

**WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**

**AT A MEETING OF THE BUS WORKING GROUP  
HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON  
WEDNESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2007**

**PRESENT:** Councillor D Congreve (Chair)  
Councillors T Brice, C Campbell, K Rhodes and G Wainwright

**Observer:** Councillor R Downes

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**2. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2007 be approved.

**3. LOCAL TRANSPORT BILL**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive giving an update regarding the bus provisions within the draft Local Transport Bill.

Members were advised that the House of Commons Transport Select Committee had published the report of their enquiry into the draft Local Transport Bill and the Transport Innovation Fund. It was noted that the report was mainly supportive of the PTA SIG/pteg views but had suggested that the role of the Panel considering Quality Contract applications should be restricted to process compliance. The Select Committee's report conclusions relating to bus services were attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

It was reported that the Department for Transport (DfT) had issued a consultation document on the role of the Traffic Commissioner and the proposals sought to ensure that the traffic commissioner system would deliver the proposed new bus functions together with its existing responsibilities. The DfT had asked for responses by 15 October 2007 and the Working Group endorsed the draft PTA SIG/pteg response which was attached at Appendix 2 to the submitted report.

Members discussed the reimbursement of fuel duty to operators and noted that the DfT were to carry out a review of the Bus Service Operators' Grant (BSOG). It was proposed that Metro's input to a PTA SIG/pteg response be considered at a future meeting of the Working Group when the consultation document had been received.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Working Group endorse the draft PTA SIG/pteg response set out in Appendix 2 of the submitted report.

**4. MYBUS UPDATE**

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

It was noted that 12 new Mybuses had been launched at the start of the Autumn term and full details of the services, together with new additional primary linked trip services, were attached at Appendix A to the submitted report. The remaining 5 Mybuses would be introduced during October 2007 and details of the final position with regard to the entire fleet were attached at Appendix B.

The effectiveness and value for money of all Mybus services were reviewed regularly and 5 primary school services had been identified with low patronage. It was reported that marketing exercises were being undertaken to promote the services and these would be monitored with a view to their withdrawal should patronage levels not improve. Members requested that officers consider the transport options available to pupils should the Mybus services be withdrawn and asked that the Bus Working Group be advised of proposals prior to any action being taken.

**RESOLVED -** That the report be noted.

**5. METROLOCAL UPDATE**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress regarding the launch of MetroLocal services.

It was noted that pilot MetroLocal services were being developed for implementation in the Kirklees area later in the year and pupils would transfer on to MetroLocal from existing SEN taxi contracts. The services would be managed by Metro alongside the AccessBus service. SEN transport would commence in the Autumn term and it was anticipated that the daytime service would be introduced in December 2007. The capital costs of the pilot scheme

would be met by the Mybus capital project and the revenue costs funded by Kirklees Council.

**RESOLVED** - That the report be noted.

## **6. BUS STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive which provided an update regarding Metro's Bus Strategy.

Members noted the information on bus performance which was set out in Appendix 1 of the submitted report. It was reported that there had been an improvement in reliability and punctuality of bus services during 2007 which was attributed to improved recruitment and retention of bus drivers and the use of real time data to improve and monitor schedules. With regard to patronage, it was noted that there had been an increase since 2005/6 although this was as a result of free concessionary travel on buses from April 2006 and adult and child journeys had actually reduced. Comment was made that in some areas passengers had transferred from bus to rail travel because of rail service capacity enhancements and although this would not greatly affect bus patronage figures, further analysis on the mode shift would be carried out.

The Working Group was advised that the accessibility target in the Local Transport Plan regarding public transport availability to hospital services was not being achieved. This was due to network changes and reorganisation within the health sector and investigations were being undertaken into the data behind the accessibility modelling and actions to be considered to bring the target 'back on track'. With regard to physical accessibility, comment was made that problems were often caused by indiscriminate parking at bus stops and Metro supported "clearway" markings which helped to alleviate the problem of careless parking. It was noted that a large number of passenger complaints continued to be received, the most common being failure to operate, failure to stop and driver behaviour, particularly relating to bus drivers not using ramps to help disabled passengers board and alight. The Working Group were advised that discussions were ongoing with larger operators on how to respond more effectively to complaints and these and other issues had been raised at a meeting of the Leeds Transport Action Group, details of which were attached at Appendix 2 to the submitted report.

It was noted that operators had been advised that consideration was being given to the need for Bus Quality Contracts. The draft Local Transport Bill proposed a new set of tests for authorities considering the need for Bus Quality Contracts. The Authority had approved an approach of developing the case for Bus Quality Contracts in tandem with partnership approaches and Metro was liaising with other PTA/Es and sharing the cost of developing a financial model for bus service development.

**RESOLVED** - That the report be noted.

## **7. INNOVATION FORUM TRANSPORT PILOT**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members of Metro's involvement in the Innovation Forum Transport Pilot programme.

Members were advised that the Innovation Forum had been working with a small group of authorities to develop a specification for some pilot projects to experiment with new local public transport arrangements.

In 2006 Metro, in partnership with local bus operators and Kirklees Council, commissioned the Huddersfield Bus Study. Metro and Kirklees Council submitted a joint bid to the Innovation Forum to develop innovative approaches to the findings of the Huddersfield Bus Study on the "core" bus network and a "Metro Community" scheme to improve services to areas of low and dispersed demand including the development of MetroLocal proposals.

The bid was successful and the Innovation Forum had offered to fund development of the scheme to the value of £12,500 per annum for two years, subject to match funding from Metro and Kirklees Council and to grant additional freedoms and flexibilities. It was noted that the Innovation Forum was arranging a meeting for the partners with the Department for Transport (DfT) to define the freedoms and flexibilities and details were attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report. Members were advised that should the appropriate freedoms and flexibilities be granted, Metro would wish to proceed as the template could then be used to roll out wider partnerships throughout West Yorkshire. A progress report would be prepared for a future meeting of the Working Group.

**RESOLVED** - That the report be noted.