

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

**AT A MEETING OF THE LEEDS PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS
ON WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2009**

PRESENT: Councillor C Campbell (Chair)

WYPTA

D Congreve
R Downes
C Greaves
J Jarosz
M Lyons
P Wadsworth

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

Brian Cooper	Lynn Jones
Edward Gale	Hazel Lee
Philip Good	Frank Priestley
Tim Holdsworth	Eric Smith
Joyce Hutt	

LEEDS CC

C Fox
R Pryke

Also in attendance:-

D Alexander	-	First
R Harris	-	First
D McGraw	-	First
P Adcock	-	Arriva
S Bear	-	Arriva
R Edwards	-	YEP
41 members of the public		

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Lewis and public representative Charles Stones and Charles Leslie (TSSA).

23. JULY BUS SERVICE REDUCTIONS

Councillor Campbell welcomed everyone to the meeting which had been arranged following the registration of changes to commercial local bus services by operators.

It was reported that the ITA and Metro had expressed their deep concern that the changes, especially those registered by First, were significant and wide ranging and represented the largest single reduction in commercial service

provision in the county since the deregulation of bus services in 1986. Metro had carried out research which had shown that the number of fare paying passengers in West Yorkshire could reduce by more than 5% due to reductions in frequency, major service cuts and fare increases. It was stressed that Metro would be unable to financially support all the deregistered services and they had made strong representations to the operators seeking to address some of the issues which would arise.

Mr Alexander explained the rationale behind First's proposed changes. He advised that there had been a downturn in passenger usage due to the economic climate and it was necessary to match resources to demand. Members challenged the patronage figures quoted by First and Mr Alexander agreed to provide Metro with further information on all affected services. He believed that First had demonstrated their commitment to bus services in West Yorkshire with significant levels of investment and by subsidising some of their own poorer performing services. Further information regarding those services would also be provided to Metro.

The Committee discussed First's proposals for service changes in the Leeds area and their views and individual issues were fully debated with Mr Alexander and Mr Harris. Members were extremely concerned at the proposed scale of cuts and the impact they would have on communities who would lose vital links to shops, hospitals and employment.

It was suggested that First consider holding fares at their current level or even reduce fares for a given period in order to restore confidence and encourage patronage. However Mr Alexander was unable to give such guarantees although the company was mindful that it would be insensitive to introduce any increase in fares at the present time.

Comment was made that the proposed changes had not been well advertised and, in some cases, incorrect information had been published in the local media. It was acknowledged that this had led to confusing and misleading information in some areas. Members stressed that there had been insufficient consultation prior to the registrations and that it would now be difficult to find solutions for the areas which would be most severely affected. They urged operators to ensure that a wider consultation process be introduced for future changes and consideration be given to providing accurate and timely information. They also expressed concern regarding the lack of promotion by the operators in order to encourage passengers to use the threatened services and the lack of concise information where services were to be withdrawn or altered. Mr Alexander agreed that the current consultation process was flawed and recognised that there was an urgent need to discuss better mechanisms for both consultation and publicity with Metro. Councillor Greaves welcomed the opportunity to continue discussions with First, members of the ITA and Metro and a meeting would be arranged in the near future.

In closing the meeting, Councillor Campbell thanked everyone for their attendance and also the interest shown by members of the public, whose

comments were appreciated. Councillor Greaves also passed on his thanks and, in particular, to officers for their help in arranging the meeting and in their continuing discussions with the operators.

RESOLVED - That the Committee's views on the impact of the July service changes be noted.