

AGENDA ITEM No: 12.

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE CALDERDALE PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE TOWN HALL, HALIFAX ON TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER 2006

PRESENT: Councillor G Wainwright (Chair)

WYPTA

S King
T Swift

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

James Calland	Peter Stocks
Lesley Mackay	John Sykes
Howard Maude	John Whiteley

CALDERDALE MBC

K Watson

Also in attendance:

D Squire	-	Arriva
M Davies	-	First
C Goulthorpe	-	First
D Haley	-	Northern
M Peel	-	Halifax Courier

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence was received from public representatives David Bruce, Vic Duke and Peter Melling and Neil Walsh, Halifax Bus Company.

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2006 be approved.

8. MEMBER FEEDBACK REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising them of the feedback received at the meeting of the Committee held on 11 July 2006.

Members welcomed the Real Time initiative although comment was made that there were still occasions when timetable information was being provided rather than real time information. Members were asked to provide Metro with

details of any problems they encountered so that they could be fully investigated.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

9. INFORMATION REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on information regarding current developments and issues affecting the Calderdale District.

Christmas and New Year 2006/7 Train Service Arrangements

Concern was expressed that services would not be provided on Christmas Day when some people who did not own cars would want to visit family and friends. It was reported that pilot schemes had been trialed and passenger use was poor resulting in a high cost per passenger journey. More recent attempts to run services in Huddersfield funded by third parties had also not been well used despite extensive publicity.

It was suggested that demand patterns could change especially if shops decided to open on Christmas Day and members asked for further consideration to be given in future years.

Station Improvement Programme

Members welcomed the programme of works which had been developed to enhance the general appearance and quality of facilities at a number of prioritised local rail stations including Mytholmroyd and Sowerby Bridge. In order to commence work as soon as possible, Metro had agreed to provide funding of up to £82,000 to the station operator, Northern.

Rolling Stock Refurbishment

Members were advised that Metro was providing funding for improvements to the interiors of Class 155 diesel units, Class 321 electric units and Class 158/9 diesel units operating on local services. The refurbishments were welcomed but comment was made that the ceilings of some of the refurbished units were not clean. Northern believed that roof cleaning had been included in the specification and would investigate the matter.

The Committee noted that Metro had been successful in securing additional rolling stock and was also considering further options. However members were concerned about the lack of funding the Government had made available for rolling stock and stressed that capacity for growth must be included in future franchise agreements.

Yellow Bus Phase 3

Members were updated on the tendering process for Phase 3 of the project. Comment was made that the newspapers had published reports of “chaos” at the school base from parents’ cars at the end of the school day and that older children were reluctant to use the Yellow Bus because of the seatbelt restrictions imposed. Metro was disappointed at these reports as the scheme had been highly successful achieving significant growth in bus use. Metro had received several commendations from schools and users.

Hebden Bridge – Fairfield Update

It was reported that following feedback regarding the revised timetable, Service E would be altered on 29 October 2006 to include trips to and from Fairfield, Monday to Saturday. The service would serve both Eaves and Fairfield on a limited number of journeys each day. It was noted that the market day service covering Fairfield, Eaves and Hardcastle Craggs would be withdrawn due to low passenger use.

Brighouse Bus Station

Members were advised that discussions had been held with operators regarding the phasing of the proposed redevelopment in order to minimise disruption. It was hoped that the planning consent would be obtained by the end of October 2006.

Air Quality and Public Transport Vehicle Emissions

It was reported that the 2nd Local Transport Plan had identified Air Quality as one of the shared priorities of LTP2 and had set out a strategy for dealing with Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and Areas of Concern (AOCs). In Calderdale 3 AQMAs and 5 AOCs had been identified and LTP resources would be directed towards measures to address the problems. The 4 key elements of the strategy were traffic demand management measures, sustainable travel, vehicle emissions and climate change.

Members were advised that the Government Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) were responsible for the testing and fitness of buses including emission standards. It was noted that following testing an operator could be entitled to pay a reduced road tax if it met low pollution standards. VOSA could also prevent operators using vehicles that emitted large quantities of exhaust fumes and new vehicles were subject to “Euro” standards for reduced emissions.

The Committee expressed concern about the age and condition of some of the buses used in the Calderdale area. The operators reported that all vehicles were inspected every 28 days and emission standards checked.

Further concerns were expressed that drivers left their engines running unnecessarily at termini and bus stations. In response the operators advised

that their drivers were given training and should turn their engines off at termini. Members suggested that this should also apply to trains.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

10. CONSULTATION ITEMS -

(a) Arriva Service Changes

(b) Metro's Process for Handling Feedback

Arriva Service Changes

Members were given a presentation by Arriva on the proposed service changes to be made in Calderdale in January 2007.

It was reported that following significant changes to Arriva services in 2005, the company had maintained a stable network throughout 2006. The performance of the network had been reviewed and the company was developing proposals for service changes in early 2007. The changes would be subject to consultation with local Councillors prior to their introduction and members were asked for their comments on the proposals.

It was noted that Arriva had three key areas of concern –

Service X33 (Bradford – Wakefield – Sheffield)
Services 224/225/226/254 (Leeds – Cleckheaton/Dewsbury – Halifax)
Service 128 (Dewsbury – Horbury – Wakefield)

With regard to Service 225, members commented that patronage was low because many passengers had abandoned the service due to its unreliability. They expressed their dissatisfaction at the proposals and asked that Arriva reconsider, especially with regard to Service 225 as the area was isolated and many elderly people relied upon the service.

The Committee suggested that all services would be better patronised if newer vehicles were used to reduce the number of breakdowns and improve reliability.

Handling Feedback

Members received a presentation on the process for handling feedback on bus and rail service complaints and compliments.

It was reported that Metro received approximately 13,000 complaints each year of which only approximately 10% related to Metro's direct activities mainly concerning stop and shelter issues. Of the remaining 90%, approximately 5% were rail related and 85% concerned bus service provision with the largest issues being bus reliability/punctuality and driver behaviour.

The Committee were advised of the current process and how the issues were addressed and asked members for their comments and suggestions on how Metro and operators could improve the system.

It was suggested that there should be one point of contact for all complaints and that it was important to acknowledge receipt of complaints and ensure the correspondent was informed of any investigations if no immediate substantive response was possible. It was suggested that complaints could be displayed at bus and rail stations with responses from the operators or Metro in order that other public transport users who may have similar complaints were kept informed.

It was reported that many complaints were about buses failing to stop. It was noted that some passengers were not aware that certain express services did not use all stops on the route and it was suggested that notices be displayed at bus stops not used by these services.

Members were provided with a questionnaire and asked to complete and return it to Metro with any comments or suggestions on how the process for handling complaints could be better managed.

RESOLVED - That PCC members' comments and views be noted.