

AGENDA ITEM No: 5(b)

AT A SEMINAR OF THE WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY 9 JULY 2008

PRESENT: Councillor C Greaves (Chair)

Councillors C Campbell, R Downes, E Firth, G Phelps, A Pinnock,
K Rhodes, T Swift, P Wadsworth and M Walker

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Brice, A Carter,
D Congreve, A Hawkesworth, M Lyons and G Wainwright.

24. SEMINAR - REVIEW OF TRANSPORT GOVERNANCE

Members were given a presentation by Atkins on the initial review findings
and governance options.

Introduction

In introducing the discussion the Chair indicated that the Passenger Transport Authority had played a major role in the development of transport across West Yorkshire and the City Region. He said that he recognised that some reform was necessary and therefore it was essential that the PTA was a strong ITA with enhanced transport powers and that he was sure that an ITA given these powers would have the capacity and capability to lead transport across the City Region.

He went on to say that it was essential that whatever arrangements were to be put in place it must bring about improved high quality transport throughout the region which could only be achieved with appropriate powers and influence.

Governance

The Authority commented on the 6 option modules presented by Atkins and requested that two further options be developed. It was considered that communication on transport issues at top level from the PTA to the Districts and vice versa required improvement which could be addressed by the new options now proposed and would capture the attributes of options 3 and 4 whilst allowing for 22 Councillors rather than 5 as suggested. The view was expressed that a reduction from the existing 22 Councillors to 5 Elected Members on the ITA (as suggested by Atkins) was undemocratic in governance terms.

They also indicated that a reduced membership would probably lead to an ITA consisting of Council Leaders or Cabinet Members. They questioned whether they would find sufficient time, bearing in mind the demands placed on them in their existing roles to perform the additional duties in an effective and efficient manner.

The Authority also recognised that different solutions might be appropriate in different areas and the potential issues relating to Authorities such as North Yorkshire which should be taken into consideration.

Members believed that it would be preferable to have members nominated by Districts to the ITA who could solely dedicate their time to transport issues. They suggested that the ITA should nominate either 5 or 7 members (eg 1 member from each of the five districts or 1 member from 3 districts and 2 from Leeds and 2 from Bradford) to form an Executive Committee of the ITA and that the ITA Executive members would then sit on their respective Districts' Executive Board as a non voting advisor, representing Transport issues. In that case where members of the ITA were already Portfolio/Cabinet members of their respective District Councils they could not be appointed into that role which would ensure that the ITA representative was always additional to the existing structure giving the capacity and focus required. Furthermore, the ITA Executive Member would lead an enhanced new liaison arrangement between the ITA and District Council and act as their District Spokesperson. It was also agreed that each District would have a Transport Liaison Group chaired by that Member attending cabinet. Comment was also made that Members salaries and re-imbursements would be paid by the ITA and not the District Councils.

Appointments to the ITA

Members were concerned about the prospect of unelected representatives on the ITA and that it was important that there was no conflict of interest on the ITA or the city region transport panel. Many members felt that the scrutiny should come from elected members, however there was recognition of the opportunity to involve business representatives. However, it was stressed that it was important to have meaningful engagement. Members felt a consultative forum, similar to the Regional Transport Forum, that fed into the ITA Executive mechanism could be a positive way forward.

RESOLVED - That further options (7 and 8) based on a larger ITA with an Executive Board be suggested to Atkins through Metro's response to the consultation.