

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

**AT A MEETING OF THE STAFFING WORKING GROUP
HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS ON
THURSDAY 23 APRIL 2009**

PRESENT: Councillor A Wallace (Chair)

Councillors D Congreve, C Greaves, M Lyons and P Wadsworth

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2008 be approved.

3. SICKNESS ABSENCE SUMMARY 2007/2008 AND 2008/2009

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the procedures in place to manage sickness and absenteeism within Metro.

It was reported that Metro's sickness levels for 2008/09 averaged 7.65 days which was slightly higher than Metro's target of 7.5 days but compared favourably when measured against other PTEs and the 5 local authorities in West Yorkshire.

Whilst welcoming the overall good management of sickness levels, particularly the high number of employees who had not had any sickness during last year, which was over 50% of the staff, the Working Group commented that levels would significantly improve if it were not for a small minority of employees/sections in the organisation whose poor attendance was of concern.

Members were advised that sickness levels would be further analysed, including the information requested by the Working Group in order to strive for continuous improvements in sickness absenteeism:

- (i) Breakdown of sickness within each section/department
- (ii) Best and worst achievers in local authorities

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the sickness levels be further analysed with a view to bringing a report back to a future meeting of the Group.
- (b) That approval be given to increase the payment for 100% attendance although the payment for absence of one day per year should remain at the current rate.
- (c) That officers be asked to further investigate the possibility of providing or subsidising private medical insurance for Metro employees.

4. METRO EMPLOYEE DATA 2009

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive setting out current essential data on Metro employees including headcount, turnover and salary information.

Members noted the appendices attached to the report summarising staff changes since 2006. It was reported that Metro had undertaken to maintain staffing levels such that the net cost of staff and the headcount remained the same for the last 2 years, with growth only being allowed where external funding had been received to meet the increased cost. Despite that, the Group was informed that Metro had taken on increased workloads by taking the lead in the delivery of the City Region Transport Vision, influencing the Transport Act and resourcing the additional work involved in the Transport Innovation Fund bid and the co-ordination of Regional Transport Board bids for additional funding.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

5. PAYMENT PROTECTION UPDATE

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive giving an update in relation to payment protection.

It was reported that a formal policy on pay protection was currently being developed. This was to ensure that there was continued compliance with Equal Pay legislation following concerns raised by the Executive Board.

In October 2008 the Executive Board had agreed to apply a 3 year pay protection limit on the salary of employees affected by a reduction in grade based on year one rate for job plus 75% of difference between old and new, 50% for the second year, 25% for the third year and the reduced salary applied in the fourth year.

It was reported that external legal advice had been sought and they had agreed on the methodology being proposed.

The Working Group was also advised that at the present time Metro did not have a formal redundancy scheme unlike many other PTEs and local authorities. It was therefore proposed that a report be prepared for consideration at a future meeting setting out the redundancy arrangements in place at the other PTEs and local authorities and proposing a way forward.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a report be submitted to a future meeting on redundancy arrangements.

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Working Group considered a recommendation to exclude the press and public from Agenda Items 8 and 9, which contained exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 (information relating to any individual) and 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

It was recommended that, because disclosure of the reports would disclose details of financial information relating to named individuals, the public interest would be better served by maintaining the exemption and, therefore, that the press and public should be excluded.

RESOLVED - That, as disclosure could prejudice future negotiations, the press and public be now excluded from Agenda Items 8 and 9.

7. APPOINTMENT OF NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

The Working Group considered a report of the Clerk on the appointment of non-Executive Directors (NEDs) to the Passenger Transport Executive.

It was considered that as a detailed governance review was being undertaken, it would be pragmatic to continue with the current arrangements in relation to the appointment of NEDs but on a rolling three month basis. It was proposed that the NEDs meet the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee on a six monthly basis and that they should have the ability to submit reports to the Committee and attend any of the meetings. It was noted that once the new governance arrangements were clarified, any NED appointments would be subject to a full recruitment process.

RESOLVED - That the appointments of Mr Page and Mr Darbyshire as non-Executive Directors to the Passenger Transport Executive on a rolling three month basis be confirmed.

8. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on proposals to make the Authority's current temporary financial arrangements permanent.

It was reported that previously the Audit and Governance Committee and the Staffing Working Group had agreed the arrangements on a temporary basis. Members were advised that since that time the arrangements introduced were operating effectively and efficiently and therefore it was proposed that they be made permanent. Comment was also made that at that time the remuneration of the Assistant Director Finance was enhanced to reflect the additional responsibility. Evaluation work with assistance from Hays Consultants had compared the duties and responsibilities of the post with the relevant comparative posts in the private and public sector. Comment was made that this work had confirmed that the salary was within the recognised parameters for that role.

RESOLVED - That the financial management arrangements as previously agreed with effect from 1 April 2008 be now made permanent.