

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY / DISTRICT COUNCILS

**AT A MEETING OF THE ADULT SERVICES LIAISON GROUP
HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON
MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2009**

PRESENT: Councillor J Jarosz (Chair)

Councillors	D Congreve	-	WYITA
	P Wadsworth	-	WYITA
	K Watson	-	WYITA

Officers in attendance:	M Pickles	-	Bradford MDC
	G Wainwright	-	Kirklees MC
	N Holt	-	Metro
	D Pearson	-	Metro
	S Naylor	-	WYITA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Robinson (WYITA), T Leadley (WYITA), D Clamp (Bradford MDC), B Metcalfe (Calderdale MBC) and S Armitage (Leeds CC).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2009 be approved.

4. ACCESSBUS UPDATE AND STATISTICS

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on current AccessBus projects and trends in AccessBus usage.

Current Projects

Members were advised that Phase 1 of the replacement booking/information management system for AccessBus was progressing well. The new system would allow remote access by the AccessBus operators, as well as offering enhanced service flexibility and efficiency. Phase 2 of the project would

deliver improved communication between the booking office and drivers and vehicle tracking.

It was reported that the 19 new Optare Solo low floor accessible buses had entered service and were to the same specification as those purchased for MetroLocal services. The newer buses were now equipped with CCTV and Metro was in discussion with operators to retrofit older vehicles with the systems. All AccessBus vehicles were now less than five years old.

Statistic and Trends

It was reported that 518,968 passenger journeys had been undertaken in the 12 months to 31 July 2009, representing a decrease of nearly 2% on the previous period. There were 18,985 registered customers, 6,843 of whom were classified as 'active' users. It was noted the majority of journeys continued to be on a long term booking basis and that the number of ad hoc bookings was less than 4% of total trips. Since the last meeting the taxi commitment had reduced by a further 0.6% to just over 2.4% of total passenger journeys. The reduction in taxi use had resulted in a £23,000 financial saving based on the same period last year.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

5. ACCESSBUS REGISTERED SERVICE

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising of current changes to the AccessBus service.

It was reported that plans to operate the AccessBus service as a registered local bus service were at an advanced stage and would commence operation on 28 September 2009. This would not result in any changes or disruption to current passenger trip patterns. Although fares would be introduced at £3 per passenger trip, passengers who were over 60 and/or disabled would qualify for free travel under the Concessionary Fares Scheme. The Concessionary Fares Scheme had been amended in respect of AccessBus to extend the start time for the scheme to 0900 hours to allow all passengers on AccessBus trips to take advantage of free travel. All regular users had been contacted to encourage them to obtain a Concessionary Fare permit and applications were being processed in advance of the introduction date.

Members were informed that based upon current operating mileage, it was estimated that registration of the service would significantly reduce AccessBus operating costs and attract considerable concessionary fares and fuel duty reimbursement.

Members suggested that any savings arising from registration should be reinvested to expand the AccessBus service.

RESOLVED - That the changed operation of the AccessBus service as a registered local bus service from 28 September 2009 be noted.

6. **ACCESSBUS OPERATING CONTRACTS**

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the award of new contracts for the operation of the AccessBus service.

Members had previously been advised that tenders had been invited on the basis of revised contract provisions. Tenders were issued in one Batch comprising of five separate contracts for each of the five District Council areas in West Yorkshire. Bidders were invited to bid for any complete District or a combination of Districts and ten companies submitted bids, with at least three bids per District. It was noted that all existing district contractors had been successful and that the new contracts would commence on 28 September 2009 to coincide with the operation of AccessBus as a registered service.

RESOLVED - That the award of new contracts for the operation of the AccessBus service from 28 September 2009 be noted.

7. **METROLOCAL UPDATE**

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress with the MetroLocal services.

It was reported that 17 routes had been introduced since December 2007 and full details were attached at Appendix A to the submitted report. It was noted that a new format information leaflet, which had been in use since October 2008, had been designed to promote the 'hail and ride' aspect of the service. It was more user friendly and had attracted positive feedback from passengers.

Members were informed that in order to publicise changes to the ML4 (Ashbrow) and ML5 (Lindley) services leaflets had been distributed along the new routes. As a result of the promotion, the revised route and improved frequency patronage had increased by over 40% on ML4 and by 70% on ML5.

The Liaison Group was further advised of proposed changes to the ML15 (Milnsbrigde - Meltham) service, which commenced operation in April 2009. Approval to the proposed changes would be sought at the next meeting of the Authority's Tendered Services Working Group and would extend the service to serve Huddersfield Royal Infirmary.

It was reported that a report outlining the performance of the MetroLocal project and how to roll out the initiative on a wider basis would be submitted to the next meeting of the Liaison Group.

The Liaison Group commended the MetroLocal initiative and discussions ensued regarding the issue of funding an extension of the project to other areas and how demographics could explain why some ML services were better used compared to others.

RESOLVED -

- (a)** That the report be noted.
- (b)** That a report outlining the performance of the MetroLocal project and how to roll out the initiative on a wider basis would be submitted to the next meeting of the Liaison Group.

8. WEST YORKSHIRE COMMUNITIES ON THE MOVE

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the development of the Community Transport (CT) sector in West Yorkshire.

Members were advised of the role of Community Transport (CT) organisations and of the provision in the new Local Transport Act for them to now operate local services using larger buses and paid drivers. It was noted that in some parts of the UK the CT sector played a significant role by providing transport commissioned by social services and health sector organisations. However, the sector was not well developed in West Yorkshire and in 2007, Metro and Yorkshire Forward had jointly commissioned the Community Transport Association (CTA) to produce an appraisal of the current position. The study broadly concluded that CT provision in the County was 'patchy' but delivered to a high standard where available. It was reported that the CT sector made a significant contribution towards independent living and could provide a greater contribution to the Regional Economic Strategy and accessibility targets of the Local Transport Plan. However, to achieve this potential organisations required support to towards becoming community interested companies meeting the full standards of Public Vehicle Licensing. As a result, in 2008 Metro commissioned the CTA to provide development support through the "West Yorkshire Communities On The Move" project.

The project has been undertaken in two phases. Phase 1 was completed early in 2009, which involved the CTA meeting each of the participating organisations and undertaking appraisals on various aspects, such as organisational business plans, operating standards, PSV operator licence and CPC holders and the capacity to provide new and expanded services, including registered or 'section 22' bus services. A list of participating organisations was outlined in Appendix 1. Phase 2 was now in progress and comprised of the establishment of an email forum for CT operators, training courses/seminars, the development of a Commissioning, Tendering and Procurement Guide by the CTA and the development of a West Yorkshire Community Transport Strategy, which would identify how the sector could contribute to LTP3 and Local Area Agreements.

It was reported that through the programme Metro had submitted a joint bid with Calderdale Community Transport for the funding of a new MetroLocal service to operate in the Brighouse area of Calderdale. The proposed service sought to address accessibility issues following the withdrawal of some local bus services in the area by First Group.

Comment was made regarding the necessity for improved and co-ordinated evening bus services, as well as regular daytime services, in order to improve the public's perception and confidence in public transport.

RESOLVED - That the progress of the West Yorkshire Communities on the Move programme be noted.

9. LOCALITY BASED ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members of Metro's current Locality Based Accessibility Planning pilot.

It was reported that to better understand accessibility problems and potential solutions, the pilot project was engaging with local communities through their area/neighbourhood forums. A number of meetings had been held in areas identified by Metro and the District Councils to undertake the pilot and a list of the areas was outlined in the report. Metro had also contacted a wide range of community groups, parish councils and elected members to determine a cross section of issues affecting local accessibility. Issues included availability of public transport to local amenities such as hospitals, health centres, post offices, links between adjacent communities/villages and choice of shopping areas/FE colleges determined by available bus routes.

These issues have been recorded and brought to the attention of the relevant body. It was noted that the solution to some issues may require alterations/improvements to public transport, walking or cycling facilities. The process would also identify solutions within local service provision including alterations to opening times or providing outreach/mobile service delivery.

Members noted that an evaluation of the effectiveness of the pilot would be made prior to determining whether the project should be extended to other areas of West Yorkshire.

RESOLVED -

- (a)** That the pilot of Locality Based Accessibility Planning be noted.
- (b)** That the outcome of the pilot be reported to a future meeting of the Group.