

AGENDA ITEM No: 6.

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE RAIL WORKING GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON TUESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2005

PRESENT: Councillor C Townley (Chair)

Councillors C Greaves, M Lyons and J Prestage

In attendance: Malcolm Brown, Area Director, Northern Rail (minute 11 only)

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair announced that the next meeting of the Rail Working Group would be held on Tuesday 6 December 2005 at 11.00 am.

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J S King.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

10. MINUTES

Further to minute 5, Grand Central Railway, it was reported that a decision was still awaited from the Office of Rail Regulation regarding the proposals for the East Coast Main Line.

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2005 be approved.

11. NORTHERN FRANCHISE UPDATE

The Working Group considered a report on the operating performance of local rail services within West Yorkshire provided by Northern Rail.

Members expressed concern about current performance levels and requested that future performance reports provide details of the actual number of trains cancelled or running late. Members noted that day-to-day maintenance and cleaning of stations appeared to be proceeding and cleaning crews were

visibly operating on trains. However, the 'deep cleaning' of trains did not seem to be taking place.

Northern's Area Director, Malcolm Brown, attended the meeting and gave a short presentation on the steps being taken to improve performance and customer service and their future plans for the franchise. Mr Brown advised members of the sustained levels of patronage growth being achieved on all West Yorkshire routes. Members requested that patronage figures prior to the current franchise be provided.

Members expressed their deep concern regarding the cancellation and punctuality figures for the period from March to August 2005. They stressed that the franchise agreement was not being adhered to and that the Passenger Transport Authority were not satisfied with Northern's performance.

Mr Brown advised that a large number of the cancellations and delays during July were attributable to major incidents which were outside Northern's direct control - a train colliding with a herd of cows at Keighley and a broken rail at Kildwick. Mr Brown advised that Northern were obliged by their franchise to proactively manage their relationship with Network Rail to address the impact of infrastructure problems on performance. Under the new arrangements for rail, Network Rail had responsibilities for performance and this was being reflected in their relationships with the train operating companies.

With regard to Northern related delays and cancellations, it was reported that the main causes were unit breakdowns, staffing and station delays with a number of cancellations being attributable to security alerts following the London bombings.

Members also expressed concern that Northern were not delivering all the agreed strengthenings and Mr Brown advised the Group that Northern would continue to focus on fleet performance and were aiming to improve their maintenance regimes in order to increase the fleet reliability and availability.

Members stressed the need to provide accurate and timely information to passengers when problems occurred. Mr Brown described some of the initiatives that Northern were undertaking in relation to customer care.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a representative of Network Rail be invited to attend a future meeting of the Working Group.
- (c) That Mr Brown be thanked for his presentation and invited to attend a future meeting of the Working Group.

12. ROLLING STOCK AND NETWORK DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on a number of rolling stock and network development issues.

Additional Rolling Stock

It was reported that a bid had been submitted to Yorkshire Forward for an extra 6/7 two-car diesel multiple units. A decision was expected in December and, if positive, the additional units would be available from March 2006 onwards.

Cross Boundary Fares

The Working Group was advised of a study being undertaken with Greater Manchester PTE to develop a scheme to address a number of cross-boundary ticketing issues. These included a 'zone 6' MetroCard covering the wider city region and addressing cross-boundary fare anomalies. Members requested a progress report to be prepared for the next meeting.

East Coast Main Line (ECML)

It was reported that a response had been sent to the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) emphasising the need for better services to London from other urban centres in West Yorkshire as well as Leeds and the need to provide sufficient capacity on the ECML to serve the wider needs of West Yorkshire.

Wakefield Westgate

Members were advised that a funding bid had been submitted, through the Local Transport Plan process, for additional platform capacity at Wakefield Westgate. It was expected that an announcement regarding the bid would be made during December 2005.

New Stations

It was reported that meetings had taken place with Northern and Network Rail to discuss the timetabling and train capacity issues involved in the development of the proposed new rail stations at Kirkstall and Apperley Bridge. Further progress reports would be prepared for the Working Group on completion of the Business Case.

With regard to the proposed new station at Low Moor, it was reported that independent consultants had been appointed to carry out a feasibility study on the Caldervale line.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.