

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

**AT A MEETING OF THE WAKEFIELD PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, WAKEFIELD ON
THURSDAY 18 JANUARY 2007**

PRESENT: Councillor G Phelps (Chair)

WYPTA

K Rhodes
M Walker

WAKEFIELD MDC

R Halliday
L Harrison
D Hopkins

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

Catherine Bairstow
John Churms
Michael Dalton

Derek Farren
Tim Rogers
Keith Watson

Also in attendance:

P Adcock	-	Arriva Yorkshire
G Bickerdike	-	Arriva Yorkshire
J Connelly	-	Arriva Yorkshire
G Cooper	-	Arriva Yorkshire
M Lowrey	-	Arriva Yorkshire
M Drinkwater	-	GNER
G North	-	GNER
C Barraclough	-	Stagecoach

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from public representatives Mrs B Darlison and Mrs B Fruish.

13. MINUTES

With reference to Minute 10 - Kirkgate Rail Station - Councillor Rhodes advised the Committee that he and Members of the PTA Rail Working Group would be visiting Kirkgate station and a number of other local rail stations in the near future.

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2006 be approved.

14. MEMBER FEEDBACK REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising them of the feedback received at the meeting of the Committee held on 12 October 2006.

Members were thanked for their contributions regarding Metro's process for handling feedback on bus/rail service complaints and compliments. It was reported that the suggestions made by Members would be considered in the development of revised procedures currently being pursued.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

15. INFORMATION REPORT

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

January Bus Service Changes

It was reported that the next major timetable change would take place on 27 January 2007. In this respect, the Committee were given a verbal summary of the changes.

Members expressed their concern at the withdrawal of the X33 service. An Arriva spokesperson explained the withdrawal arose due to the poor financial performance of the service, which would be withdrawn from 27 January 2007.

Community Transport

It was reported that, in partnership with the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Metro had hosted a Community Transport Partnerships Conference in September 2006. This was addressed by Ed Milliband MP and attended by Community Transport operators, transport authorities and regeneration agencies. Delegates had explored the issues of social exclusion and regeneration. Members were provided with details of the role of Community Transport and the steps taken by Metro to support its development in West Yorkshire.

New Leeds to Nottingham Service

It was reported that the Department for Transport had announced that the Northern Franchise was to be amended to include an hourly service between Leeds, Sheffield and Nottingham, thereby enhancing the frequency of the current Leeds-Wakefield-Sheffield fast service. Detailed timetable planning was now being undertaken to integrate the service into the current pattern of West Yorkshire services. It was hoped that upon completion of this work the service would commence December 2008.

Rail Station Cleaning

It was reported that the standard of cleanliness at rail stations was still of concern. Reasons were the lack of litterbins, which had been removed following the 2005 security alerts, and Northern Rail's cleaning contract arrangements.

Members were advised that further to a recent review of security, litterbins with clear plastic bags were now allowed at minor stations and that stations with the highest litter levels were being prioritised to receive the bins first.

It was reported that Metro had repeatedly raised the issue of station cleaning with Northern Rail who had increased resources and were undertaking a review of the cleaning contract arrangements to remedy current deficiencies.

Awards

The Committee were informed that over the last 12 months Metro had enjoyed a number of important achievements, including winning awards for 'Outstanding Achievement in Transport Policy and Planning' and 'Customer Service Team of the Year'.

LTP Settlement

It was reported that notification had been received from the Government Office in December 2006 that West Yorkshire would receive funding of £27.96m in 2007/08, rising to £32.657m in 2010/11. This was based on an assessment of the performance of the 6 partners (Metro plus the five District Councils) during the first LTP period (2001-2006) and the quality of the second LTP.

MyBus Update

It was reported that 59 of the 60 MyBuses in Phase 2 of the project had now been successfully implemented, with the final bus being scheduled to commence operation at Ravenshall School, Kirklees in February 2007.

The Committee were informed that Department for Transport funding to cover Phase 3 of the MyBus project provided for the implementation of a further 60 buses (and 6 spare buses). The tender process for Phase 3 had been split into three batches to encourage competition. Tenders for all three batches had now been awarded to operators and it was anticipated that all of the Phase 3 MyBuses would be in operation by December 2007.

On behalf of Highfield's Special School situated in Wakefield, Councillor Rhodes commended the scheme and how it had provided much-valued independence and security to its pupils.

First Appeal against the West Yorkshire Concessionary Travel Scheme

It was reported that First had appealed against the reimbursement arrangements set out in the West Yorkshire Concessionary Travel Scheme and had submitted evidence to the Secretary of State for Transport. In response, Metro had produced a robust rebuttal of all the points raised by

First and had requested that the Secretary of State dismiss the appeal. A decision is expected shortly.

2008 Concessionary Travel Scheme Proposals

Members were updated with details regarding the introduction of a national free off-peak travel scheme on buses for people aged over 60 and certain categories of disabled people. It was reported that all concessionary permits would need to be reissued to ensure that bus drivers in any part of the country could verify entitlement. Government advice on the issue of new permits and funding was awaited.

National Policy Initiatives

It was reported that the Local Government White Paper (Strong and Prosperous Communities) had been published on 26 October 2006. Members of the Committee were given a brief summary of the proposals contained within the document.

Transport Innovation Fund

It was reported that the City Region bid for £1.7m of pump-priming funding had been refused by the Department for Transport. The DfT had emphasised that further bids could be made for substantive TIF funding, although this would be difficult without the pump-priming funding. Other possible funding sources were being investigated.

GNER Franchise

Members were advised that GNER's franchise for East Coast Main Line services had been replaced by a short-term management agreement with the DfT, which was expected to last for 12-18 months. Expressions of interest for the new franchise had been invited and consultation on the content of the new franchise should be completed in February 2007.

Grand Central

It was reported that Grand Central Railways were proposing to run additional through services from Bradford and Halifax to London via Brighouse and Wakefield. Grand Central were seeking service commencement in December 2007.

Castleford Interchange Proposals

It was reported that following a successful public consultation event at the Carlton Lanes Shopping Centre in Castleford, Metro had finalised the scheme proposals and submitted a planning application at the end of November 2006.

It was noted that discussions with affected landowners were continuing and that work in relation to the serving of Compulsory Purchase Orders was ongoing in advance of the final go-ahead from the Department for Transport.

Wakefield Kirkgate Station

Members were advised that a draft development brief was being prepared for the station building and the immediate surroundings based upon initial indications from Network Rail and Northern as to the future railway operational requirements.

Members expressed concern at the dilapidated appearance of the Kirkgate/Chantry Bridge leading to the station, which also acted as the 'gateway' to Wakefield City Centre. Metro advised that they would raise this issue with Network Rail.

Wakefield Westgate

It was reported that Metro were working in partnership to provide additional technical evidence to the DfT to support a £7m bid for two additional platforms at Wakefield Westgate.

The proposal would also support other developments in the vicinity of the station, including redevelopment of the existing car park and dairy site, multi-story station car park and construction of a new station building and footbridge.

FreeCityBus - Wakefield

The Committee were informed that Metro was working closely with Wakefield Council to develop proposals for a pilot FreeCityBus for Wakefield in Spring 2007, linking the railway and bus stations, shopping area and retail parks. In this respect, the Committee commended the scheme and commented on how it would benefit the Wakefield City Centre area.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

16. CONSULTATION ITEMS -

- (a) Environment Strategy**
- (b) Transport Vision**

Environment Strategy

Members were given a presentation on the Environment Strategy. It was reported that as part of Metro's commitment to environmental improvement and the promotion of sustainable forms of transport, the Environment Strategy was being updated.

A questionnaire was circulated at the meeting and Members were asked for their views and comments on how Metro could reduce the environmental impact and develop an influencing role.

Members commented that the bus operators should be encouraged to 'go green' with regard to their vehicles. In this respect, it was reported that some bus operators were proactive in their approach to the environment, in

particular with regard to fuel efficiency. Arriva advised that their new vehicles operated on bio-diesel and other initiatives included shorter/regular servicing programmes, switching off of engines when not in use and driver training to improve fuel consumption.

Members were concerned that environmental benefits and costs should be incorporated into the decision making process when evaluating future capital and revenue expenditure plans.

Transport Vision

Members were given a presentation covering the main components of the 25 year vision for transport across the City Region. Copies of the vision were available at the meeting and Members were given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the implementation plan and prioritisation of schemes within the vision.

It was suggested that public transport routes could be build into motorways when widening was taking place. GNER representatives asked whether priority routes could be created for passengers travelling to Wakefield Westgate Station. In response, development of High Occupancy Vehicle lanes were mentioned, which could apply to both local roads and motorways. Members also felt that the vision should address issues around freight and demand management. In respect of the latter the work on developing Transport Innovation Fund proposals was discussed.

RESOLVED - That the comments and views of PCC members be noted.