

**WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**

**AT A MEETING OF THE BUS WORKING GROUP  
HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS ON  
FRIDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2009**

**PRESENT:** Councillor D Congreve (Chair)

Councillors R Downes, C Greaves, E Firth and K Watson

**10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor G Phelps.

**11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no personal or prejudicial interests declared by members.

**12. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2009 be approved.

**13. BUS QUALITY CONTRACTS**

The Working Group was given a presentation on the development of bus quality contracts for West Yorkshire.

It was reported that the Local Transport Act 2008 had introduced opportunities for Local Transport Authorities to deliver a high quality integrated transport system to meet local needs. These included changes which made bus quality contract schemes a more viable option. Members were informed that the Authority had previously supported the development of a bus quality contract scheme and had endorsed a parallel strategy of working on the potential business case whilst pursuing partnership opportunities.

A report on the development of a Bus Quality Contract Scheme was being prepared for consideration at the ITA meeting on 20 November 2009. The report content was outlined in a presentation, which focussed on the objectives of a scheme, the associated processes, potential benefits, affordability and risks.

## **Objectives and Benefits**

The Working Group supported the work which had already been carried out. The Group considered that quality contracts would give the Authority responsibility for the quality of bus services and would address a broad range of issues including network design, reliability and punctuality, service integration and interchange, ticketing and quality of buses.

## **Affordability**

The Working Group was advised that affordability and the ongoing financial viability was a key consideration and that the process of developing a quality contract scheme would need to demonstrate an understanding of both costs and revenues and have a strategy in place for ongoing financial viability.

Further work would be required in the development of the SIMBUS model to assess the benefits of better service integration and proposed features including integrated ticketing and enhanced marketing activities. Members were also advised that it would also be necessary to model the impacts of different fares and ticketing strategies.

## **Risk**

The presentation highlighted that the development of a bus quality contract scheme involved a high degree of risk, principally in relation to potential operator opposition, procurement issues, future change of Government policy and the management of contracts within a quality contract scheme when the Authority would be responsible for revenue risk.

The Working Group considered that the Shadow Transport Team should be lobbied on the need to retain quality contracts as a viable option.

The Working Group was informed that bus operators would be advised that partnership approaches that achieved the objectives and outcomes of a bus quality contract scheme would be considered.

**RESOLVED** - That officers be thanked for their presentation.

## **14. UPDATE ON NATIONAL BUS INITIATIVES**

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive on national initiatives to assist bus services.

### **Green Bus Fund**

It was reported that since the last meeting Metro had further explored the possibility of using electric vehicles on the Leeds Free City Bus. The Working Group was informed that given the limitations of the technology currently available and the high level of capital investment needed to fund the purchase

of new vehicles it had been decided that Metro would not proceed with the bid to the Government's £30m Green Bus Fund.

Operation of the service using electric buses would require the operation of an additional vehicle due to the limited range of the electric vehicles available.

Members recognised that whilst there were fuel and maintenance cost savings to be achieved from operating electric buses these were not sufficient to offset the additional operational costs and risks involved in providing a high profile service using untested technology.

### **Consultation on Smart and Integrated Ticketing**

It was reported that the comments which had been raised by the Working Group had been incorporated into the pteg response which had now been forwarded to the DfT for their consideration.

Members were advised that whilst the pteg response had welcomed the strategy's support for Metro and other ITAs/PTEs view that integration of fares and ticketing was a vital component of a successful transport network the response had also suggested that the report should have a clearer plan on implementation of the strategy and a stronger emphasis on mechanisms to implement and deliver the strategy.

### **Consultation on Quality Contracts Guidance**

It was reported that Metro had co-ordinated its response through pteg which had now been forwarded to the DfT for their consideration.

The Working Group were advised that pteg's response had welcomed the guidance which made Quality Contracts a more realistic option placing greater emphasis on local determination.

### **Office of Fair Trading**

It was reported that a response had now been submitted to the DfT which supported the proposed referral to the Competition Commission.

### **Kickstart**

It was reported that the following two bids had been submitted to the DfT which sought to utilise new powers included in the 2008 Local Transport Act.

**Wakefield Partnership** - a voluntary partnership with Arriva involving a redesigned Wakefield city network, integrated fares/unified branches, service quality enhancements and the possibility of a park and ride facility.

**Brighouse MetroLocal** - a partnership with Community Transport Calderdale for the provision of a MetroLocal service in the Brighouse/Rastrick area.

Members were advised that the DfT was expected to announce the successful bid in the very near future.

**RESOLVED** - That the report be noted.