

AGENDA ITEM NO: 5

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE RAIL WORKING GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON TUESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2007

PRESENT: Councillor E Smaje (Chair)
Councillors R Downes, G Phelps and K Rhodes

In Attendance: Councillor S King
Simon Coulthard (Network Rail)

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Khan and C Townsley.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

20. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Working Group considered a recommendation to exclude the press and public from Agenda Item 7, Train Operators' Timetable Proposals for 2007/08, which contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED - It was agreed that because the report contained rail network changes which were subject to the approval of the rail industry regulatory bodies and must, therefore, be regarded as commercially confidential until such approval was obtained, the public interest would be better served by maintaining the exemption and, therefore, the press and public should be excluded for this item

21. MINUTES

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

22. NETWORK RAIL PRESENTATION

Members were given a presentation by Network Rail who had been invited to attend the meeting.

The Working Group were given an overview of Network Rail's responsibility in managing local rail service performance and enhancement schemes relevant to West Yorkshire. Members were given the opportunity to raise relevant issues and discussed the problem of cable thefts and the actions being taken to address the issue. It was noted that cable theft continued to have a major impact on performance and the Authority had sent a letter to West Yorkshire Magistrates highlighting the severity of the problem. Two responses had been received and British Transport Police had been advised of the necessary course of action required to assist the courts in assessing the seriousness of the crime. It was proposed that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Authority request a meeting with the Crown Prosecution Service to discuss the matter further.

Members expressed their concern regarding the number of delays and cancellations attributable to Network Rail and stressed that the Authority wanted to see improvements. In response Network Rail commented that incidents of disruption, even for short periods of time, could affect all services for a whole day and sometimes services had to be cancelled on routes where there were frequent services, to ensure rolling stock was in the right place, enabling the timetable to return to normal as quickly as possible. Network Rail had set targets to reduce cancellations and introduced an internal incentive scheme for all staff based on improved performance.

With regard to infrastructure improvements, it was reported that members had recently visited several rail stations including Wakefield Kirkgate. The Working Group discussed the problems associated with the station, including its location, design, condition and the lack of integration with Wakefield Westgate station. Comment was made that the introduction of the Wakefield FreeCityBus in April 2007 would impact on the usage of Kirkgate Station as it would provide a link with the city centre giving passengers from areas such as Castleford and Pontefract a wider choice of travel options.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That Network Rail be thanked for their presentation.
- (b) That a letter be sent to Northern Rail thanking them for attending the rail station visits.
- (c) That a meeting be sought with the Crown Prosecution Service to discuss their approach to cable thefts.

23. NORTHERN FRANCHISE UPDATE

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the operating performance of local rail services within West Yorkshire provided by Northern Rail.

Members noted that there were still concerns regarding the cleanliness of rail stations although there had been a general improvement following the increase in resources. Comment was made that the 'hooped' bins with plastic bags had been provided at some stations. However, whilst better than no bin at all, these were not substantial enough and litter continued to be a problem.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

24. TRAIN PERFORMANCE REPORTING

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive following the Authority's request to review the presentation of rail performance data.

The views of the Working Group were sought on the format of presentation of detailed performance information to future meetings. They considered the options available (including the volume of data and resource requirements) and agreed that future Franchise Performance reports should include a table based on Option 2. This would include detailed numbers of cancellations and delays for each route segment and also an identification of individual trains which had been the subject of most delay/cancellation. It was further agreed that the 'raw' industry data on every delay and cancellation would be available to the Chair at the meeting if more detailed information was required. A summary of the information would be included in the minutes of the Rail Working Group which were included on the agenda for meetings of the Authority.

RESOLVED – That more detailed performance data as outlined in Option 2 of the submitted report be prepared for future meetings and reflected in the Working Group minutes.

25. TRAIN OPERATORS' TIMETABLE PROPOSALS FOR 2007/2008

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on train operators' intentions for the timetable changes in May and December 2007. The report also provided an update on changes planned in 2008.

It was recommended that the Northern Rail proposal be supported in principle, subject to a detailed appraisal to assess whether there would be any impact on the timing of peak trains.

RESOLVED - That the approach set out in the report be endorsed.

26. FRANCHISE REPLACEMENTS

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on consultation by the Department for Transport (DfT) on the re-letting of the Inter City East Coast (ICEC) Franchise. The report also provided an update on the Cross Country franchise.

With regard to the East Coast Main Line franchise, it was reported that the DfT had requested responses to the consultation on the franchise specification by 15 February 2007 and members noted the key points in Metro's proposed response. These included fares, information and ticketing, capacity, Bradford services, East Leeds electrification, Wakefield Westgate and quality. The Working Group stressed the importance of the franchisee providing adequate capacity.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a formal response to the Inter City East Coast franchise consultation be made based upon paragraphs 2.1 to 2.10 of the submitted report.

27. RAILPLAN 6

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on matters relating to the delivery of RailPlan 6.

Department for Transport 'Access for All' Initiative

With regard to Shipley Rail Station, members were advised that it was not within the remit of the DfT funded 'Access for All' scheme to provide a bridge/lift and stair access to Station Road, although Network Rail would consider the provision of the facilities if they were funded by a third party. It was noted that Metro was in discussion with Bradford MC regarding a larger scheme for Shipley which could include improved access to Station Road.

New Rail Stations

Members were provided with an update on progress with new stations. It was noted that the ability of Northern to secure the trains and support their leasing costs was an important element of the business case for the Kirkstall Forge scheme and detailed discussions were taking place with the developer of the Horsforth Woodside Quarry site and Leeds City Council, the planning authority.

Car Parking at Rail Stations

Members were advised that Metro had been developing a number of schemes for car park extensions although the substantial capital and ongoing revenue costs of such schemes was preventing their further development. Metro was reviewing the current policy on car park charging which would provide additional income to support both the car park schemes and other key enhancements such as additional train capacity. Work on the business case was being progressed and would take into account the impact of charging on existing users. Comment was made that any proposed scheme should consider discount for MetroCard holders and the effect of cars parking

elsewhere ie. on surrounding roads near stations. It was noted that discussions continued regarding the use of cross boundary MetroCards and it was considered that when finalised, a first phase was likely to include the Harrogate line.

Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Planning Assessment (RPA) for the Railway and the East Coast Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS)

Members were updated on the consultation process regarding the RPA and it was noted that a meeting had been arranged with the DfT to discuss concerns.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.