

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

**AT A MEETING OF THE BUS WORKING GROUP
HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON
THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2008**

PRESENT: Councillor D Congreve (Chair)
Councillors C Campbell and G Wainwright

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Bolt, R Downes and E Firth.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2008 be approved.

4. BUS STRATEGY

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress in the implementation of the Bus Strategy.

Members were given a presentation on the opportunities for using the Statutory Quality Partnership provision of the Local Transport Bill and further progress in developing the business case for Bus Quality Contracts.

It was reported that Metro, Leeds City Council and First had launched the upgrading of the A61 Scott Hall Road guided bus corridor. Comment was also made that work was being prepared on the following potential bus based schemes for major scheme investment bids to the Regional Transport Board:

A62 Leeds Road, Huddersfield (SEZ)
Connecting Airedale
North Wakefield Gyratory
Traffic Light Priority Programme
Low Carbon Bus Demonstration
Bradford Interchange (enhancing bus and rail links)
NGT Phase 2

Projects planned for implementation before 2014/15 would require an outline business case by 10 October 2008. The following projects for implementation in the period 2015/16 - 2018/19, which could be more indicative and thematic, with description of problem, intervention and outcomes would be required by November 2008:-

MyBus Extensions

Urban Area Bus Packages (including guideway extensions)

MetroXpress Package

MetroConnect Package (including transport hubs)

ITS Package to integrate information from public and private transport and assist enhanced urban transport management and control strategies.

A copy of the updated action plan of the Audit Commission review of partnership working was appended to the report for members' information.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

5. LOCAL TRANSPORT BILL UPDATE

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive giving an update on the new Local Transport Bill, particularly with regard to the areas of the Bill on Community Transport, partnership working and Quality Contracts.

Community Transport

It was reported that the Bill sought to give greater flexibility to Community Transport operators. A consultation document had now been issued and a joint response was being prepared on behalf of the PTA/Es.

Quality Partnerships

It was reported that guidance had been issued and a joint response was being co-ordinated by Pteg.

Members were advised of the following outstanding areas of concern:-

- The guidance on admissible objections potentially allowed operators to frustrate a scheme.
- The guidance offered little protection from 'creaming off' competition which could make operators more reluctant to participate and invest in high quality vehicles and services.

Quality Contracts

It was reported that revised guidance on Quality Contracts would be published for consultation, although to date no timescale had been given.

The Working Group was advised that Pteg was holding discussions with the Department for Transport (DfT) and was pressing for the new guidance to be issued as quickly as possible.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That further reports be submitted to a future meeting of the Working Group.

6. PERFORMANCE OF BUS SERVICES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the current levels of bus service performance and on progress in the establishment of Punctuality Improvement Partnerships to address bus service punctuality and reliability.

Members welcomed the punctuality and reliability for the period in question, which had showed a year on year improvement, which they had attributed, in part, to the introduction of real time information.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the current performance of bus services in West Yorkshire be noted.
- (b) That the targets and action plans agreed by Performance Improvement Partnerships be considered at a future meeting of the Working Group.

7. MYBUS FINAL REPORT

The Working Group considered a final report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the MyBus major scheme.

It was reported that structured monitoring of the impacts of the scheme had been carried out throughout the project to assess to what extent the objectives were being met and if the service was achieving value for money/efficiency. That information had now been issued to prepare the report, which was being formalised and would be made available to all interested parties. A copy of the Executive Summary on the final report was appended for members' information.

The Working Group was informed that the scheme had been hugely successful with 206 services now in place carrying over 9000 children.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the 'final' report be noted.

- (b) That the ongoing tendered awards be overseen by the Tendered Services Working Group.

8. COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the development of the Community Transport (CT) sector in West Yorkshire.

The Working Group was advised that community transport providers were primarily charitable organisations providing door to door services using minibuses or volunteers' cars. It was commented that In some parts of the UK, the CT sector played a significant role in local transport provision providing transport commissioned by Social Services and health organisations. Comment was also made that although the CT sector was not well developed in West Yorkshire, community transport was providing public transport services in the TfL, GMPTE, SYPTE and Merseyside areas.

The Working Group was advised that the Government was promoting the use of community transport through the draft Local Transport Bill and sought to expand their role by enabling them to operate local bus services using larger buses and paid drivers.

It was noted that a well developed CT sector with sufficient capacity and skills potentially offered many advantages to Metro including:

- Local bespoke transport solutions to accessibility issues in areas where full scale public bus service provision was not feasible, economically viable or sustainable;
- To increase the number of small/medium sized organisations available to tender for tendered services and/or AccessBus contracts;
- To play a role in recruiting and training new PSV drivers especially in areas of unemployment and low skill base;
- To provide added value in the form of community benefit - a healthy CT provider generates local employment and spends its surpluses on transport services in the community.

It was reported that Metro and Yorkshire Forward had jointly commissioned the Community Transport Association (CTA) to produce an appraisal of the current position of the CT sector in West Yorkshire. They had concluded that provision was 'patchy', but where it was available it was delivered to a high standard. The Working Group recognised that development of community transport had the potential to make a greater contribution to the Regional Economic Strategy and the accessibility targets of the LTP. In this respect, they were told that Metro had appointed the CTA to provide support through the 'West Yorkshire Communities on the Move' programme, which would be

carried out in two phases aimed at supporting social enterprises who had made a commitment to develop a professionally managed transport provider.

Members were informed that the conclusion of phase one was expected in December 2008 and a summary of the outcome of that stage in the programme would be provided to a future meeting of the Working Group.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the establishment of the 'West Yorkshire Communities on the Move' programme be noted.
- (b) That a further report be prepared on the conclusion of Phase I of the programme.

9. ACCESSBUS SERVICE REGISTRATION

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress made towards the registration of the AccessBus service to secure eligibility for Bus Service Operators' Grant (BSOG) and concessionary fares revenue.

The Working Group was reminded that they had previously considered the future development of the AccessBus services.

In this respect, it was reported that two recent legislative changes afforded opportunities to improve the financial position of AccessBus and for the development of a more comprehensive model for meeting local needs. They were:

- Changes to the bus service registration system;
- Introduction of free travel for elderly and disabled persons.

It was stressed that the option for the operation of AccessBus as a registered bus service would require the introduction of fares. Almost all the current AccessBus passengers were holders or were eligible for concessionary fare passes. The introduction of fares would not, therefore, cause individual hardship provided the concessionary travel scheme was suitably amended.

With regard to the MetroLocal pilot, which had been developed in Kirklees, which provides accessible services targeted at people with restricted mobility and parents with young children, it was reported that these services were now in operation and it was considered by members that it was appropriate to move to the next stage of the pilot towards registration of the AccessBus services as a local bus service.

RESOLVED - That progress towards the option of registration of the AccessBus service in October 2009 be approved.

10. YORCARD

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive giving an update on the YorCard project.

Bus Phase

The Working Group was advised that a pilot scheme, involving 3 schools went live in 2008. The element of the pilot included the issue of Zero Fare school passes. New Smartcards for the 2008/09 academic year were also being issued.

It was also reported that Stagecoach had become 'smart enabled' and that two routes now accepted English National Concessionary Travel passes and Smart versions of multi ticket operation tickets. Stagecoach services would also be accepting child concession smartcards from September 2008.

Rail Phase

It was reported that the rail element of the pilot between Doncaster and Sheffield was on target to be operational in September 2008. Most stations had been installed with the required equipment including ticket vending machines selling smartcard tickets.

Retailing

It was reported that work was progressing to develop a trial for the use of the single smartcard for transport and library and leisure services with Sheffield City Council. That work would involve testing the technology and obtaining user opinion.

Future Roll Out

The Regional Transport Board had endorsed funding for the rollout of the YorCard scheme and the business case was being further developed. Members were advised that roll out would allow Metro to administer concessionary travel data from the recorded on-bus and on-train transactions instead of passenger surveys.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.