

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

**AT A MEETING OF THE CALDERDALE PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, HALIFAX ON
TUESDAY 14 JULY 2009**

PRESENT: Councillor K Watson (Chair)

WYITA

T Swift

CALDERDALE MC

B Collins

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

James Calland
Hannah Dobson
Vic Duke
Peter Melling

Neal Ricketts
John Sheppard
Peter Stocks
John Whiteley

Also in attendance:

R Tomys	-	First
N Walsh	-	Halifax Bus Company
D Haley	-	Northern Rail

1. FIRST SERVICE CUTS

The Chair and Metro officers updated the Committee on the proposed service cuts to be implemented by the First Group at the end of July 2009. It was reported that the majority of service cuts would occur in the Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield district. However, it was noted that the cuts would slightly impact on Services 503 and 537/9 in the Calderdale district. In this respect, Metro had provided funding to extend Service 537/9 until January 2010 during which time passenger usage would be reviewed. Service 503 would operate every 12 minutes instead of every 10 minutes on Saturday journeys only.

It was requested that, as the Committee had not had a meeting to discuss the changes, a press statement be released expressing members' serious concerns and disappointment at First's actions. It was agreed that a press statement from the Committee would be released within 24 hours.

RESOLVED - That a press statement be released expressing the Committee's concerns and disappointment at the First service cuts and reductions.

2. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed James Calland and John Sheppard to their first meeting of the Committee.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from public representatives Mr N Hull and Mr J Sykes.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2009 be approved.

5. MEMBER FEEDBACK

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising them of the feedback received at the meeting of the Committee held on 31 March 2009 and to report the action taken.

The Chair advised the Committee that signs warning non rail users of parking fines had now been erected in Brighouse rail station.

Comment was also made that on certain services operated by First and Arriva passengers were not able to purchase Day Rover tickets. In response, Metro officers clarified that Day Rover tickets were available to buy on all bus services and that if members encountered difficulties in the future to advise Metro accordingly whereby the issue would be raised with the operators directly.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted

6. INFORMATION REPORT

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

Review of Tendered Bus Services – Rural South Calderdale

Members were advised that a number of commercial bus services operating in rural South Calderdale had been withdrawn by First, as the company considered them no longer commercially viable. As a result, Metro had agreed to fund the continuation of the services on a temporary basis until January 2010 pending a comprehensive review of tendered and commercial

bus services in the area. The Committee would be advised of progress at its next meeting.

Discussions ensued regarding the necessity to consult with local councillors, bus users and local communities/groups when undertaking such reviews in order to obtain wider/constructive feedback and to avoid a similar situation to that of the Mixenden bus route changes. Metro officers confirmed that informal consultations had already taken place with local community groups in the area affected and that officers were working with operators to encourage consultation on a wider basis for all service changes. At the present time there was no formal mechanism in place that would allow members of the public to put forward their views/suggestions.

Kickstart - Brighouse

The Committee noted that the Department for Transport had invited bids under its Kickstart programme for innovative new bus services. It was confirmed that Metro, in partnership with Calderdale Community Transport and Calderdale Council, had submitted a bid for a "Metro Local" community minibus service in Brighouse and Rastrick similar to those recently introduced in Kirklees. The service would provide links to local facilities, which could not be met by the regular bus service. Metro was working closely with the Primary Care Trust and local community groups in Rastrick in developing the bid. A decision was expected from the Department for Transport in the autumn.

Metro Active

The Committee was advised of the campaign to encourage young people to use public transport for leisure journeys during the summer. The daily £1 off peak ticket would be available during August and Metro was promoting the scheme widely. Bus operators were thanked for their co-operation with the campaign.

Brighouse Bus Station

It was reported that the new Brighouse bus station became fully operational on 21 May 2009 and was dedicated to the memory of former Calderdale District Spokesperson, Councillor Geoffrey Wainwright, who died in February 2009.

Facilities included comfortable, safe waiting areas, new seating and queuing arrangements, accessibility improvements, 24 hour CCTV surveillance and real time information displays. Pedestrian access between the bus station and town centre had also be improved by the provision of new footpaths and crossings.

The Committee commented whether the realtime system in Brighouse bus station was compatible for the blind and partially sighted. In response, it was stated that this would be investigated. It was also requested that braille signs be erected at Brighouse bus station to assist sight impaired passengers with

stand information. Metro officers confirmed that such signs should be in situ and that this issue would be addressed.

Members commended the new bus station, but commented on duplication of departure information on the realtime screens, the bleeping of the help points and how waiting passengers were exposed to the elements in the 'night area'. It was confirmed that Metro was aware of these issues and was exploring solutions.

Realtime at Bus Stations

It was reported that realtime information had been installed at Keighley Bus Station. The roll out of realtime would continue during the summer at Bradford, Dewsbury, Pontefract, Leeds, Halifax and Wakefield bus stations.

Halifax Rail Station Update

The Committee was advised that Network Rail's renovation of the island platform canopy and the footbridge had commenced in May 2009 and that the work would be undertaken on weekends only until 13 July 2009. As a result of this and other track works, no train services would be calling at the station at weekends, although connecting bus services would be provided for passengers for the duration of the works. Full details of the travel arrangements were included in Metro's May 2009 Caldervale Line timetable and posters were displayed at rail stations.

It was anticipated that further improvements to Halifax rail station, which would be funded by the Department for Transport's National Station Improvement Programme, would be undertaken once the current renovation work was completed.

Todmorden and Sowerby Bridge Car Park Improvements

Members were informed that the recently approved Leeds City Region Rail Growth Package included investment for car park improvements at a number of existing local rail stations. Improvements to both Sowerby Bridge and Todmorden rail stations on the Caldervale Line had been proposed. Metro had commissioned Northern Rail to carry out the outline feasibility studies and design work for the car park extensions, which were presently underway.

Members welcomed the news that twenty one additional car parking spaces would be provided at Todmorden and forty nine additional spaces at Sowerby Bridge. Proposed works also included improvements to lighting and CCTV facilities at each car park area. It was anticipated that the improvements would be delivered by 2012, subject to the necessary consents being obtained.

Hebden Bridge Rail Station Travel Plan

The Committee was advised that Metro, in partnership with Northern Rail, Network Rail, Calderdale Council and Hebden Royd Town Council, had

developed and submitted proposals to the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) for a Station Travel Plan for Hebden Bridge rail station, as part of a national pilot initiative being co-ordinated by ATOC.

The objective of the Plan was to promote sustainable modes of access to the rail station including walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing. The Plan also included recommendations for minor station improvements and improvements to the walking and cycling routes to/from the town centre. Implementation of the proposed improvements would be subject to funding and affordability and, in this respect, Metro would explore the possibility of attracting third party funding through the submission of DfT Access for All - Small Schemes Funding bids to assist with the implementation of the proposed improvements.

Metro would also continue to pursue the issue of additional parking at the station with Northern and Network Rail, as part of an overall review of the existing car parking strategy.

Bus Services

Mr Whiteley made comment about how the 682 and 751 services from Bradford to Shelf ran 15 minutes past the hour and on the hour resulting in a 45 minute wait for passengers in both Halifax and Bradford bus stations. Mr Whiteley requested that this issue be raised with First, with a view to improving the timing of the services. In response, Metro officers noted Mr Whiteley's comments and advised that this issue had already been raised with the operator to determine whether the services could be better co-ordinated.

Ms Dobson raised the issue of extending the final Service 500 from Keighley to 6.05 pm from 5.05 pm. Metro officers confirmed that they were presently discussing with Transdev the possibility of delaying the last departure by half an hour.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Committee be advised of progress regarding the review of tendered bus services in rural South Calderdale at its next meeting.

7. CONSULTATION ITEMS -

- (a) **Sustainable Cities Bid**
- (b) **Rural Bus Shelters**
- (c) **Realtime Voicesserver**
- (d) **Future Local Rail Timetable Development**

Sustainable Cities Bid

It was reported that the government had recently announced details of a competition to fund a sustainable cities bid. It was noted that Metro was

working with partners to develop a funding bid for Leeds which had to be submitted to the Department for Transport by mid July. In this respect, members were given a short presentation on the draft bid and proposed programme and their views were sought on the proposal.

Comment was made regarding the excellent cycling spinal route via the Calder Valley connecting with Cooper Bridge. It was suggested that consideration be given to improving the canal tow paths in order to encourage cycling, subsequently creating a full spinal cycling route linking rails stations along the Calder Valley.

Rural Bus Shelters

The Committee was advised that one of the targets in the Local Transport Plan 2 was that 95% of the shelters in West Yorkshire would be upgraded to meet modern standards by 2011. There were 4,500 bus shelters in West Yorkshire and the current criterion for the provision of a shelter was that it must have 50 boarding passengers per day. However, it was acknowledged that it was not possible to meet this criterion in most rural areas. Members were given a short presentation and their views were sought on Metro's proposals to develop a rural bus shelter programme. They were also asked to consider several aspects including location, lighting, structure, building materials and how often the shelters should be cleaned.

It was suggested that in order to assist with maintenance issues in rural locations people be given the opportunity to 'adopt' or 'dedicate' a seat in the shelter. Comment was made that particular attention be given to the illumination of timetable cases in shelters and the introduction of realtime at remote locations. The latter being particularly important when a service was cancelled or delayed.

Realtime Voice Server

The Committee was given a short presentation on the development of the 'Yournextbus' automated voice system. It was reported that the voice server would allow users to call a number, type in their stop number and have the real time information read out to them. The system was currently being tested and, depending on the feedback, would be rolled out over the next few months. Members welcomed the development and they were asked to test the system and pass any comments to Metro.

The scheme was commended by members, but concern was expressed that the system might not portray accurate information if a service was delayed or cancelled.

Future Local Rail Timetable Development

Mr Haley of Northern Rail briefed members on the process for the development of the local rail timetables.

It was reported that work had commenced on compiling the December 2010 timetable and members were asked to provide Northern with any ideas, suggestions or aspirations which could be evaluated as part of the timetable process.

Comment was made that it was essential that Northern Rail be made aware of Calderdale Council's aspirations for rail services in the district. Members also welcomed an opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed timetable(s) affecting the area. In this respect, Mr Haley confirmed that he would provide information to the next meeting of the Passenger Consultative Committee of a planned extension to some of the Blackpool services.

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 or by email to erica.ward@wypte.gov.uk.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That PCC members' feedback and views be noted.
- (b) That Mr D Haley of Northern Rail provides information regarding a planned extension to some of the Blackpool services to the next meeting of the Committee.