

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

**AT A MEETING OF THE CONCESSIONARY FARES WORKING GROUP
HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON
TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2009**

PRESENT: Councillor J Jarosz (Chair)
Councillors T Leadley and M Walker

1. **RESOLVED** - That Councillor Jarosz be elected to chair the meeting in the absence of Councillor Swift.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Swift and Wallace.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

4. **MINUTES**

Further to minute *8 - Future Developments - Members were informed that discussions concerning the retail opportunities for selling MetroCards and DayRovers were still ongoing and that progress in this regard would be reported to a future meeting.

It was also reported that, as a result of the recent postal strike, slight delays had occurred in the delivery of concessionary fares passes. Metro had, therefore, arranged for a notice to this effect to be placed on the website. Metro would explore alternate delivery methods should the postal strike continue for an indefinite period.

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2009 be approved.

5. **YORCARD**

The Working Group received a presentation and considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the jointly partnered Metro and South Yorkshire PTE Yorcard project and the development of a revised implementation strategy for smartcard ticketing.

Yorcard Pilot

Members were advised that the final phase of the current Yorcard project finished at the end of September 2009 and involved touch on/touch off payment methods using Yorcard 'Pay as You Go' cards and commercial products on ITSO smartcards from First and Stagecoach. The pilot's success was reported to members, particularly in the use of smartcard technology in an ITSO and multi-operator context. It was confirmed that customer reactions to the project had been positive and a large number of cross country passes had been recognised and read by the technology.

A formal evaluation of the pilot project was being undertaken, which included analysis of the impacts on boarding/alighting times and evidence of customer responses in terms of generated travel.

DfT Draft Strategy for Smartcard and Integrated Ticketing

The Working Group was advised that the Department for Transport (DfT) had published a consultation draft strategy for smart and integrated ticketing. The Strategy's vision was outlined in the report. In this respect, members received a presentation regarding the development of a revised approach to the strategy, reflecting the experience from the pilot project and subsequent national developments.

The next steps included the setting up of a 'back office' and Host Operator Process System (HOPS) in order to facilitate Metro's Card Management System. This would be undertaken in partnership with South Yorkshire PTE. It was noted that this aspect of the initiative was vital in order to allow the production of tickets, processing of passenger data and reimbursements to bus operators. It was reported that in order to encourage bus operators to equip vehicles with smartcard readers the DfT had proposed changes to the way BSOG (Bus Service Operator Grant) was reimbursed to operators. Due to the complexity of the equipment, it was recognised that smaller operators might require support to implement the initiative. In this regard, it was commented that the option to lease the necessary 'kit' may be available to smaller operators, although this option would require further investigation.

The Working Group was further informed that Metro aspired to develop the Leeds rail station ticketing gates in order to make them smartcard compatible. In this respect, initial discussions with Northern had been positive and it was hoped that a contribution towards costs could be secured from the company.

Members were supportive of the initiative and acknowledged that the issue would be submitted to a future meeting of the Authority for further discussion and approval.

RESOLVED -

- (a)** That officers be thanked for their presentation.

(b) That the report be noted.

6. CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL UPDATE

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on the English National Concessions Scheme (ENCS).

Lost Passes

The Working Group was advised that a charge of £5 for the replacement of lost passes had been introduced on 28 September 2009. It was noted that since inception very little reaction had been received from people regarding the surcharge.

Disabled People with Learning Difficulties

Members were informed that Metro had held discussions with advocacy groups, which included the Access Committee for Leeds, regarding their requests for an extension to the hours of the current concessionary travel scheme. They had requested free travel before 0930 hours on weekdays for pass holders who had learning difficulties.

The groups had argued for the change on the basis of cost, dependency on buses and 'ease of use' grounds and that people with learning difficulties also relied on bus use for medical appointments, colleges, work and community placements. It was also recognised that some groups of disabled pass holders experienced communication difficulties with drivers. Members noted that changing the scheme for just one group of disabled pass holders would result in a legal challenge on discrimination grounds. It was further acknowledged that to change the scheme to allow travel before 0930 hours could incur a significant increase in the concessionary fares budget, as well as possibly generating a transfer from senior pass holders to disabled passes. The Working Group noted that there was no discounted product available for pass holders who regularly travelled before 0930 hours.

In view of the above, Metro was exploring options for a concessionary MetroCard that would reflect the pre-payment options available to other groups of regular travellers and address some of the communication issues.

Operator Payments

It was reported that the 3 year agreements with the major operators had provided financial security and had represented value for money. Payments to operators outside the agreements had increased faster than forecast, which had demonstrated the inherent volatility and risk. In this respect, a major operator had discussed with Metro the re-phasing of the payments to better reflect patronage trends. Metro had agreed to consider this on the basis that

cash flow benefits/disbenefits were recognised and value for money could be demonstrated.

Card Management System

Members were advised that Metro had now appointed two preferred suppliers to produce an Integrated Card Management System (CMS). Payne would be responsible for card production and Novacroft would provide data capture, card management and integration systems. Novacroft would also act as lead supplier for all elements of the systems and processes.

The initial phase of the project would encompass the ENCS passes and be ITSO compatible. Future phases would incorporate Young Person's Photocards and MetroCards into the system. Further work would examine how people applied, obtained and paid for the Young Person's Photocards. The present acquisition system was outlined to members. In this respect, it was Metro's aim to ensure that a Young Person's Photocard be provided to each young person in Year 6 of primary school utilising the Card Management System. This would eliminate the process of applying in person for a pass via travel centres and post offices. Images could also be stored digitally on the system, which would assist with card replacement.

It was noted that the photocard would be provided free of charge and that costs could be recouped via a £5 charge for lost/replacement passes.

Concessions for Young People

As previously reported, Metro had undertaken a study to assess what contribution free travel for young people would make. The recently completed study examined the current social and environmental costs to society of limited accessibility for them to transport services. A report outlining the findings was being finalised, however, it had concluded that whilst there was a positive benefit cost ratio there would need to be national funding in order to make free travel affordable for the ITA.

In this respect, members were advised that Metro was presently in discussions with bus operators regarding the implementation of a 'flat fare' for young people after the 3 year concessionary fares agreement with operators expired in April 2011.

It was agreed that a copy of the study would be sent to members.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.