

AGENDA ITEM No: 14.

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE FACILITIES WORKING GROUP HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE ON MONDAY 19 MARCH 2007

PRESENT: Councillor P McBride (Chair)

Councillors D Blackburn and K Rhodes

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Wallace

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

11. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2006 be approved.

12. ON STREET INFRASTRUCTURE

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the management of Metro's on street infrastructure.

Shelter Glazing

It was reported that performance data covering the period 31 August 2006 to 28 February 2007 had demonstrated that the existing contractor continued to meet the standards set for attendance at site for both emergency call-outs and planned works.

Shelter Cleaning

Metro's in-house team and external contractors continued to meet performance standards. However, a full re-tendering exercise would be undertaken during 2007 to ensure that Metro sustained value for money regarding shelter cleaning services.

Shelter Contract

It was confirmed that during 2006/07 over 380 new Trueform shelters had been installed in West Yorkshire as part of the current Yorkshire Bus Programme. Members were assured that the new shelters were compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

As previously reported, the current shelter contract was due to expire in June 2007 and, in this respect, a full tender exercise had been undertaken with 5 bids presently being evaluated. Members would receive a detailed presentation of the preferred supplier following appraisal of the tenders.

Shelter Advertising

Members were advised that over 400 new advertising panels had been installed to shelters across most of the 5 Districts, which was in line with the revised agreement with Clear Channel (Adshel). However, some difficulties had occurred in securing Wakefield MDC's agreement over the installation of advertising panels and that this matter was still subject to further discussions.

Shelter Refurbishments

The Working Group was advised that Metro had received favourable comments from passengers and bus operators regarding the 300 Signature Smart 4 shelters, which had been fully refurbished across West Yorkshire. The remaining 120 shelters would be completed by June 2007. It was reported that Metro had provided Merseytravel officers with specification details to enable them to consider a similar programme of refurbishment works to the number of Smart 4 shelters within the Mersey area.

Solar Power

It was reported that Metro continued to explore the usage of solar power at both bus stops and shelters as part of the Environment Strategy. Members commended this initiative, particularly at sites in rural locations when a mains electrical supply was not available.

Public Consultation

As previously reported, Members were advised that to date over 50 consultation letters had been sent to property occupiers prior to the installation of stops/shelters, which commenced in September 2006. Only one written objection had been received, however, this had been resolved amicably following further consultation with the occupier concerned.

Shelter Replacements

The Group was advised that best value would be achieved through a more robust policy to define usage criteria for not replacing little used shelters on corridor schemes, dilapidation or road traffic accidents. This approach would

facilitate consultation on alternative sites with higher passenger numbers. The initiative's proposals/criteria would be submitted to the next meeting of the Group.

Discussions ensued regarding drainage problems at bus stops located on Dewsbury Road, Wakefield. In this respect, Members were assured that this issue would be brought to the attention of Wakefield MDC's Highways Department for rectification.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a report outlining the new proposals/criteria for the shelter replacement programme be submitted to the next meeting of the Working Group.

13. MANAGEMENT OF METRO BUS STATIONS

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the management of Metro bus stations.

Police/Partnership Working

Members were informed that a new 2 year funding package was being finalised to extend the funding of 8 PCSO's to cover Metro bus stations. It was reported that this package would result in a significant cost reduction to Metro per year. Metro had also facilitated an approach between the major bus operators and West Yorkshire Police to part fund dedicated PCSOs to police buses throughout West Yorkshire.

It was reported that the FOCUS Safer Transport Group had continued with initiatives to improve transport security and to gather valuable intelligence on offenders. In this respect, successful operations had been undertaken in the Calderdale and Leeds districts, which had been very well received by the public. Kirklees would be targeted in April, with the Wakefield and Bradford areas benefiting from joint operations later in the year.

The Group was advised that anti-social incidents in Metro owned bus stations had reduced by 20% in 2006 compared to 2005.

Members were informed that options to update Metro's CCTV control room had been explored, as part of the development of a business case. This work would include enhancements due to technological advancement since the opening of the control room some years ago. Options included exploration of greater collaboration with the District Councils.

Members also thanked officers for their visit to the CCTV control room on 13 September 2006, which they felt had been most informative.

Asset Management

It was reported that Metro was updating its asset management strategy to co-ordinate the management/maintenance of Metro's assets, including bus stations. This would ensure best value/practice regarding the approach to maintenance/operation and health and safety. Further details regarding the strategy would be submitted to a future meeting of the Working Group.

Advertising

The installation of advertising screens at Bradford Interchange had been successful and would be rolled out to other bus stations over the coming year. Also an agreement had been reached with J C Decaux to provide billboard advertising at a number of Metro sites. Further options regarding advertising revenue were being explored, with a progress report being submitted to a future meeting of the Group.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

14. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN FUNDED SCHEMES

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding Local Transport Plan funded proposals to improve bus and rail passenger facilities.

Pudsey Bus Station

Members were informed that Metro and Leeds City Council had developed an outline design for the new proposed bus station at Pudsey. It would be a six stand 'drive around' station with two dedicated stands for the Route 4 'ft' articulated buses. It had been agreed to refurb the site of the existing public toilets, adjacent to the entrance of Pudsey park, due to a lack of space within the proposed bus station site. In this respect, it was stated that the toilets would be owned and operated by Leeds City Council and that building work, maintenance and repair costs would be met by the council. It was anticipated that a joint public consultation on the proposals would be undertaken within the near future, with a view to work commencing on the new facilities in early 2008, subject to obtaining the necessary planning approvals and traffic regulation orders.

Brighouse Bus Station

The Group was advised that the Traffic Regulation Order process/consultation had commenced following the award of planning permission at the end of 2006. Issues surrounding loading/access arrangements along Ganny Road had been raised. It was anticipated these could be resolved with the assistance of Calderdale Council's Highways section, with a view to construction commencing in 2008.

Heckmondwike Bus Facilities

Discussions continued with Kirklees Council regarding their aspirations to include improved on-street bus facilities as part of their proposals for combining the library and information centre. Members were informed that Metro was working on a joint feasibility study with the council and consideration would then be given to its inclusion in the capital programme.

Hemsworth Bus Station

Following discussions between Metro and Tesco it had been agreed that the design of the new bus station, as part of Tesco's supermarket proposals, would be a new 'drive-in-reverse-out' facility. It was reported that waiting facilities would form an integral part of the supermarket's cafeteria and passengers would also be able to wait in a separate enclosed waiting area, as well as beneath the supermarket canopy.

Castleford Interchange Proposals

It was noted that planning consent for the proposed Castleford transport interchange had been granted on 22 February 2007. Metro and Wakefield Council were working together on the land acquisition issues and consulting with the relevant landowners. Wakefield Council was also undertaking preparatory work on the Compulsory Purchase Order procedures.

It was requested that the respective Authority Members be kept informed and consulted on the development stages of the initiative(s) pertaining to their District.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

15. INFORMATION AND PROMOTION UPDATE

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive and received a presentation regarding Metro's promotion and marketing activities.

Metroline/Traveline

Members commended Metroline staff on being amongst the best in the country for exceeding two Key Performance Indicators in relation to information provision. Metroline had also achieved runner up position in the European Call Centre of the Year Awards in the under 50-seat category.

It was noted that a decision had been taken to change the national Traveline number to a 10p per minute number (0871 200 2233), as from 1 February 2007. The number would be phased into future printed material and would not affect the local Metroline number (0113 245 7676).

Marketing Activities

The Working Group was updated on the various marketing initiatives currently being undertaken by Metro. These included the development/commencement of the Travel To Work project, the ongoing development of the 'Moving On' promotion and the Young Person's website, an update concerning the real time information system and improvements to the Journey Planner to incorporate full Metro branding.

It was further reported that an independent consultation and review on Metro's approach to bus stop displays and network maps had been undertaken. Metro planned to incorporate route diagrams and provide information at more stops. A web-based approach relating to the network maps was being considered.

Members were advised that in view of the increased volume of bus stop timetable displays being produced the purchase of an additional printer would be considered.

It was noted that the total ticket sales for the first 10 months of this financial year had increased 11.7% on last year, while volumes represented an increase of 8.6%. MetroCard sales had also increased, which equated to 10.8% (values) and 3.5% (volumes). Company MetroCard sales had increased by 12.7% in this financial year to date compared with the previous year.

Members also received a presentation on Metro Messenger, which was a free email update service advising registered customers of travel news, special offers and other incentives. It was reported that the database system could be used as a tool for managing customer information and improving customer targeting, as well as allowing information to be accessed/disseminated easily and cost effectively. Future development of the service was also discussed. It was reported that the scheme would be launched in April 2007. Members commented that this would be an effective tool in the promotion of special offers, such as the Settle and Carlisle route and the Jazz Train.

The Working Group was advised that Metro had achieved the highest BVPI 103 score (satisfaction with information provision) of all PTA/Es. Seventy nine percent of transport users were satisfied with the provision of bus information.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That officers be thanked for their presentation on the database system for managing customer information.
- (b) That the report be noted.