

West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority

10 February 2006

Budget for 2006/07

1. There has been considerable tendered bus mileage lost over the last few years because of the actions of the bus operators who have created new tenders containing excessive prices and have reduced and cancelled services which they claim are uneconomical. They are simply increasing their profits at Metro's expense.
2. Metro cannot keep replacing these bus services and paying more and more to the operators. The methods used by Metro to encourage operators to make as much of the mileage as possible commercial, to negotiate on the tenders and re-organise the services to make them more attractive financially has been good but more needs to be done.
3. Despite the unreasonable attitude of operators the PTA need to intervene in certain grey areas to stop the rundown of the bus services across West Yorkshire. The under spendings reported so far of £1/2m should be used for this purpose.
4. However, the increase in the tendered services budget should go further than this. The PTA should instruct the officers to find appropriate savings of a further £1/2m. The resulting overall increase of £1m would then allow a real change to services. This together with the new Leeds City Centre service, recently approved all Members, should put some new life into the buses. However, there still needs to be firm discussions with the operators to make sure they don't undermine what we are doing as an Authority.
5. The other area for attention is the Accessbus budget. This is not being operated efficiently. There are far too many taxis being used to replace accessbus journeys. There is nearly £300,000 in the budget for taxis. This is far too high and it is proposed to take £200,000 of that sum and put it into increased and more efficient use of the buses. Officers should be asked to go away and come back with a further report on how accessbuses can be re-organised.

6. It is therefore recommended:
- a. that the budget be amended to increase tendered services by £1m,
 - b. that officers be instructed to cut the use of taxis by £200,000 per annum and produce a report on how to use such a saving to make the provision of the Accessbuses more efficient/effective.

Councillor M Lyons,

Leader of the Labour Group