

AGENDA ITEM NO: 18

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE BUS WORKING GROUP HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS ON THURSDAY 8 JUNE 2006

PRESENT: Councillor D Schofield (Chair)

Councillors S Khan, C Townley and G Wainwright

Councillor J S King (Observer)

In attendance: Mr M Cooper, Managing Director UK Regions, Arriva) Item18
Mr P Stone, Managing Director, Arriva Yorkshire) only

14. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED - That Councillor Schofield be elected to chair the meeting.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

16. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2006 be approved.

17. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - That the press and public now be excluded from the meeting for minute 18, on the grounds that if they were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information defined in Part 1 (Paragraph 3) of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972.

18. ARRIVA BUS SERVICES

The Working Group were given a presentation by Arriva. Mr M Cooper (Managing Director - UK Regions) and Mr P Stone (Managing Director - Arriva Yorkshire) outlining the companies future plans and how they were committed to continuing to work with Metro and District Councils to implement the Bus Strategy and achieve the targets set out in the 2nd Local Transport Plan.

Whilst welcoming the proposals, Members considered the poor performance of Arriva during part of the LTP period which had significantly affected patronage on their services. In this respect the Working Group asked Arriva to outline their plans to improve public confidence and patronage on their network of services. The Committee was specifically concerned about the numerous timetable and route changes introduced, particularly in Wakefield and the Heavy Woollen areas, which had led to considerable opposition from local councillors, District Councils and the travelling public. These changes had undermined confidence in the service and had done little to address reliability and punctuality problems.

Arriva indicated that the action they had taken recently was based on a consultation exercise they had undertaken regarding bus travel. Arriva highlighted reliability and punctuality as vital components to sustain and encourage future growth on their services.

They commented that the revisions made by simplifying the network and withdrawing unprofitable routes were necessary to ensure the viability of the company and that the improved financial performance would generate income for investment in new vehicles. It was reported that Arriva were very encouraged by data collected by Metro and their own monitoring which had shown considerable improvements in reliability and punctuality, with punctuality exceeding 90% over the last seven months (with the exception of the Christmas period).

The Working Group were also informed of a number of initiatives where Arriva and Metro were working together including the Yorkshire Bus Initiative, RealTime Passenger Information and Announce (RNIB) on their 126/127 services.

In view of their recent problems and to continue the momentum/improvements which Arriva had made in recent months, it had been agreed with them to develop and implement a 3 year programme (similar to that previously taken with Arriva Trains Northern) aimed at regaining lost patronage and achieving Local Transport Plan targets.

In this respect the company advised that no further service changes were planned for this year. Future network reviews would be undertaken in consultation with local members and designed to complement work on the Yorkshire Bus Initiative.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That Arriva be thanked for their presentation.
- (b) That an Action Plan as outlined be developed and reported to a future meeting.

19. RELIABILITY AND PUNCTUALITY OF BUS SERVICES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the current levels of bus service punctuality and reliability and on the progress in establishing Performance Improvement Partnerships (PIPS) with bus operators.

It was reported that since January, the Realtime system had been used to monitor punctuality which provided a much larger sample of the major bus operators' services whose buses were equipped with real time equipment. To complement the data manual, monitoring was also undertaken to assist in monitoring tendered services and to assess the performance of smaller operators not equipped with real time. In this respect it was reported that previous monitoring reports based on observational monitoring, had indicated 90-95% of buses being punctual. Results from the realtime system revealed that 85% of buses ran to time reflecting the much larger sample size available from real time data.

With regard to Performance Improvement Partnerships, the Working Group were informed that initial meetings had been held with operators. These had established agreed punctuality targets for 2006. It was also reported that action plans were being developed which identified specific routes for closer examination to establish the causes of punctuality problems.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a further report on targets and action plans agreed by Performance Improvement Partnerships be considered at a future meeting of the Working Group.

20. HUDDERSFIELD BUS STUDY

The Working Group was given a report on the progress of the Huddersfield Bus Study (HUBS) which was aimed at developing a specification of an overall network of services that would best meet the delivery of local and regional policy and strategy objectives.

It was reported that the study was being carried out by consultants Steer Davis Gleave, who had considerable experience in this area of work. A review methodology for the Huddersfield area had now been developed by the consultants which was based on the following:

Travelstyle A socio demographic package which considered the propensity to use bus services compared with actual usage.

Visim Network modelling package to assess the viability of alternative network solutions

Simbus Analysis of future trends in terms of cost, revenue and patronage and financial sustainability.

The Working Group were informed of the progress, including meetings with operators, incorporation of ticket machine data into the model, and the analysis of journeys to work and reliability data. It was proposed to carry out further work with regard to designing a network following the evaluation of all data with a view to preparing a final report in July 2006.

It was also reported that similar exercises taking into account the 'propensity to use bus services' compared with 'actual bus patronage' would be carried out in other parts of West Yorkshire.

RESOLVED - That officers be thanked for the presentation.

21. ACCESSBUS - REVIEW UPDATE

Members were given a presentation on work which had been carried out reviewing the AccessBus facility to examine its use, its customers and how best Metro could provide the service in a sustainable way in the future.

The presentation noted that new opportunities, including new concessionary arrangements and bus service operator grant for flexibly routed services could provide scope for improving the financial position of the service.

It was agreed that the option for integration with Special Education Need services and registration, in order to attract Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) and hence reduce costs, should be explored further.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That officers be thanked for their presentation.
- (b) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Working Group.

22. MYBUS UPDATE

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the following issues:

- (i) Progress on the implementation of Phase 2 MyBus services.
- (ii) Progress in tendering Phase 3 services, the approach to be taken and other issues relating to implementation of Phase 3.
- (iii) Monitoring and market research being undertaken and further reporting requirements.

Members were also given a presentation of the evaluation of possible vehicles to be procured for Phase 3 services and endorsed the proposed approach. It was noted that any new buses purchased would go through the same rigorous checks by the Freight Transport Association on delivery to ensure they meet the specification before authorisation for payment.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

23. ESTABLISHMENT OF A TICKETING COMPANY

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the proposed establishment of a company to oversee the administration of the West Yorkshire Prepaid Ticketing Scheme.

It was reported that the principle of joining a West Yorkshire Ticketing Company (TICCO) had been endorsed by the Business Improvement Group.

It was also acknowledged by the Group that whilst the existing scheme had worked satisfactorily, a number of issues had emerged over the years, particularly with regard to price setting arrangements which were cumbersome and open to challenges by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

In this respect, the report set out a number of options including:

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| Option 1 | Do nothing |
| Option 2 | Scheme continue |
| Option 3 | TICCO |

It was reported that discussions had taken place with all parties on the various options and it was considered that the establishment of a TICCO, which had operated successfully in Greater Manchester and Tyne and Wear, was the most feasible as it could deliver the formalised structure and address the concerns of operators in respect of OFT investigation.

A Joint Venture Agreement had been drafted on the future arrangements for the administration of the scheme based on the Greater Manchester model.

It was reported that discussions were still ongoing with the operators to resolve a number of outstanding issues and that once they had been successfully concluded a report would be submitted to a future meeting.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the progress made on the establishment of a ticketing company be noted.
- (b) That, subject to the conclusion of successful negotiations with the operators, a report be submitted to a meeting of the Authority seeking approval to the establishment of a ticketing company.