

# **AGENDA ITEM NO: 15**

## **WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**

### **AT A MEETING OF THE RAIL WORKING GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS ON TUESDAY 25 APRIL 2006**

**PRESENT:** Councillor C Townley (Chair)  
Councillors K Iqbal, P McBride and J Prestage

#### **30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J S King and M Lyons.

#### **31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **32. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2006 be approved.

#### **33. PERFORMANCE 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.

It was reported that in comparison to the corresponding period the previous year, the number of cancellations had risen slightly but punctuality had improved. Members discussed the maintenance procedures of the existing fleet and, with regard to strengthenings, it was noted that Northern Rail had improved in their delivery of strengthened trains although fleet failures did continue to affect overall results. Members had previously expressed their concern regarding the internal and external cleanliness of trains and it was reported that Northern had carried out a number of training sessions with cleaning team managers and work would continue to investigate areas where improvements could be made.

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

#### **34. NORTHERN FRANCHISE REVIEW**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating them on information on the Department for Transport's review of the Northern Rail Franchise.

Members were advised of the findings of the review undertaken by consultants on behalf of the DfT which stated that the Northern Rail franchise was an efficient and well managed operation and that Northern Rail continued to develop and improve the overall efficiency and value for money of the franchise through well developed and focussed initiatives. As a result there would be no short term changes to the specification.

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

#### **35. NORTHERN FRANCHISE UPDATE**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating them on matters relating to the Northern Franchise.

Members were updated on the arrangements for the purchase of additional rolling stock and the refurbishment of existing rolling stock. Concern was expressed regarding the DfT's refusal to fund the 8 Class 333 trailer cars beyond March 2007. It was noted that an alternative source of funding would need to be identified in order to retain the vehicles and discussions were taking place with Northern and Angel Trains to develop funding options.

With regard to the proposed scheme to improve car parking at Morley Station, it was reported that Network Rail were in the process of completing work following the drainage problems identified at the site. The scheme would be revisited with a view to developing a revised proposal.

It was noted that the Authority had approved the proposals to extend platforms on the Harrogate and Caldervale lines. Metro would seek contributions from local authorities for those stations to be extended which lie outside the West Yorkshire boundary.

The Working Group were advised that a further 15 waiting shelters would be replaced at 8 rail stations which would provide additional seating and integral lighting to improve comfort, safety and security. Metro agreed to investigate the issue regarding the waiting rooms at Todmorden Station being locked at night due to vandalism problems.

Members were advised that Metro were continuing to liaise with Calderdale Council and potential funding partners to explore the options available to develop an improvement scheme for Mytholmroyd rail station. With regard to Wakefield Westgate, it was noted that a decision on funding was still awaited from the DfT who had requested additional information which should be completed by the end of June 2006.

It was noted that Faber Maunsell were preparing a final report regarding proposals for a MetroCard Zone 6 to cover rail services in the wider City Region and the report would also consider options to address cross boundary fares anomalies.

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

### **36. INDUSTRY ISSUES UPDATE**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on East Coast Main Line Access, 'Railways for All' Accessibility Strategy, DfT Guidance on Closures and Regional Planning Assessments and Route Utilisation Studies.

#### East Coast Main Line (ECML) Access

Members were advised that the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) had published details of how the decision on GNER and Grand Central's applications had been reached. The Working Group expressed their disappointment at the decision. It was noted that Grand Central had reiterated its intention to serve Bradford in the future and that the ORR had asked Network Rail to investigate additional paths between Leeds and London to facilitate GNER's application. Metro would continue to explore with Grand Central how the services could be accommodated together with the additional GNER services. The Working Group considered that the failure of the bids would damage the economic growth of West Yorkshire and that the issue of improved connectivity with London should be pursued through Yorkshire Forward and the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly.

#### 'Railways for All' Accessibility Strategy

It was reported that the DfT had launched the strategy which was aimed at improving the accessibility of rail stations over a period of 10 years. Shipley and Huddersfield stations were included in the first 3 year programme of larger schemes to develop "accessible routes". With regard to accessibility at Huddersfield Station, comment was made that the reopening of the pedestrian tunnel from platform 1 to 8 should be considered as an option. It was proposed that Metro submit appropriate schemes for the application of 2006/7 small schemes funding for access improvements at Garforth and Ilkley. If the bids were successful, a report would be prepared for the Authority to seek approval for any match funding required and it was proposed to develop further schemes to be considered for future stages of the DfT's programme.

#### DfT Guidance on Closures

The Working Group was advised on the basic principles proposed in the DfT's consultation document on Guidance on Closures. Metro had contributed to a pteg response to the consultation and had endorsed the concerns raised regarding the methodology and conclusions drawn in the document's case studies. It was noted that Metro would closely monitor the situation.

## Regional Planning Assessments (RPAs) and Route Utilisation Studies (RUSs)

It was reported that the Regional Planning Assessment (RPA) for Yorkshire and the Humber would commence in September 2006 and would look at the rail network against its geographic, demographic and economic context. The RPA would be carried out by the DfT.

Route Utilisation Studies (RUS) would be carried out by Network Rail and would examine the capacity, effectiveness and future needs of the rail network.

The East Coast Main Line RUS was currently in progress and included services on the Wakefield line. Metro was represented on working groups collecting evidence and data. A RUS for the network in Yorkshire and the Humber was scheduled to commence later in the year and progress on all of the studies would be reported to future meetings of the Working Group.

### **RESOLVED -**

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the schemes to be submitted to the current 'Access for All' round be noted.