

AGENDA ITEM NO: 12b

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE TENDERED SERVICES WORKING GROUP HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE ON MONDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2007

PRESENT: Councillor T Brice (Chair)

Councillors C Campbell, D Congreve, G Phelps and G Wainwright

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

52. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2007 be approved.

53. BOXING DAY AND NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the work undertaken in the delivery of Boxing Day and New Year's Day services.

It was reported that meetings had been held with the respective City Centre management and retailers in both Leeds and Huddersfield, who had welcomed the decision to fund the services. As a result of these discussions it had been agreed that in view of the low level of retail activity in Leeds and Huddersfield on New Year's Day it had been decided to provide the services on Boxing Day only. The Chair informed the meeting that Kirklees MC had now agreed to fund the FreeTownBus on Boxing Day on a 50:50 basis with Metro.

Members were also advised that whilst work continued to secure third party funding, both the City Centre Management teams had agreed to advertise the service free of charge in their seasonal publicity material/campaign and local retailers would fund timetable publicity and promote marketing material in their stores. It was also suggested that flyers be made available on the FreeCity/Town buses.

It was stated that the cost of operations which had been agreed with the operators on the planned routes would be £78,350 less farebox revenue.

This would be met from the supplementary tendered services budget previously approved by the Authority.

RESOLVED - That progress on the implementation of Boxing Day services in Huddersfield and Leeds be noted.

54. NIGHT SERVICES – LEEDS

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the award of an emergency contract for the operation of late night bus services in Leeds in November and December.

It was reported that the services were wholly funded by Safer Leeds, a partnership aimed at reducing crime in the city centre.

Appended to the report was a breakdown of revenue taken when the service ran in 2006. Members were advised that despite an extensive marketing campaign, usage of the services had been disappointing. Despite the poor patronage the levels of crime had reduced during that period of operation. As a result of this, further funding had been secured and it was proposed to run services 2, 12 and 51 on Friday and Saturday evenings from 30 November until Christmas and on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Members requested that the performance of the Night Bus services be reported to a future meeting of the Working Group.

RESOLVED - That the award of a contract to First for the operation of Night buses in Leeds as detailed in the submitted report be noted as being consistent with the Authority's policy for local bus services.

55. BUS SERVICES – SOUTH EAST KIRKLEES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive setting out the ongoing concerns relating to the operation of Stagecoach bus services in South East Kirklees.

It was reported that since Stagecoach introduced changes to their network in May 2007, significant complaints had continued to be received regarding:

- poor punctuality and reliability;
- lack of capacity;
- poor condition of buses;
- loss of cross-boundary links to Barnsley.

The Working Group was advised that Stagecoach had accepted that the current level of service, particularly punctuality and reliability, fell well below standard. The company had therefore undertaken monitoring of their services which identified a number of failings on certain routes and as a result of that

work they had introduced some short notice timetable changes on 28 October 2007. These measures included additional buses employed on the network to either duplicate the busiest journeys or as 'back up' to improve reliability.

It was hoped that these changes would mitigate the most severe current reliability and punctuality problems. In this respect it was also commented that Stagecoach were reviewing all their routes in the area with a view to carrying out comprehensive timetable changes in January 2008. A further meeting would be held with Local Councillors early in the new year to consider the outcome of the actions taken.

To address the poor condition of the existing buses the Working Group welcomed Stagecoach's decision to introduce a new fleet to run on the network in December 2007 which would be DDA compliant with increased capacity.

Members were informed that a de minimis contract had been awarded to Stagecoach for the operation of a market day service between Huddersfield and Barnsley which also provided a link to Barnsley Hospital, the details of which were reported to the previous meeting of the Group.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the concerns and actions taken to address public transport provision in South East Kirklees be noted.
- (b) That the award of a de minimis contract to Stagecoach for the operation of a market day service between Huddersfield and Barnsley be noted as being consistent with the Authority's policy for the provision of local bus services.
- (c) That a report be submitted to the Working Group following the review of the effectiveness of the actions taken to address the current public transport concerns.
- (d) That officers be asked to invite the Managing Director of Stagecoach to a future meeting of the Bus Working Group.

56. AWARD OF CONTRACT – HOLME VALLEY MINIBUS SERVICE

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the award of a de minimis contract for the operation of the Holme Valley minibus service.

It was reported that following customer complaints regarding the use of high floor minibuses, the operator, Stotts Coaches, had approached Metro to seek a revised contract to allow for the introduction of 2 new Optare narrow bodied/short wheelbase low floor buses. In this respect, the operator had also

agreed to upgrade their existing ticketing system which would permit the implementation of through ticketing on to the core service network. As a result of these discussions it had been agreed that with effect from 3 December 2007 the existing contract would be terminated and a new de minimis contract awarded.

The Working Group were informed that, despite efforts to resolve local concern following the withdrawal of services from Sheffield Road affecting the villages of Scholes, Jackson Bridge, Hepworth and New Mill, First were unwilling to maintain the Area Network for commercial reasons. Whilst demand in the affected area was low, approximately 40-45 trips per day, Metro continued to develop options to secure a solution including variations to the existing minibus service or providing a service on a 6 month 'use it or lose it' basis. The outcome of the work would be reported to the next meeting of the Working Group.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the award of a de minimis contract for the operation of the Holme Valley minibus network as detailed in the submitted report be noted as being consistent with the Authority's policy for local bus services.
- (b) That the continued public concern relating to the planned changes to local buses in the area be noted.
- (c) That the efforts being made to find a solution to the travel issues in the New Mill area be endorsed.
- (d) That Stotts Coaches be approached with a view to providing CCTV in their new vehicles.

57. SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING FOR TENDERED BUS SERVICES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on supplementary funding for tendered bus services.

It was reported that the 2007/08 budget had allocated £500,000 for additional tendered bus services aimed at addressing the recent shrinkage in the bus network. The new services would be provided on a use it or lose it basis.

Criteria based on bus patronage, accessibility, access to health and modal change had been adopted to ensure that the service proposals met two or more of the objectives which would demonstrate a positive impact on the delivery of Local Transport Plan targets. Following discussions with PTA members, preliminary proposals were being developed in each of the Districts based on their suggestions.

District

Proposals/Suggestions

Leeds - Proposals to award a de minimis contract for the operation of an off peak service between Colton and St James's Hospital to First for 12 months from January 2007.

Kirklees - Extension of frequency of services to Dewsbury Hospital to facilitate easier access for evening visiting.

Calderdale - Improved accessibility to health and education facilities in West Halifax.

Bradford - Direct bus link between Shipley and Bradford Royal Infirmary and a feeder service to Baildon Station. (These proposals were subject to further discussions with Bradford PTA members.)

Wakefield - Further discussions to take place with Wakefield PTA members.

Members were advised that work to progress all outstanding proposals would be reported to a future meeting of the Working Group.

RESOLVED – That the award of a de minimis contract to First for the operation of Service 78 between Colton and St James' Hospital as detailed in the submitted report be noted as being consistent with the Authority's policy for tendered bus services.

58. TENDERED BUS SERVICE CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive setting out proposals to update the contractual obligations relating to tendered bus services.

It was reported that the objective of the review was to ensure that the provision of tendered bus services was more closely aligned to the service quality/delivery standards, which link with the Local Transport Plan, Metro's Bus Strategy and the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Working Group was advised that a target date of 2010/11 had been set to:-

- secure improved standards and a timescale to uplift service quality;
- revise tendering procedures to enable bids to be evaluated on the basis of quality;
- introduce new service quality standards;
- revise the contract compliance scheme to accommodate the revised quality standards and real time monitoring;
- update and simplify the General Conditions of Contract;
- amend tender documentation to accommodate the above changes.

Consultation had already been undertaken with bus operators to discuss the review including new features within the existing conditions of contract. It was planned to introduce the new requirements for all contracts in April 2012 and that final proposals would be presented to a future meeting of the Bus and Tendered Services Working Groups for approval. Comment was also made that although a target date of 2012 had been set for full implementation, in the interim quality bids would receive positive consideration in the tender evaluation process. Whilst welcoming the proposals, the Working Group commented that the onerous contract conditions might disadvantage small operators from tendering.

RESOLVED - That the revised conditions of contract and quality standards for tendered bus services from April 2008 be noted.

59. MY BUS TENDER BATCH 445

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive on tenders received in Batch 445 for the provision of My Bus Schemes in the Wakefield District.

It was reported that tenders had been sought following a request from the existing operator, Stagecoach, to terminate their contract for financial reasons. Members were advised that the bids received were double the existing price paid to Stagecoach and as the existing contract did not provide for early termination without financial penalty, the operator had agreed to continue operation until the end of the current contract. Tenderers would be advised of Metro's decision.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the withdrawal of tender batch 445 be noted.
- (b) That the continuation of the current Stagecoach contract until the Summer 2009 expiry date be noted.

60. TENDERED SCHOOL BUS SERVICES AWARD OF DE MINIMIS CONTRACTS 2007/2008 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the award of de minimis contracts for the 2007/2008 academic year.

It was reported that following the awards which were reported to the last meeting a number of new services had been procured to resolve overcrowding problems which had become apparent during the first weeks of the new academic year. A number of services had been procured after carrying out start of school year surveys.

RESOLVED - That the award of de minimis contracts, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be noted as being consistent with the Authority's policy for the provision of schools transport services.