

AGENDA ITEM No: 7.

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE RAIL WORKING GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON FRIDAY 31 AUGUST 2007

PRESENT: Councillor A Carter (Chair)

Councillors R Downes, P McBride and M Slater

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor C Campbell.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That, in the absence of any previous members of the Working Group being present, the minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2007 be approved.

4. RAIL WORKING GROUP OVERVIEW

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive which gave an overview of Metro's involvement in the planning and delivery of rail services.

The report had been prepared in view of the fact that all the members were new to the Working Group and it was considered beneficial for them to be briefed on Metro's role in the provision of local rail services. Members were also advised of the key issues the Working Group had previously been involved with which included:

- monitoring performance and quality
- focussing on specific causes of poor performance (eg cable theft)
- developing and implementing a strategy to improve accessibility at rail stations
- developing a strategy to better manage demand at station car parks
- seeking to influence national policies and strategies regarding Leeds City Region issues

Members noted the future dates of the Working Group which had been scheduled for:

30 October 2007
21 January 2008
11 March 2008.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

5. NORTHERN FRANCHISE UPDATE

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the operating performance of local rail services within West Yorkshire provided by Northern Rail and changes to the timetable from December 2007. It was reported that data from the daily performance log was available for Members to inspect in line with the approach agreed at a previous meeting of the Working Group.

Cancellations and Punctuality

Members were informed that service cancellations had averaged at 1.8% for each period during February to July, which was an increase on the same period last year. Punctuality over the same period was 0.2% lower than the previous year with 89.3% of services arriving on time.

The Working Group noted the reasons for the service delays/cancellations, including the ongoing and previously reported problem of copper cable thefts. It was acknowledged that the severe flooding during June had had a major impact on the figures for rail passengers travelling in West Yorkshire and details were provided in Appendix 3 of the submitted report.

Members requested that Northern Rail and Network Rail be invited to attend a future meeting of the Working Group.

December 2007 Timetable Changes

The Working Group noted the major change to the rail services on the Huddersfield line and the proposed timetable from December 2007. It was reported that the revised service pattern would provide an overall enhanced level of service with a new all day hourly service from Leeds to Brighouse and Hebden Bridge. In combination with the Huddersfield Line service this would maintain at least an hourly service for all local stations. The Service Level Commitment in the Northern Franchise would be updated to reflect the new train service plan.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That Northern Rail and Network Rail be invited to attend a future meeting of the Working Group.

- (b) That the Service Level Commitment for the Northern Franchise be updated to reflect the changes set out in paragraphs 2.21 to 2.25 of the submitted report.

6. NATIONAL STRATEGIES

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members on national strategies and their implications.

Rail White Paper and High Level Output Specification (HLOS)

It was noted that the DfT's White Paper 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway' had been published on 24 July 2007 and included high level specifications such as performance and capacity and safety, which would be delivered via franchise specifications. The investment priority for the HLOS period was increased capacity and the DfT had published a technical document indicating that 60 to 90 additional carriages would be provided in the Leeds area. Metro had provided input to the HLOS through liaison with Network Rail and the DfT including the identification of issues and aspirations and providing forecasting data to the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Planning Assessment and East Coast Main Line Rail Utilisation Strategy. There were immediate opportunities for Metro in the funding for station modernisation and additional carriages and Metro were proposing to discuss rolling stock issues and City Region aspirations with the DfT in the near future.

Yorkshire and Humber Regional Planning Assessment (RPA)

It was reported that the DfT had published the RPA for Yorkshire and the Humber in June 2007 which identified low and high forecast growth for the region and short term priorities in respect of commuter routes for additional train capacity and increased car parking capacity. With regard to the medium to long term priorities, which referred to possible electrification, better connectivity between London and Bradford, improvements to the CalderVale route and further new stations, it was reported that Metro would work with the City Region partners to make a case for earlier implementation.

East Coast Main Line (ECML) Rail Utilisation Strategy

Members were advised that Metro had been involved in the ECML Route Utilisation Study (RUS) since its inception and continued to be represented on the Stakeholder Management Group and Options Sub Group. Members noted the key issues that Metro had sought to address with regard to the growth forecasts presented in the Yorkshire and Humber RPA which were reflected in the RUS and also noted the proposed response to the ECML consultation.

Inter City East Coast Rail Franchise Award

The Working Group were advised that NXEC Trains Ltd, a subsidiary of National Express Group, had been awarded the contract to operate services on the InterCity East Coast rail franchise. The franchise would commence on 9 December 2007 until 31 March 2015 and Metro would liaise with the DfT and NXEC Trains Ltd to explore the implications and opportunities for the Leeds City Region. Councillor Downes advised the Working Group that he had requested a meeting with National Express and it was suggested that they should be invited to attend a future meeting of the Working Group once that meeting had taken place.

East Midlands and Cross Country Franchise Awards

It was reported that Stagecoach had been awarded the contract to run the new East Midlands rail franchise and Arriva the contract for the new Cross Country rail franchise. Metro would liaise with both companies regarding their respective franchise operations.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That National Express be invited to attend a future meeting of the Working Group.
- (b) That following publication of the Rail White Paper, the proposed actions set out in paragraph 2.12 of the submitted report be noted.
- (c) That the key points of the proposed East Coast Main Line Rail Utilisation Study consultation response set out in paragraph 2.24 of the submitted report be endorsed.

7. RAIL PLAN 6

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

Low Moor Station

Members were advised that Metro continued to pursue opportunities for future train service patterns that would allow trains to stop at the proposed Low Moor station site. The proposed station remained one of Metro's priorities and, subject to PTA approval, further development work would continue once there was confidence that service opportunities were deliverable and the overall business case remained sound.

Kirkstall and Apperley Bridge

It was reported that the Section 106 Agreement between CEG, the developer and Leeds City Council had been signed for both new stations, together with a funding agreement between CEG and Metro. This would secure a significant contribution from the developer of the Kirkstall Forge site, enabling the development of the two stations. Metro was to engage Network Rail on the development of initial designs and discussions were ongoing with the DfT and Northern on the business case and future rolling stock requirements.

Accessibility Strategy

Members were updated on the current position regarding the proposed scheme for Garforth which involved the construction of a ramped path to the York/Selby bound platform. It was reported that this had been delayed due to design issues which had led to unacceptable cost and time implications. The DfT had stated that they were unable to extend the funding period beyond March 2008 and it was therefore proposed that the scheme not be progressed in its current form. Alternative options would be pursued including nominating Garforth as a candidate for the next round of the DfT's national 'Access for All' initiative. If this bid were successful, it could potentially provide the facilities for a fully accessible station including a footbridge and lifts.

Station Car Parks

It was reported that Metro had been developing schemes for car park extensions at a number of locations and also examining the opportunities for funding both the capital and ongoing revenue costs. In line with RailPlan 6, this will also include reviewing the policy on car park charging. Detailed proposals would be prepared for a future meeting.

Passenger Information at Stations

Members were advised that it was proposed to submit a bid to the DfT's 'Small Scheme' funding initiative to assist in the delivery of additional improvements to a scheme which Northern and Network Rail were developing.

Wakefield Kirkgate Rail Station

Members were advised that Network Rail was proposing to refurbish the existing depot at Wakefield Kirkgate station and replace redundant facilities with new, fit for purpose ones. Network Rail were liaising with Wakefield MDC on the details of their proposals and a progress report would be prepared for a future meeting of the Working Group.

Wakefield Westgate Station

Comment was made that the access to platforms at Wakefield Westgate station was poor and members were advised that Metro was preparing a

major scheme bid with Wakefield MDC, rail operators and Network Rail. The proposals would improve accessibility at the station and include lifts. It was reported that Wakefield MDC also had plans to redevelop the Westgate area of Wakefield and members would be provided with further details regarding the timescale of the programme.

RESOLVED -

- (a)** That the report be noted.
- (b)** That the current scheme to provide a ramped access path at Garforth rail station not be progressed further and the DfT be asked to include Garforth within its national, Access for All 'step free' initiative.
- (c)** That the Working Group endorse the proposal that Metro submits appropriate bids for DfT 'Small Scheme' funding in relation to enhancements and renewals to the passenger information facilities at rail stations, as set out in paragraphs 2.29 and 2.30 of the submitted report.