

AGENDA ITEM NO: 11

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY/ DISTRICT COUNCILS

AT A MEETING OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES LIAISON GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS, ON TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2005

PRESENT: Councillor J Jarosz (Chair)

Councillors	D Schofield	-	WYPTA
	G Wainwright	-	WYPTA
	A Harrison	-	Leeds CC
	J Nicholson	-	Wakefield MDC

Officers in attendance:

G Smith	-	Bradford MDC
N Holt	-	Metro
D Pearson	-	Metro
R Chaplin	-	WYPTA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Hullock (Kirklees), M Smith (Bradford) and J Akhtar (PTA).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2005 be approved.

4. LEEDS BUDDYING SCHEME – FINAL REPORT

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members of the outcome of the Leeds Buddying Scheme.

Members were advised that the Leeds Buddying Scheme had been a 3 year project which had ended at the end of August 2005. The scheme had been funded by an award from the Department for Transport's Urban Bus

Challenge together with contributions from Metro, Leeds City Council and the bus operators, First and Arriva.

The success of the scheme was widely recognised as an example of good practice in Travel Training and was included in the Department for Health guidance. The advice offered by the team had assisted the development of similar schemes elsewhere, notably the recently launched Transport for London project. The Liaison Group agreed that the scheme had made a positive contribution to removing barriers to mobility and promoting independence for people with disabilities and regretted its discontinuation. The steps taken to ensure the continuation of this type of scheme were set out in a separate report on Travel Training.

RESOLVED - That the outcome of the Leeds Buddying Scheme be noted.

5. TRAVEL TRAINING

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members on the joint approach adopted by Metro and the District Councils to develop and extend a Buddying/Travel Training scheme in West Yorkshire.

It was reported that Metro had employed two Accessible Transport Officers to facilitate and support the establishment of travel training services throughout West Yorkshire. The officers would support the development of Social Services staff in travel training skills and techniques and assist and advise in the setting up of a structured travel training programme. The team would also work with bus and rail operators to assist the development of Disability Awareness within staff training programmes and continue to promote the benefits of travel training to all District Councils and other agencies throughout West Yorkshire.

Members raised the problem of cars illegally parking and obstructing bus stops making it difficult for passengers with disabilities to alight. It was noted that plans to decriminalise some traffic offences would give local authorities more powers in this regard and officers were asked to promote this issue with District Councils.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

6. ACCESSBUS PASSENGER STATISTICS AND TRENDS

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on usage of the Accessbus service for the six month period since the last meeting (February to July 2005).

It was reported that the number of passenger journeys undertaken in the 12 months period up to 31 July 2005 represented an increase of 5% on the same

period the previous year. Members also noted that the total number of customers registered to use the Accessbus service had increased by 11% on the previous year. Over two thirds of the journeys were to a supermarket and/or local shopping centres and members requested a breakdown of the statistics regarding specific shopping locations to a future meeting.

It was noted that continued increases in membership meant that it was becoming more difficult to meet the demand for trips on the service. This Issue had been identified as a future concern in the recent Best Value Accessibility Review and would be the subject of further consideration by the PTA.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

7. ACCESSBUS PROGRESS REPORT

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on issues and initiatives affecting the AccessBus service since the last meeting of the group.

AccessBus Operating Contracts

It was reported that Wakefield MDC were unable to continue to operate AccessBus services and, following a tendering exercise, the contract had been awarded to B L Travel. All other operators had agreed to the extension of their existing contracts.

AccessBus Booking System

Members noted that the trials of the upgraded booking system had highlighted issues where the system's functionality did not meet Metro's requirements. These issues were being discussed with the suppliers prior to determining a future course of action.

Service Quality Monitoring

Members were advised that the agency appointed to undertake research were exploring how they could recruit new surveyors who were not existing AccessBus customers in order that an objective assessment of the service could be made.

It was reported that tracking devices were being fitted to AccessBus vehicles in Kirklees in order to monitor reliability and ensure best value for money. It was noted that the trial would be evaluated to determine whether the wider roll out of the technology offered value for money.

Accessbus Vehicles

It was reported that the Passenger Transport Authority had approved a vehicle replacement programme which included the replacement of high floor vehicles with low floor easy access buses. An order had been placed for 8 new low floor vehicles and it was anticipated that these would enter service in 2006.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a letter of thanks be sent to Wakefield MDC for their previous participation in operating the AccessBus scheme.