

AGENDA ITEM NO: 14

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE WAKEFIELD PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE HELD IN COUNTY HALL, WAKEFIELD ON THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER 2006

PRESENT: Councillor G Phelps (Chair)

WYPTA

R Downes
S King
K Rhodes
M Walker

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

John Churms	Brenda Fruish
Michael Dalton	Keith Watson
Derek Farren	

WAKEFIELD MDC

D Hopkins
B Smith

Also in attendance:

G Cooper	-	Arriva Yorkshire
M Lowery	-	Arriva Yorkshire
J Ward	-	Wakefield MDC

6. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Councillors King and Downes to the meeting.

7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from public representatives Mrs B Darlison, Mrs C Bairstow and Mrs S Churchill, Councillors L Harrison and R Halliday (WMDC), Mr M Drinkwater and Mr G North of GNER and Mr C Barraclough of Stagecoach.

8. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2006 be approved.

9. 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 6 July 2006.

Councillor Rhodes requested that Arriva review the timing of bus services on the Dewsbury Road corridor in Wakefield so as not to inconvenience passengers who have to wait in some instances for 35/40 minutes for the next bus to arrive.

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

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

10. INFORMATION REPORT

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

Station Improvement Programme

It was reported that a programme of works had been developed to enhance the general appearance and quality of facilities at Featherstone, Fitzwilliam and Streethouse Stations. The works would include enhanced security measures, lighting improvements, deep cleaning, station painting and the renewal of Metro branding.

Rolling Stock Refurbishment

Members were advised that Metro was providing funding for a number of schemes, which would improve the interiors of a number of trains operating on local rail services. Improvements would be made to Class 155 diesel units, Class 321 electric units and Class 158/9 diesel units.

Community Transport Partnership

It was reported that Metro, in partnership with the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, hosted a Community Transport Conference on 21 September 2006. The purpose of the event was for Community Transport operators, Transport Authorities and Regeneration Agencies to explore how they could work together to address social exclusion and to provide regeneration. In this respect Councillor Phelps suggested that a report be prepared on the role of Community Transport having particular regard to how it could be developed to complement Metro's existing services.

Real Time Displays

It was reported that 172 large and over 500 small real time information displays would be located in the busiest shelters in West Yorkshire. Members had previously been consulted regarding the locations and a list of 150 proposed sites for the large displays was attached to the report. The installation of the displays would commence in the Autumn. The Committee questioned the need for a large display at George Street, Wakefield, on grounds of usage. Members were also asked to let Metro know of any other sites they considered would benefit from real time displays in the Wakefield district.

Councillor Phelps stressed that in view of the fact that Castleford Interchange was not expected to open for another 3 years, the provision of real time information displays at the Bus Station should not be overlooked.

The Committee suggested that public announcement systems should also be used to give out passenger information such as cancellations and late running and were advised that this would be a later feature of the real time project.

Wakefield Westgate Station

Comment was made that Metro was currently working in partnership with Network Rail and Wakefield MDC on the development of the scheme. Work was continuing in respect of additional track and platform capacity and Network Rail were currently carrying out timetable performance monitoring work in order that the benefits of the scheme to the railway industry could be determined.

Kirkgate Rail Station

It was reported that a Working Group had been established involving Metro, Wakefield MDC, Network Rail and Northern to consider the scope for the possible redevelopment of the station and to develop a strategy that could form the basis of a development brief. Comment was made that the maintenance of the building was becoming a health and safety issue. General cleaning of the building and track was also a major concern.

In response the Committee were informed that although Metro had lobbied for financial penalties to be part of the new franchise similar to the previous SQUIRE arrangements, the Department for Transport had removed this clause when the franchise was renewed. Notwithstanding this, Metro took station cleaning very seriously and had already arranged an urgent meeting with the Area Director of Northern Rail to address the problem at Kirkgate and other stations throughout West Yorkshire.

Wakefield FreeCity Bus

It was reported that Metro and Wakefield Council were considering the introduction of a FreeCityBus in 2007 on a six month trial basis. The service would link the city's Kirkgate and Westgate Stations, shops and retail parks

and parts of the city which were not accessible by public transport. The Committee were informed that during the trial period the service would be monitored and evaluated. It was stressed that after the six month trial period, third party funding from business, rail operators, colleges and hospitals etc was vital to the long term success of the service.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

11. **CONSULTATION ITEMS –**

(a) Metro's Process for Handling Feedback

(b) Castleford Interchange

Handling Feedback

Members received a presentation on the process for handling feedback on bus and rail service complaints and compliments.

It was reported that Metro received approximately 13,000 complaints each year of which only approximately 10% related to Metro's direct activities mainly concerning stop and shelter issues. Of the remaining 90%, approximately 5% were rail related and 85% concerned bus service provision with the largest issues being bus reliability/punctuality and driver behaviour.

The Committee considered that 13,000 complaints seemed relatively high particularly when that figure did not take into account those received by the bus and rail operators. In this respect, the question of whether Metro and the transport operators shared data which highlighted those issues causing most concern, was raised. In response the committee were informed that complaints and correspondence were taken very seriously and that the Operators' Group (which involved Metro and the operators) regularly considered ways to tackle the major areas of concern.

Members were provided with a questionnaire and asked to complete and return it to Metro with any comments or suggestions on how the process for handling complaints could be better managed.

Castleford Interchange

Members were given a presentation detailing plans for the new Castleford Interchange which also included a virtual walk through image of the proposed design.

Comment was made that Metro was continuing to work in partnership with Wakefield MDC, Network Rail, Northern and bus operators on the proposals for a new transport interchange adjacent to the existing Rail Station. Metro's architects were finalising the design details and an application would be submitted to Wakefield MDC for planning permission.

Members were informed that Metro and Wakefield MDC had developed a programme of public consultation but would include local member briefings and opportunities for members of the public to examine and comment on the proposals.

RESOLVED -

- (a)** That PCC members' comments and views be noted.
- (b)** That officers be thanked for their presentations.