

AGENDA ITEM: 8

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE WAKEFIELD PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE HELD IN COUNTY HALL, WAKEFIELD ON THURSDAY 30 MARCH 2006

PRESENT: Councillor G Phelps (Chair)

WYPTA

M Walker

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

Catherine Bairstow
Sharon Churchill
John Churms
Michael Dalton

Barbara Darlison
Derek Farren
Brenda Fruish
Keith Watson

Also in attendance:

G Cooper	-	Arriva Yorkshire
M Burk	-	Arriva Yorkshire
M Drinkwater	-	GNER
G North	-	GNER
D Haley	-	Northern

13. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Hussain, K Rhodes, and L Harrison and M Lowery of Arriva.

14. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2006 be approved.

15. MEMBER FEEDBACK REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising them of the feedback received at the meeting of the Committee held on 19 January 2006.

Members were reminded that individual detailed matters could be raised with Metro officers at the close of the meeting.

The Committee noted the results of the discussion between Metro and Arriva regarding accessibility issues at Wakefield Bus Station.

It was reported that Arriva had agreed to consider the request to re-time Service 593, but could give no guarantees on whether they would be able to do this.

The Committee were informed that Arriva had indicated that it was unable to sustain the commercial operation of the trial service to Bottomboat beyond July 2006. This matter had been considered at a meeting of the Tendered Services Working Group held on 29 March where it had been agreed to fund the service for a further year.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

16. INFORMATION REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on information regarding current developments and issues affecting the Wakefield District.

Yellow Bus

It was reported that the second phase of the Mybus project was progressing well and that there had been very positive feedback on the low floor buses. The Department of Transport had agreed to provide funding to cover Phase 3 of the project which would provide for the implementation of a further 60 buses over the next two years.

Concessionary Travel Arrangements

It was reported that with effect from Saturday 1 April 2006 people holding a Metro Senior or Disabled Concessionary Permit would be entitled to free travel on all local bus services in the county, after 0930 Monday to Friday and all day Saturday, Sunday and public holidays. Metro had extended the scheme to include travel on most cross-boundary services.

It was noted that the Chancellor's Budget Statement on 22 March 2006 announced plans for the introduction of a national free concessionary travel scheme from 2008. It was noted that further details of the proposed scheme were awaited.

YourNextBus Real Time Information Project

The Committee were updated on progress with the project and were informed that approximately 93% of buses in West Yorkshire had now been equipped with real time information tracking equipment and that 70% of these were being reliably picked up. It was reported that bus operators had started to use the data from the system to identify problem areas in their timetables and had used the data to make minor adjustments, which had resulted in improvements in reliability and punctuality.

It was noted that whilst most text messages were answered within 60 seconds there were some minor problems with the text messaging service, which resulted from communication problems between the text messaging aggregator and the mobile phone providers. Metro's real time provider was working with the parties to find a solution.

Wakefield Westgate Rail Station

It was reported that the major scheme bid for the increase in rail capacity at Wakefield Westgate was still with the DfT who had asked for additional feasibility work to be carried out before it made a formal decision on the bid. It was likely that the work now required would delay any final decision until the end of the year.

Castleford Bus/Rail Interchange

It was reported that a Consultant had been appointed to oversee the design and delivery of the £14m investment in the new Castleford Bus/Rail Interchange project. Members would be consulted on progress of the scheme layout and design at a future meeting.

Wakefield Kirkgate Station Issues

It was reported that Metro, in partnership with Network Rail, had recently carried out a number of minor improvements at Kirkgate station to increase passenger safety and security. These included additional CCTV cameras, improvements to the subway area and entrance lobby, a new transparent shelter on the island platform and enhanced lighting to the platform areas.

Despite the improvements, it was reported that the station continued to be a cause for concern to users and that it did not meet current accessibility guidelines.

The Committee were informed that a 'task force' was to be established to address the current problems at Wakefield Kirkgate and would look at future opportunities and funding.

The station had recently seen an increase in patronage due to the introduction of the Leeds-Sheffield 'fast' service in 2005.

It was reported that the possibility of a bus service linking Wakefield Kirkgate Station with Wakefield Westgate was still being examined.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

17. CONSULTATION ITEM: HOW TO MAKE BETTER USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on ways to make better use of public transport.

Following a brief presentation, members were asked to provide feedback and suggestions for future action on ways to make better use of public transport capacity. They were asked to consider how to increase off-peak rail use, evening and Sunday bus use and how commuters could be encouraged to travel at different times in order to reduce over-crowding

Members of the committee made the following comments:

- A reduced price ticket could be offered as an incentive to encourage passengers to travel off-peak
- Employers could be more flexible with their working hours to enable employees to make use of off-peak services
- Bus services should be more reliable, especially on corridors where services are less frequent
- That the use of bus lanes should be considered on narrow corridors, which could be used to regulate inward and outward traffic flow at peak times.

Members were thanked for their useful contributions and were asked to forward any further suggestions to Metro.

RESOLVED - That PCC members' comments and views be noted.