

## **AGENDA ITEM NO: 8**

### **WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**

#### **AT A MEETING OF THE BUS WORKING GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2005**

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Lewis (Chair)

Councillors K Rhodes, D Schofield and G Wainwright

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor C Townley.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **3. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2005 be approved.

#### **4. KICKSTART**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the outcome of bids submitted by Metro to the Department for Transport Kickstart competition.

It was reported that successful bids had been secured for the following schemes:

- Bradford (First) - Extension of Service 636/637 - Orange Line to new Morrison HQ.
- Kirklees (First) - Extension of Holme Valley services to Huddersfield Rail Station.

It was reported that the successful bids sought capital and revenue support for 3 years with the operators making a commitment to run services on a commercial basis at the end of the funding period. Subject to the completion of highway infrastructure works, it was envisaged that the new services would operate from Spring/Summer 2006.

With regard to the Leeds Night Bus Network, Members were advised that discussions were continuing with First on how to progress service delivery. It was hoped that a reduced network could still be secured and a report would be submitted to a further meeting of the Working Group detailing the outcome of those discussions.

Comment was also made that it was likely that a future round of Kickstart would be invited in 2006. Ideas had been sought from operators and preparatory studies on various schemes such as new services to key employment sites were being progressed.

**RESOLVED -**

- (a) That the successful awards within the 2005 Department for Transport Kickstart process be noted.
- (b) That the feasibility of night bus services in Leeds be further investigated with First and that a progress report be submitted to a future meeting.

**5. ACCESSIBILITY REVIEW - FINAL REPORT**

The Working Group considered the final report and action plan of the Best Value Review of Accessibility, which had been carried out by consultants Faber Maunsell.

Members were advised of the consultants approach to review, which had included wide consultation with stakeholders. It was noted that the main conclusion of the review was that Metro was providing Best Value in meeting the objectives for accessibility and social inclusion in relation to tendered services, rural transport and AccessBus.

The review had identified a number of opportunities to improve the accessibility planning process. A key challenge was the potential to cope with increasing demand for AccessBus in the light of an increasing ageing population and the current budget constraints. It was proposed to review the service and bring back a package of options for Member consideration. This work would be focused on clearer targeting of the market to be served rather than the need for the service itself, which had been endorsed by the Review.

**RESOLVED** – That the accessibility review and action plan be noted.

**6. PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIPS**

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the Performance Improvement Partnerships, which had been encouraged by the Department for Transport.

It was reported that Local Transport Plan Policy Guidance recommended the adoption of PIPs as a means by which the LTP target for bus punctuality could be met. There was a clear incentive for both operators and PTEs to establish effective PIPs.

Following discussions with the operators and Local Highways Authorities a model PIP had been prepared setting out targets and an action planning process aimed at improving the punctuality, reliability and journey times of bus services.

Members noted that Metro had already increased its observational monitoring of bus services during October and November and that this would continue until early December. Initial results had suggested that across West Yorkshire 84% of buses had arrived on time (not more than one minute early or five minutes late). In this respect, it was reported that in the new year it was intended a new methodology based on real time data would be used and the results of the more intensive monitoring would enable a provisional benchmark of punctuality performance to be set.

#### **RESOLVED -**

- (a) That the observations of bus operator performance, as outlined in paragraph 2 of the submitted report, be noted.
- (b) That progress in the development of Performance Improvement Partnerships and the timescale for their implementation be noted.
- (c) That a further report be presented to the Working Group detailing the agreed targets and action plans set by each Performance Improvement Partnership.

## **7. BUS STRATEGY**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the completion of the formal consultation exercise and proposals for further works relating to Metro's Bus Strategy.

Members noted that during the consultation exercise a wide range of responses had been received principally from the public/user groups, District Councils, operators and Passenger Consultative Committee public representatives. Over 80% of those responses received from the public and user groups considered the objectives of the Bus Strategy to be correct and believed that the Strategy would make bus use simpler, services more reliable, increase patronage and improve access to key facilities.

It was reported that the operators broadly supported the aims and objectives of the Strategy. They had, however, raised a number of issues regarding matters of control (fares, branding, compensation, complaints and integrated

networks). The operators also considered that the Bus Strategy, if amended, could be delivered through partnership arrangements and did not consider that Bus Quality Contracts were required.

### **Next Steps**

Members were also informed that a seminar would be held for all PTA Members to consider in detail the main elements of the Strategy and that the outcome of those discussions would be used as the basis for:-

- (i) Detailed discussions with the operators regarding the delivery of the Bus Strategy.
- (ii) Production of a more concise 'user friendly' version of the Strategy for further consultation with bus passengers.
- (iii) Carry out more work on the implications of Bus Quality Contracts including risk analysis.

It was also proposed to carry out a pilot study with Kirklees to develop a specification of an overall Network of services that would better meet the councils' economic, social and environmental objectives and accessibility standards in line with Metro's Best Value Review. The work would initially focus on the Huddersfield area. It was intended that the study would seek to develop a methodology that could be used throughout West Yorkshire.

An issue regarding the cleanliness of buses, particularly litter, was raised and it was suggested that specific guidance should be incorporated within the Bus Strategy.

### **RESOLVED -**

- (a) That the progress in the development of the Bus Strategy be noted.
- (b) That the future steps, as set out in the submitted report, be endorsed.