

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY
AT A MEETING OF THE CALDERDALE PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE TOWN HALL, HALIFAX
ON TUESDAY 15 JANUARY 2008

PRESENT: Councillor G Wainwright (Chair)

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

V Duke	G Rusher
N Hull	P Stocks
P Melling	J Sykes
N Ricketts	J Whiteley
	E Wood

CALDERDALE MBC

B Collins
K Watson

Also in attendance:

P Flanagan	-	First
S Forrest	-	First
N Walsh	-	Halifax Bus Company
D Haley	-	Northern

7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Swift and C Townley.

8. MINUTES

Further to minute 5, Grand Central Railway, Councillor Watson updated the Committee on the current position regarding Grand Central's operation of services between Sunderland and London via the Durham and East coast routes and their future plans to run from the West Yorkshire area to London.

Further to minute 5, Leeds-Hebden Bridge via Brighouse New Rail Service, members welcomed the new service which was being well used. Concerns were expressed about insufficient car parking at Hebden Bridge and Brighouse to accommodate park and ride passengers. In response Mr Haley from Northern commented that investigations would be undertaken as it was believed that non-rail users were using the car park.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2007 be approved.

9. MEMBER FEEDBACK

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members of the feedback received at the meeting of the Committee held on 9 October 2007 and to report on action taken.

Members were reminded that individual detailed matters could be raised with Metro officers and the operators at the end 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 Calderdale District.

Bus Services Changes

Members were advised that the next major timetable change would take place on the weekend of 26/27 January 2008 and copies of Metro's Changing Times leaflet had been sent to all PCC members. Additional copies were available at the meeting.

Concern was expressed regarding the forthcoming changes to Service X25 and the lack of early publicity and consultation. It was noted that Arriva had not contacted Calderdale Councillors to advise them of the changes but Metro had sent details to local ward members. As a result of complaints received Arrive had revised their plans in the area maintaining through buses to Leeds and had further agreed to maintain a morning X25 service.

Boxing Day Bus Services

It was reported that Metro had funded the pilot operation of daytime bus services on core routes into Leeds and Huddersfield on Boxing Day. The focus of the services was to provide access to shops in the two busiest retail areas and links to local hospitals. Initial indications were that the services had proved to be well used carrying approximately 35,000 passengers. The Authority would consider the possibility of repeating the services for Boxing Day 2008 and would also investigate further expansion to other areas.

Concessionary Permit Issue

It was reported that over 290,000 application forms for the English National Concessionary Scheme (ENCS) pass had been received prior to the

introduction of the new national scheme in April 2008. The new ITSO smartcard passes and information on how to use them would be sent to applicants in March 2008.

Yorcard

It was reported that opportunities to roll a smartcard scheme throughout the Yorkshire and Humber region were being investigated to take full advantage of the introduction of the new concessionary scheme smartcard passes. Metro was working with other authorities and operators to investigate funding opportunities and develop a strong business case.

Real Time Information Update

It was reported that over 2 million text requests had been received to date, with approximately 4,500 text messages being sent each day giving information about departures from West Yorkshire bus stops. It was also noted that following vandalism to electronic displays, a protective cover had been developed and it was hoped that the roll out of displays would resume during February 2008. It was reported that the scheme was receiving positive feedback from customers. Members suggested that information regarding the system be displayed in the timetable cases at stops where the displays were installed.

Driver Training – Mobile Training Unit

The Committee was advised that Metro had joined forces with Huddersfield College and Aberdeen Skills and Enterprise Training (ASET) to provide the NVQ Level 2 qualification in PCV Driving (Bus and Coach). Metro had created a mobile training unit equipped with PCs to enable the fully flexible training package to be delivered at remote sites. Mr Walsh of Halifax Bus Company commended Metro on the initiative which was of great assistance to smaller operators.

Brighouse Bus Station

Members were advised that solutions had been reached regarding road safety issues at the proposed site. It was anticipated that work would commence during Spring 2008 with construction work taking approximately 8 months to complete.

Halifax Rail Station

Members were advised that Metro and Northern were lobbying Network Rail with a view to secure investment for Halifax Rail Station from the DfT's National Stations Improvement Programme. Mr Haley advised the Committee that significant improvements would be made to the station but these could not commence until 2009. However Northern and Metro were considering whether it would be appropriate to carry out some minor cosmetic improvements at the station in the short term. Councillor Collins asked that

Northern make a public announcement about the future plans for the station at the earliest opportunity once the timescales for the work were available.

Members asked if there were any plans to introduce a Freetownbus in Halifax that could provide a link between the bus and rail stations and city centre. It was reported that operators already provided services which facilitate these cross town links and Metro would consider ways in which these could be promoted. Comment was made that there was a need for clear signage and directions on the station forecourt for visitors as it was not apparent how to get to the town centre. Councillor Collins advised the Committee of plans for the future development of Church Street and was requested to ensure that the provision of pedestrian routes be taken into consideration.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

11. **CONSULTATION ITEMS -**

- (a) Bus Passenger Representation**
- (b) Promotion of Public Transport to Non-Users**
- (c) Information at Bus Stops**
- (d) Consultation on Bus Service Changes**

Bus Passenger Representation

The Committee were given a short presentation on the Department for Transport's proposals to introduce a bus passenger watch dog to represent bus passengers' interests at a national level. The DfT had issued a consultation paper which was available on their website. The consultation would run until 17 March 2008 and members' views were sought on the proposals.

Promotion of Public Transport to Non-Users

It was reported that Metro's programme of market research had indicated that the level of satisfaction with public transport information was much higher amongst public transport users than amongst non-users. Members were advised of the work currently being undertaken to promote public transport which included the travel plan scheme, residential MetroCards for new housing developments and new media opportunities, eg website, Metro Messenger, realtime displays, electronic maps etc. Members were asked for any ideas or suggestions on how Metro could raise awareness and target information to non-users.

With regard to residential MetroCards, it was reported that schemes had been introduced at a new housing developments and surveys and further work would be carried out to evaluate their success.

Comment was made that local planning authorities should give consideration to the funding and provision of transport infrastructure such as new stations when considering applications for large developments.

Information at Bus Stops

The Committee was given a short presentation on the provision of information at bus stops and members views were sought on how this could be improved.

It was reported that Metro was to provide additional timetable displays at bus stops which would include improved information and maps. Members were advised of the trial in Leeds of displaying service numbers on some shelters and of proposals to add the 'H' symbol where hospitals were served. It was suggested that fares be also displayed although it was noted that there would be some practical problems in keeping such information up to date. Comment was made that a simpler method for highlighting journey times should be investigated to allow passengers to take the fastest route to their destination.

Consultation on Bus Service Changes

It was reported that passengers had asked for more advance notice of changes to bus services. It was noted that Metro currently published new timetable leaflets, amended the bus stop displays and provided information through Metroline and the website shortly before any changes were made. Members were asked for any ideas or suggestions on how to improve passenger awareness of forthcoming bus service changes.

It was noted that the Changing Times leaflet was a summary of changes which gave people advance warning and alerted them to get new timetables. It was suggested that timetables and the Changing Times leaflet should be available on the relevant services.

The Committee were advised that earlier notification and publicity was dependent on the co-operation of the operators and Metro was keen to pursue the development of a consultation protocol prior to the registration of service changes.

It was noted that Metro sent Councillors service and bus stop alteration information approximately 5-6 weeks before a service change. It was suggested that this information could be simplified. It was acknowledged that small changes to service timings could affect many people and concern was expressed that operators did not consult passengers prior to changes. In some cases people either did not know who to contact or had raised their concerns with the operator but not received a response.

Councillor Collins advised the Committee that area forums had now been established in the Calderdale area and it was suggested that these could be used to raise local transport issues.

Members were thanked for their suggestions to all the consultation items and asked to forward any further ideas or comments on the questionnaire provided at the meeting.

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