

AGENDA ITEM NO: 10a

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE RAIL WORKING GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS ON THURSDAY 5 OCTOBER 2006

PRESENT: Councillor E Smaje (Chair)
Councillors S Khan, S King, K Rhodes and C Townsley

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2006 be noted.

3. NORTHERN FRANCHISE UPDATE

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

Comment was made that a large amount of information was provided in the report and, as all the members were new to the Rail Working Group, it would be advantageous to hold an information seminar covering all rail topics before the next meeting.

It was noted that in comparison to the corresponding periods the previous year, the number of cancellations was the same with an average of 0.6% each period during March to August. Punctuality was 0.8% higher at 89.8% although this was still below the target of 92% of trains to arrive at destination within 5 minutes of advertised time. The Working Group requested that for future reports, the graphs attached at Appendix 1 include details of the areas served.

It was reported that Network Rail was responsible for the largest number of delays and cancellations and a key factor affecting the Network Rail infrastructure had been a large number of cable thefts.

With regard to Service Quality Performance, Metro had raised the issue of inadequate cleaning at some stations and Northern had agreed to increase resources in the short term while the contract arrangements were reviewed.

Members noted the arrangements for additional peak seating capacity on trains from December 2006 which was outlined in Appendix 2 of the report. With regard to the funding of Class 333 trailer cars, it was reported that there was a risk that 8 carriages would have to be removed from April 2007, but that Metro was involved in negotiations for a funding package to continue leasing the carriages.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

4. RAILPLAN 6 IMPLEMENTATION

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the development of schemes contained within the second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) which included Metro's rail strategy, RailPlan 6.

Members noted that with regard to LTP2 major schemes, work had commenced on developing proposals for a new pedestrian access to Leeds Station and that the scheme to increase rail capacity at Wakefield Westgate Station required additional modelling work to be carried out before the DfT would make a decision.

It was reported that the implementation of new rail stations would be dependent on funding and deliverability which would probably extend beyond the period of LTP2. The position regarding the proposals for new stations at Apperley Bridge, Horsforth Woodside and Kirkstall was noted. With regard to Low Moor, members were advised of the timetabling implications and they requested that this work be given high priority. They were advised of the proposal to purchase land from third parties and that a report would be prepared in due course for consideration by the Authority.

Members stressed the importance of any new stations being easily accessible by bus, car and pedestrians and requested that any proposals or plans for new stations be submitted to the Working Group.

The Working Group noted the position regarding station accessibility improvements and were advised of the DfT's 'Access for All' initiative and the station improvement scheme. It was noted that a further bid had been submitted to the DfT for Phase 3 of the minor accessibility works. If successful, DfT would provide up to 50% of the estimated cost of £336,000 and funding approval for Metro's contribution would be sought from a future meeting of the Authority.

Concern was expressed regarding the access and condition of Wakefield Kirkgate Station particularly with regard to the extensive redevelopment of the area. It was noted that Metro was co-ordinating a working group developing longer-term proposals for Kirkgate.

Members noted the scheme to deliver a step change in quality at 10 stations across West Yorkshire (prioritised through an internal review and discussions with PCC members) which would be funded from existing approved budgets. Northern Rail had agreed, in principle, to ensure that any cost savings to them as a result of the scheme would be passed back to Metro in the future.

Members noted that Metro was leading work on a longer term (20-25 year) transport strategy which was being developed for West Yorkshire and the wider City Region. Options under consideration included the development of a tram-train network, further electrification and rolling stock and capacity upgrades. Potential “quick wins” included the extension of the MetroCard to cover the wider City Region and it was noted that detailed proposals were being developed. A PTA seminar had been arranged for 20 October 2006 to update members. Individual rail projects would be considered at future meetings of the Working Group.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a report be prepared for a future meeting of the Authority requesting approval to purchase the land in third party ownership required to construct a new station at Low Moor.

5. INDUSTRY PLANNING ISSUES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on Regional Planning Assessments, Route Utilisation Studies, refranchising for East Midlands and Cross Country services and proposals by Grand Central Railways.

With regard to Grand Central Railways, it was reported that Metro had arranged a meeting with Grand Central and Greater Manchester PTE to seek further information on their recently announced aspirations to operate services between Bradford and London, Bradford and Doncaster and London Euston and Huddersfield/Bradford. A progress report would be prepared for a future meeting of the Working Group.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

6. FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that two information seminars and a schedule of meetings would be arranged and circulated to members.