

AGENDA ITEM NO: 8

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A JOINT MEETING OF THE BUS AND TENDERED SERVICES WORKING GROUPS HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON THURSDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2006

PRESENT: Councillor J Lewis (Chair)

Councillors J Akhtar, J Jarosz, P McBride, G Phelps, S Schofield,
C Townley and G Wainwright

1. CHAIR

It was agreed that Councillor J Lewis chair the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Downes and
K Rhodes.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4. ACCESSBUS - OPTIONS FOR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Passenger Transport Executive
setting out future options for a full review of AccessBus to examine its use, its
customers and how best Metro can provide the service in a sustainable way in
the future. Members received a presentation of issues arising from the Best
Value Review and the scope of the proposed further work.

It was reported that the Best Value Review had identified the following issues,
which were affecting the future planning of the service.

- Increasing demand and customer expectations arising from an ageing
population and opportunistic use by 'agencies'.
- Rising industry costs placing pressure on budgets were resulting in
financial instability.

Whilst the performance of the existing service was good with low costs per passenger trip on a high vehicle utilization there was a need to consider options to match demand and supply to meet future requirements.

The presentation noted that new opportunities, including new concessionary arrangements and bus service operator grant for flexibly routed services, would provide scope for improving the financial position of the service.

Options were to:

- Do nothing
- Register the service to realise new revenue streams and
- Refocus the service to improve value for money

These were discussed by the Group and further work requested in their implementation.

It was reported that whilst taxis were an important part of the service provision, Members recognised the need to revisit the policy particularly when taxi usage had increased significantly over the last few years. Comment was made that in some instances (ie inaccessible locations and people with certain disabilities) taxi was the only viable option and, therefore, the Authority should consider the purchase of accessible taxi vehicles, which would be run on a similar basis to the MetroConnect services.

Members also requested a breakdown of taxi usage on a district-by-district basis for consideration at the next meeting of the Working Group.

RESOLVED - That the proposed scope of the review work forming part of the Best Value Review Improvement Plan for AccessBus services be endorsed.