

AGENDA ITEM No: 14

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE FACILITIES WORKING GROUP HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE ON THURSDAY 9 MARCH 2006

PRESENT: Councillor P McBride (Chair)

Councillors D Blackburn, K Iqbal, M Walker and A Wallace

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

15. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2005 be approved.

16. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN FUNDED SCHEMES

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding Local Transport Plan funded proposals to improve bus and rail passenger facilities.

Pudsey Bus Station

It was reported that discussions were ongoing between Metro and Leeds City Council regarding the development of a new Pudsey bus station building design. The proposed facilities included a six-stand central island concourse, two of which would be used by the 'ftr' articulated vehicles.

A joint programme with Leeds City Council was being developed and, subject to obtaining the necessary approvals, it was hoped construction of the new bus station would commence early in 2007 with completion by Christmas 2007.

Brighouse Bus Station

Members were advised and shown finalised plans to redevelop the existing site following difficulties with the site for the original 'Drive In, Reverse Out' proposals. It was reported that construction on the new bus station would

commence at the end of 2006/beginning of 2007, subject to obtaining the necessary approvals/formal agreements. Prior to construction extensive consultation would take place with passengers and operators and work would be phased to keep disruption to a minimum.

Heckmondwike Bus Facilities

Kirklees Council, as part of their local Community Strategy, had discussed with Metro proposals for combining their library and information centre with a single bus point. It was reported that a scheme was being developed and that the Group would be kept informed of any progress.

Hemsworth Bus Station

It was confirmed to Members that Tesco Supermarket had now obtained planning consent for a superstore, library and store on the site that affects the operation of Hemsworth bus station. A condition of the planning consent included that Tesco construct a new bus station as part of this development.

Keighley, Dalton Lane Redevelopment

The Working Group was informed that Keighley College and Bradford MDC was jointly funding a new state of the art facility on Dalton Lane and proposals included a 'park and ride' car park for Keighley rail station with direct access to the Leeds/Bradford bound platform. It was reported that as part of a partnership initiative, Metro would consider funding the capital cost of constructing the car park, which would create 70 spaces, and discussions were ensuing with the college regarding revenue cost issues. The college, Metro and Bradford MDC were finalising a range of benefits for bus/rail passengers to be included in the redevelopment proposals/planning process.

Improvements to Information Systems at Batley, Cleckheaton and Ossett Bus Stations

Members were advised that new audio equipment linked to Metro's real time information system had been installed at Batley, Ossett and Cleckheaton bus stations. Each stand had been fitted with the equipment, which would be beneficial to blind/partially-sighted passengers. Metro was also developing an automated voice message system, which would enable blind/visually-impaired people to access 'YourNextBus' through their mobile phone.

Bus Shelters

The Working Group discussed how consultation on bus shelter sites and installation would be improved.

Passenger Information Improvements at Rail Stations

Members were reminded that Metro had embarked on a scheme in conjunction with Northern to provide a replacement information management

system that would significantly improve the current visual/audible information provision at local rail stations. The scheme would replace existing remote information controls at Halifax and Leeds with control being centralised at Leeds. The first part of a phased approach to the scheme was being funded by Metro and was anticipated to commence during spring this year.

Rail Station Shelter Replacement - Phase 3

The Working Group was advised that the third phase of local rail station shelter replacements was underway. However, tender costs received by Northern had exceeded the limit approved by the PTA resulting in negotiations between Metro, Northern and contractors to reduce the overall cost of the scheme. It was proposed, therefore, to defer the replacement of a shelter at Cottingley station, which was lightly used.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

17. MANAGEMENT OF METRO BUS STATIONS

The Working Group consider a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the management of Metro bus stations.

Security

The Working Group was advised that working arrangements for Metro funded Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) had changed and they were now working as part of local neighbourhood police teams, resulting in a better exchange of intelligence, more effective targeting of persistent offenders and evidence gathering to pursue ASBOs.

It was reported that the Target Initiative would be discontinued from the end of March 2006. This announcement was extremely disappointing and Metro had written to the Assistant Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police seeking discussion on how strong liaison arrangements could be continued. A positive and supportive response had been received from the police, but was unspecific on how relations could be pursued. In the meantime, Metro was exploring options to continue the co-operation network among police, operators in order to carry on the work of the Target Group.

Members were informed that anti-social behaviour incidents in bus stations had decreased 30% during 2005 compared with 2004. Also a new type of bin with see through plastic bags had been installed in bus stations and was being tested in Leeds following removal of bins from bus stations in the aftermath of the London bombings as a security measure. Advice had been issued nationally on security aspects and this would be used in the installation of replacement lockers.

Bradford Interchange Access from Hall Ings

The Group considered that a further letter should be sent to Bradford Council and that the requirement for the escalator be kept under review as it may be affected by development proposals.

Bus Station Visits

It was reported that members of the Society for the Blind of Dewsbury, Batley and District were invited to visit Batley and Dewsbury bus stations and witnessed a demonstration of the facilities available for people with visual impairments at bus stations. The visit had been positively received and the group had been impressed with the facilities available.

It was also mentioned that during March the Wakefield Local Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to visit bus/rail stations in the Wakefield District and the focus of the visit would be on the physical accessibility of bus/rail stations for those with sensory/mobility impairments.

Councillor Iqbal raised concerns about youths congregating at Dewsbury bus station and undertaking anti-social activities. In response, officers gave assurance that Metro and the police were working together in order to alleviate the problem and were gathering evidence through CCTV footage to issue ASBOs. In this respect, it was suggested that Members undertake a visit to Metro's CCTV control centre at their next meeting and to visit bus station(s) subsequently.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

18. PROMOTION AND INFORMATION UPDATE

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the development of the updated Information Strategy, which was attached to the submitted report as Appendix 1, and to update the Group on recent marketing activities.

Information Strategy

Members were advised that compilation of the Information Strategy had included consultation with operators, neighbouring authorities, the Traffic Commissioner and PCC members. The Group was advised of the results of the consultation and that the draft Strategy had also been made available on Metro's website for public consultation. It was confirmed that operators had now agreed to a fund mechanism to meet the additional revenue costs of the provision of timetable information at (virtually) all bus stops. This cost recovery mechanism was designed to encourage greater network stability, as operators would have a financial incentive to reduce the number of changes. The commencement date for the scheme was 1 January 2007 and Members would be kept informed of progress.

Other Activities

It was reported that Metro Line was exceeding national Traveline targets for both calls answered and calls answered within 30 seconds. The Group was also advised that MetroCard sales for the period April to December 2005 had increased by 18% on the same period last year.

With regard to changes to the concessionary travel scheme from April 2006, it was reported that a high profile campaign was underway to promote the changes. Various types of leaflet information about the scheme would be distributed as well as cover cards installed on buses. In addition, a leaflet aimed at encouraging senior citizens to travel during off-peak times Monday to Fridays was being produced and would offer discount vouchers for attractions within West Yorkshire.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.