

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

Appointed Members

DATE: 9 DECEMBER 2005

AGENDA ITEM NO: **3.**

SUBJECT: LEEDS CITY SHUTTLE BUS SERVICES

Report of the Passenger Transport Executive

1. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1.1. The funding of buses to facilitate the operation of the Leeds Free CityBus.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1. At its meeting on 30th November 2005, the Tendered Services Working Group considered in detail and agreed the proposal to operate a trial distributor bus service in Leeds City Centre. The Group were advised that, subject to Authority approval, it would be possible to commence operation of the service on a 'trial' basis from 30th January 2006. The trial period would last until 23rd July 2006. Operating details of the service are set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. Whilst the service has been designed to complement rather than compete with established bus services in the City Centre the risk of abstraction from other services could be of concern to operators, and First in particular. Discussions have therefore been held with First as the major operator in Leeds and the only local operator who would have available operating licences to be able to run a service at short notice. First have confirmed that they are willing to participate in an experimental service.
- 2.3. Operation of the new service using high quality, accessible, service branded buses will require the additional buses. Requiring First to provide new buses would significantly increase the revenue costs of the trial service. Negotiations with First have achieved an economic revenue cost to operate the trial on the basis of vehicles funded by Metro.
- 2.4. It has been accepted by the Department for Transport that Local Transport Plan funding can be used to purchase buses. The DfT additionally have funded specific Challenge and Kickstart awards on the basis that the PTE/ Transport Authority funds the capital vehicle costs and in doing so enjoys lower revenue operating costs. It is therefore proposed to use LTP capital funding to provide six buses to operate the new Leeds service.

2.5. Discussions have been held with First and local vehicle manufacturer Optare who are able to deliver new buses to an agreed specification in time for a start of service on 31st January 2006. First would purchase six vehicles to a specification agreed with Metro. Metro would pay to First a grant equivalent to the purchase price of the buses and would issue conditions of grant which would safeguard Metro's interests in the buses. This arrangement has been used in the implementation of various challenge schemes and includes the following conditions;

- First would be restricted to operate the vehicles on the route specified.
- In the event that the contract to operate the service was awarded to another company, the buses would transfer to the new operator.
- In the event that the service was withdrawn, the conditions of grant would require the transfer of the buses to an operator of alternative tendered services. At the time of transfer, the vehicles would be subject to an independent inspection to determine value and condition.
- The operation of vehicles would be monitored by Metro staff and in terms of the vehicle maintenance, repair and residual value would be assessed by the Freight Transport Association

2.6. The grant will be awarded using Metro's powers under Section 106 of the Transport Act 1985 to fund the provision of buses to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. The service is eligible under these powers as it will provide a new facility enabling people with mobility difficulties to travel between locations throughout the City Centre.

2.7. The vehicles will be fully accessible Optare Slimline Solo vehicles accommodating 33 seated passengers. The new buses will be in Metro's red and white Metro Connect livery. The buses will be equipped with CCTV and will be included in the Mynextbus real time system. It is also planned to equip the buses with audio visual "Announce" style on board passenger information following the outcome of the trial.

2.8. A joint meeting to discuss the service has been held with representatives of Leeds City Council, Leeds City Centre Management, Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust and key City Centre businesses. All parties were enthusiastic about the service and have agreed to promote the service during the experimental period. Some Private Sector organisations considered that funding secured for Leeds Supertram through S106 agreements should be used and this suggestions will be discussed with the City Council. Discussions will continue with a view to funding support for operation of the service beyond the experimental period. These discussions will be supported by detailed monitoring of use of the service and in particular passengers' reasons for travelling on the new service.

- 2.9. In the event that the Leeds Free CityBus does not continue beyond the experimental period, the buses would be available to transfer to other tendered services where it can be demonstrated that revenue savings in the tendered costs of operation can be realised by the deployment of Metro funded buses. Previous experience indicates that the revenue cost of tendered services can be reduced by around 25% where the capital cost of vehicles can be funded separately.

3. FINANCIAL AND EC PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The revenue cost of the trial operation of the service between January and July will be £201,393. The revenue cost of the service in the current year can be met within the current revenue budget. The costs for continuation of the trial period from April until July 2006 would be included in budget proposals for 2006/7.
- 3.2. The capital costs of the service would be met from West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan funding

Six buses @ £98,000	£588,000
Livery, branding and launch	£18,000
Equipping with audio visual information systems *	£18,000
Equipping with real time system *	£16,000
Bus stop infrastructure - seven new stops plus timetable cases at existing stops	£24,000
Monitoring	£10,000
Total capital cost	£674,000

* this work will be deferred until after the outcome of the trial period is known

- 3.3. These costs could be funded from revenue or the Local Transport Plan, with a decision on the optimum method forming part of the budget report to February meeting of the Authority.
- 3.4. The contract for the purchase of the buses will be made between First and Optare and therefore not subject to EC Procurement rules.

4. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no staffing implications.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The new service will improve accessibility for people in Leeds City Centre , in particular it will make a significant improvement to access to Leeds General Infirmary by public transport.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1. That the Authority approves capital expenditure of £664,000 to enable to introduction of the Leeds Free CityBus trial.

Director General
West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive

DP

December 2005

LEEDS FREE CITYBUS – OPERATING DETAILS

Metro's Conditions Of Contract for tendered services apply to this service.

ROUTE

Leeds Station Interchange via New Station Street, Wellington Street, King Street, East Parade, Westgate, Park Lane, Hanover way, Woodhouse Square, Clarendon Road, Hyde Street, Clarendon Way, Calverley Street, Portland Way, Woodhouse Lane, Albion Street, The Headrow, Eastgate, Leeds City Bus Station, Eastgate, Vicar Lane, New Market Street, Duncan Street, Boar Lane, New station Street to Leeds Station Interchange

Refer to map of route attached

DAYS, PERIOD AND FREQUENCY OF OPERATION

The service will operate Monday to Saturday with the first bus departing Leeds Station Interchange at 06:30 and the last bus departing 19:10.

The service shall operate with no less than five buses in circulation between the following hours

Monday to Friday 07:00 until 18:30

Saturday 08:30 until 17:30

The service is scheduled to operate every six minutes during these times however variable traffic conditions may influence frequencies, the service will be therefore advertised "at least every ten minutes".

STOPS TO BE OBSERVED

Metro will specify the stops and interchange stands the service will operate from – refer to map attached

FARES

There will be no fare charged for travel on the service