE KIRKLEES PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE TOWN HALL, DEWSBURY ON WEDNESDAY 23 JULY 2008

PRESENT: Councillor M Bolt (Chair)

WYPTA

A Pinnock

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

John Appleyard

Don Burslam

Mark Denton

Richard Fieldhouse

David Hargreaves

Shaun Jordan

Keith Parry

Shamir Patel

Christopher Taylor

KIRKLEES MC

L Wilkinson

Also in attendance:

S Bear

M Fenwick

D Mallender

T Lawrence

B Gibson

S Greenhoff

- Arriva Yorkshire

- First Huddersfield

- TransPennine Express

- Kirklees MC

- Huddersfield Examiner

- Observer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Brice (PTA) and public representatives Mr C Fennell and Mr S Flood.

2. MINUTES

Further to Minute 18 - Dewsbury Bus Services - Mr Burslam expressed his concern at the lack of a direct bus service from Dewsbury to Bradford and asked whether there had been any further developments. Metro officers advised that discussions with Arriva regarding their service changes were ongoing. However, the company had confirmed that they were satisfied with the present level of service provision. There had been a significant amount of consultation regarding the proposed new network, which had been defined on a commercial basis. However, it was acknowledged that some areas had been left with a reduced service. It was requested, therefore, that Arriva submit a progress report regarding this issue to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED -

- (a)** That the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 9 April 2008 be approved.
- (b)** That a progress report regarding Arriva's service changes, which had affected the Dewsbury area, be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

3. MR S GREENHOFF

Mr Greenhoff attended the meeting as an observer and expressed his concerns about the recent rise in fares and the lack of public transport in the region. Mr Greenhoff was of the opinion that outside of London there was a lack of investment in public transport by the Department for Transport. He also criticised arrangements whereby operators were allowed to implement changes, including the recent significant fare rises, without local or national control. In response, officers explained that Metro had no regulatory powers in respect of fare increases and that operators were free to set routes, timetables and fares on commercial services. The Authority had, through press statements, made its dissatisfaction clear in respect of the recent fares rise.

Mr Bear of Arriva Yorkshire advised that Arriva calculated that the amount of funding received from the PTA/PTE equated to 18% of the company's income and remaining revenue must be generated from ticket sales. The increase in fares was a direct result of increased oil prices. Likewise, Mr Fenwick of First Huddersfield reported that the rise in fuel costs had increased operating costs by 12% resulting in fare increases of between 17% and 25%. The Chair of the Committee expressed his disappointment that operators had reacted so quickly to the fuel price increases as both companies had fixed price fuel agreements until the end of the year. It was therefore incorrect to justify the fares increase on fuel costs at this time.

4. MEMBER FEEDBACK

The Committee considered a report advising members of the feedback received at the meeting of the Committee held on 9 April 2008 and to report the action taken.

It was reported that possible sites in Kirklees to be included in the New Rail Station Prioritisation study included Milnsbridge, Golcar, Thornhill Lees and additional platforms at Ravensthorpe (Wakefield line). The Chair highlighted the potential for development at the Ravensthorpe site and suggested that a Section 106 Agreement be incorporated into the planning application in order to attract developers. In response, it was confirmed that this process would be implemented as a matter of course.

With regard to the national concessionary fares scheme, clarification was sought as to whether a pass could be used before 9.30am. It was reported that Metro guidelines issued to operators specifically stated that (with the exception of concessions for blind persons and companions) a pass was eligible at 9.30am (weekdays) and not before.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

5. INFORMATION REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on information regarding current developments and issues affecting the Kirklees District.

Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) Statement

It was reported that the Office of Rail Regulation's (ORR) level of investment to assist Network Rail in the delivery of reliability, capacity and safety improvements (as set out in Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan (NRSBP)) was significantly lower than the amount proposed by Network Rail. The Committee also noted the implications of this statement on the proposed City Region capacity enhancement schemes, which had been identified in the NRSBP. Details of these schemes were outlined to members in the submitted report. Following discussions with Network Rail it was unclear whether the reduced cost allowance would lead to the abandonment or reduction of some of the schemes. In this respect, Metro was working closely with Network Rail to submit a robust response to the ORR's draft determination to support the funding required for the implementation of all local schemes.

Concern was expressed that the DfT refused to accept the transport growth figures for the region and take these on board when allocating funds. Comment was also made regarding the Government's allocation of extra train carriages to combat the issue of overcrowding in the region and how more units were required in order to ease the situation. It was suggested that the Committee recommend that the Authority lobby the region's MPs for their support for an effective rail investment programme. Metro officers advised that this suggestion was very much part of an ongoing campaign, the recent Rail Summit, seeking the support of MPs and business leaders and highlighting the case for investment within the local rail network.

Rail Summit

Members were informed that the Metro organised 'Lines for Enquiry, the Leeds City Region Rail Summit' held on 20 June 2008 had been a success. It was well attended by delegates from key local businesses, the media and politicians/officers from the 11 City Region authorities. The Summit had highlighted the case for investment within the local rail network. The case for further investment would continue to be made via City Region stakeholders, business leaders and MPs.

Leeds Station Automated Ticket Barrier

It was reported that Northern continued with development proposals to install automatic ticket gates at Leeds rail station and it was anticipated that works at the station would be completed by October 2008. Members expressed concern at the possibility of lengthy queuing for pre-paid ticket holders, especially at peak times. In response, it was stated that there would be staff on duty as well as the automated barriers. Metro was developing ways of issuing more MetroCards on tickets that would operate the gates. The gates would also be readily adapted to accept ITSO smartcards and were therefore consistent with the Yorcard proposals.

Rail Station Accessibility

The Committee was advised that, as part of the Department for Transport 'Access for All' initiative, Huddersfield rail station had been prioritised to receive funding. The improvements, which would be delivered by Network Rail, included the provision of two lifts at both ends of the current subway at the station. It was noted that works would commence later this year, subject to the upgrade of power supply to the station, with completion of works by spring 2009. Appendix B to the submitted report provided further accessibility information at other Kirklees stations.

The Committee welcomed the fact that Huddersfield had been included within the 'Access for All' initiative. In this regard, it was requested that work at Kirklees stations be included in future reports and the Chair further requested that regular updates from operators concerning future accessibility proposals/investments be submitted to the Committee for information.

It was noted that improved access to Honley Station could be secured through the current K-Line depot site. Kirklees Council were requested to consider this matter should future redevelopment of the land be proposed.

July Bus Service Changes

Members were advised that the next major timetable change would take place on the weekend of 27/28 July 2008. In the Kirklees area these included changes to First services in the Newsome area and the implementation of a new Service 95 between Denby Dale and Barnsley. It was reported that Service 95 would operate on a 6 month trial 'lose it or use it' basis from 7 am until 6 pm Monday to Saturday. Members commended the service, but asked that connections to other services in the area be advertised to improve connectivity from Kirkburton to Barnsley.

Bus Station Real Time Displays

It was noted that bus station displays at Batley, Cleckheaton and Ossett were connected to the 'YourNextBus' real time system. Subject to the satisfactory testing and release of software to drive the older displays, it was planned to roll out the provision of real time information to other main bus stations,

including Dewsbury, by the end of the year.

'Kids for a Quid' Offer

Members were advised that Metro was developing a Young People's Strategy. As part of the strategy, operators had agreed to implement a 'Kids for a Quid' promotion throughout August. The offer would be available to children under 11 years old accompanied by an adult or any child over 11 years in possession of a half fare pass. It was noted that promotional information had been sent out to schools prior to the summer holidays. In this respect, the Committee commended the scheme and acknowledged operators' involvement/contribution to the initiative.

Concessionary Travel Update

The Committee noted that in August Metro would launch a publicity campaign to remind people of the need to obtain a new ENCS pass by the end of September 2008, as old style permits would no longer be accepted after this date. It was also reported that Metro had commenced a procurement exercise for the purchase of electronic data capture, electronic validation, card management and card production systems for the ITSO ENCS passes. Members queried how long the Government would fund the scheme. In response, it was confirmed that funding had been confirmed until 2011. The level of funding thereafter had still to be confirmed.

MetroCard Prices

It was reported that the Metro range of prepaid tickets would increase by approximately 8% from 20 July 2008 and details of the new prices were attached at Appendix A to the submitted report. Members were advised that whilst the MetroCard scheme was administered by Metro, the prices were set by the bus and train operators.

Members acknowledged that MetroCards were good value for money for passengers, but expressed disappointment at the recent above inflation 8% rise. It was felt that such a rise would hinder the aim of making public transport more attractive to non-users.

City Region Metro Card (Zone 6)

It was noted that there was a high level of commitment amongst the City Region Leaders and Metro to introduce a new MetroCard, which would cover the City Region area. Proposals were being developed to introduce a new ticket that would extend MetroCard validity across the City Region area and several options were being considered. A trial covering a limited geographic area including Skipton and Harrogate was planned for spring 2009. The new product would be revenue neutral to operators, Metro and other City Region Local Authorities. Members commended the initiative and noted that further information would be presented to the Committee when available.

Huddersfield Bus Company

Members were informed that Stagecoach had sold its Huddersfield operation to Centrebus Holdings Limited, who traded as the Huddersfield Bus Company. It was further noted that Centrebus Holdings had also acquired Teamdeck Ltd, who operated as K-Line Travel. It was reported that the Traffic Commissioner had granted a PSV operator's licence to the Huddersfield Bus Company for 35 vehicles, which would operate from the Waterloo depot. The company had introduced a new fleet of low floor vehicles on service routes 80, 81, 82, 83 and 84 as part of their tendered service contract with Metro. It was hoped that a Centrebus representative would attend future meetings of the Committee.

Rural Bus Services

Members were informed that Metro and Kirklees Council were working together to address accessibility issues in rural areas. A joint funding package had been agreed to enable a number of services, which included services 95, H8/H9 and 907, to operate on an 6 month experimental 'use it or lose it' basis until January 2009. Passenger usage of the services would be reviewed later in the year in order to assess their continued operation. In this respect, it was requested that patronage figures for the services be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

Bus Performance

Members were informed that in North Kirklees Metro, Kirklees Council and Arriva were working towards a Performance Improvement Partnership. In South Kirklees, it was reported that such a partnership had existed between Metro, the Council and First since 2006. Performance data analysis for the partnership showed an overall improvement in 2007. It reported that punctuality from start of journeys had improved by 1% and was now close to the 95% target set by the Traffic Commissioner. Punctuality from intermediate timing points had improved by approximately 5%. It was acknowledged that both these figures were very encouraging, as long term road works had affected some corridors' performance data.

The use of the real time system had allowed both Metro and operators to monitor service performance and both First and Arriva had utilised the real time information to adjust their timetables to improve reliability.

Members noted that details of the annual review of the First PIP would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

Rail Performance

For the latest rail reporting period (25 May to 21 June 2008) members were informed that Northern's local rail services achieved punctuality of 93% against Metro's target of 92% and cancellations 0.6% against Metro's target of 0.5%. Members commended the results.

Batley and Cleckheaton Retail Units

It was noted that the retail unit at Cleckheaton bus station opened on Saturday 7 June 2008 and that the operation of the unit would be on the same basis as that with the previous tenant whereby the occupier opens/closes and cleans the bus station premises. It was reported that Metro's property advisors were actively seeking a tenant for the unit at Batley.

Bus Operators' Conditions of Carriage

Members were advised that individual bus operators had their own conditions of carriage. It was proposed, therefore, to undertake a benchmarking exercise to determine whether there were any major differences between operators. Prior to the meeting bus operators had been requested to bring copies of their conditions to the meeting. In this respect, Mr Fenwick of First provided the Chair with a copy of his company's conditions and Mr Bear of Arriva advised that his company's conditions were accessible on their website. The Chair requested that copies of the documents be circulated to members.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Authority lobby the region's MPs for support for local investment in the rail network.
- (c) That regular reports from operators concerning future accessibility proposals/investments to rail stations in Kirklees be submitted to the Committee.
- (d) That copies of Arriva Yorkshire and First Huddersfield's Conditions of Carriage be circulated to members of the Committee.

6. CONSULTATION ITEMS -

- (a) **Access To Hospitals**
- (b) **Cross Boundary Bus Services**
- (c) **Real Time Displays - Demonstration**
- (d) **Fuel Prices and Transport**

Access To Hospitals

The Committee were given a short presentation on the access to hospitals and health services project which had been identified as a priority for action in the Local Transport Plan Accessibility Strategy.

It was reported that Metro had employed two students on summer work placement to undertake an audit of hospital sites in each district. Within the Kirklees district these included the Huddersfield Royal Infirmary and Dewsbury and District hospitals. It would also include access to Pontefract

General Infirmary and Pinderfields Hospital, as many residents from Kirklees attended these sites. The aim of the audits was to gather information on public transport and physical accessibility issues to inform shared action plans for delivery by the hospitals, Metro and districts.

Comment was made that Barnsley District Hospital should also be included within the audit, as residents from the Kirkburton and Denby Dale areas aligned themselves more with the hospital. It was considered that the results of the audit would be deficient without this information. Comment was also made that frequent direct bus services to hospitals was essential.

Cross Boundary Bus Services

It was reported that at a seminar on the Transport Governance Review, members had requested a discussion on cross-boundary bus services and destinations served and not-so-well served.

Comment was made regarding the loss of services from South Kirklees to South Yorkshire and how prior to withdrawal it was alleged that some of these services had been well used by passengers. In this regard, it was suggested that further investigations be undertaken in providing acceptable interchange points with Service 95 from Kirkburton to Barnsley. In response, Mr Lawrence advised that investigations into improving the existing interchange points were presently being undertaken.

Real Time Displays - Demonstration

The Committee were given a short presentation regarding the development of a new form of real time display, which combined the information from a number of individual stops on to one screen. Members noted that the screens could be used in the foyers of shopping centres, hospitals and other large, well used buildings in order to provide information on services, which were leaving from the vicinity of that location.

Suggestion was made that real time units could be developed to notify passengers of when a service was due via an alarm system. It was further suggested that the provision of real time systems be incorporated within the planning process for future housing developments.

Fuel Prices and Transport

It was recognised that fuel prices had increased significantly over the last year and that this could have significant short/long term implications on transport supply and demand. In this respect, members' views were sought on public reaction to the situation and how people could be encouraged to make more use of public transport, cycling and walking.

It was suggested that drivers turn off their engines when stood at layover points and that they attend training sessions to improve their driving style in order to economise fuel usage. In response, both Mr Bear and Mr Fenwick

confirmed that their drivers regularly undertook training in this regard. Drivers were also encouraged to switch off their engines, a move supported by Metro. It was also suggested that operators consider the use of hybrid vehicles, which utilised electricity. However, it was acknowledged that the main obstacle in this regard was the extremely high costs of the vehicles.

Comment was made that in order to make public transport more attractive to non-users it was important to invest in quality vehicles and provide regular direct services on core routes, such as between Huddersfield and Leeds.

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.