

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

DATE: 21 NOVEMBER 2008

AGENDA ITEM NO: **16.**

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Report of the Passenger Transport Executive

1. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

1.1. The development of the Community Transport sector in West Yorkshire.

2. INFORMATION

2.1. Community Transport providers are “not for profit” organisations who deliver local transport services usually door to door services using minibuses or volunteer’s cars.

2.2. The government is currently promoting the delivery of public services by not for profit organisations (the “third” sector) and has established a new form of company entity called the “community interest company” which is essentially a business that recycles its operating profits into social and community benefit.

2.3. Community Transport (CT) organisations enjoy licensing provisions which exempt them from some of the obligations of PSV operation. These are

- Section 19 operation – where a minibus is operated for the benefit of the community on a non profit making basis, the organisation that uses the vehicle may apply for a permit under section 19 of the Transport Act 1985 from their local authority or the Traffic Commissioner. Possession of the permit will authorise the organisation to use a minibus without an Operator's Licence or the need to employ a full time Transport Manager.
- Section 22 operation – this is where community organisations can use unpaid volunteers to operate a scheduled local minibus service charging fares.

2.4. It is anticipated that the Local Transport Act will enable an expanded role for the CT sector by amending these provisions as follows

- the section 19 permit scheme would include vehicles adapted to carry fewer than 9 passengers;
- the section 22 permit scheme would apply to vehicles above the current threshold of 16 passengers;

- the prohibition on paying drivers of section 22 permit vehicles would be removed;
 - The permit issuing and record keeping requirements would be strengthened. Permits would be granted for a period of up to 5 years whereas at present they can operate indefinitely.
- 2.5. These changes would enable the CT sector to play a greater role in providing scheduled local bus services.
- 2.6. In some parts of the UK, the CT sector plays a significant role in local transport provision providing transport commissioned by social services and health organisations. Some also provide public transport services under contract with TfL, GMPTE, SYPTE and Merseytravel. The CT sector has not however developed to the same extent in West Yorkshire.
- 2.7. This may however change following the recent merger of Leeds Alternative Travel with the Hackney Community Transport Group which is the parent organisation for CT Plus in Yorkshire. Leeds Alternative Travel operate contracts to provide special educational needs transport, mainstream school transport and Primary Care Trust transport. In 2007 it expanded its private minibus hire fleet and offers services to both profit and non-profit making groups. The combination of Leeds Alternative Travel and CT Plus will advance the development of a significant “third sector” passenger transport provider.
- 2.8. A developed CT sector with sufficient skills and capacity could offer the following advantages to Metro:
- To provide local bespoke transport solutions to accessibility issues in areas where full scale public bus service provision is not feasible, economically viable or sustainable;
 - To increase the number of small/ medium sized organisations available to tender for tendered services and/or AccessBus contracts;
 - To play a role in recruiting and training new PSV drivers especially in areas of unemployment and low skill base;
 - To provide added value in the form of community benefit - a healthy CT provider generates local employment and spends its surpluses on transport services in the community which are not commissioned from public bodies.
- 2.9. Commissioning from the CT sector can however carry risks to Metro. In particular CT organisations can lack capability and professionalism and be over reliant on individuals leading to instability. Tenders from some CT organisations can be comparatively expensive compared with

commercial operators because they have limited scope to recover their overhead costs.

- 2.10. In 2007, Metro and Yorkshire Forward jointly commissioned the Community Transport Association (CTA) to produce an appraisal of the current position of the Community Transport sector in West Yorkshire and its capacity to develop. The study involved a quantitative survey, qualitative research of the eight largest operators, stakeholder analysis including District Councils and benchmarking against practice in conurbations elsewhere in the UK.
- 2.11. The study broadly concluded that Community Transport provision in West Yorkshire is patchy but where it is available it is delivered to a high standard. The CT sector currently makes a significant if localised contribution towards independent living and has the potential to make a greater contribution to the Regional Economic Strategy and the accessibility targets within the Local Transport Plan. To achieve this, however those organisations with the potential to make a greater contribution would need support to develop towards becoming a community interest company meeting the full standards of Public Service Vehicle licensing.
- 2.12. Metro has commissioned the Community Transport Association to provide development support to those social enterprises who have made a commitment to developing as a professionally managed transport provider through:
 - Employment of a Transport Manager qualified to Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC), and
 - Attainment of a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Operators Licence
- 2.13. This programme is known as “West Yorkshire Communities On The Move” and has been modelled on a successful programme undertaken several years ago by GMPTE. Metro will oversee a programme steering group comprising nominated representatives of the CT sector in West Yorkshire. A list of the participating organisations is included as Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.14. The programme will be carried out in two phases. Under phase 1 of the project, the CTA will make contact with each of the organisations to appraise the following
 - The organisation’s current business plan, if no formal business plan exists an appraisal of their current business position based upon interviews;
 - The organisation’s operating standards (including training, vehicle management, accounting procedures);

- The organisation's position with regard to PSV operator licence and employment of a CPC holder;
 - The organisation's capacity to provide services under contract;
 - The organisation's capacity to provide registered public bus services or section 22 bus services.
- 2.15. Arising from the research and interviews, the CTA will provide an appraisal of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing each organisation together with a schedule of recommended actions. The CTA will agree the appraisal with each respective organisation and will present them all in a report to Metro and the programme steering group together with a list of recommendations to assist each organisation in its development. Such activities could be direct assistance to an organisation or collective to many organisations.
- 2.16. The conclusion of Phase 1 will set out a Quality Charter which details common operating and management standards which will be observed by participating organisations. The Charter is to be aimed at providing quality assurance to Metro and other prospective procurers of services from CT providers.
- 2.17. Phase 2 will comprise the development and agreement of a Vision for Community Transport in West Yorkshire. The vision will set out the role CT can play in the economic and social development of the Leeds City Region and a strategy detailing how the sector can achieve this role.
- 2.18. Metro will facilitate the research and appraisal work together with the development of a Quality Charter and a Vision. It is expected that the project will also identify development support and advice specific to the participating organisation who may commission the work directly from the CTA or any other consultant or provider.
- 2.19. The conclusion of Phase 1 is expected in December 2008 and a summary of the outcome of this stage in the programme together with a plan for Phase 2 will be presented to the Bus Working Group early in 2009.

3. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. Provision has been made in approved budgets to fund the West Yorkshire Communities On The Move" programme at a cost of £30,000. Additional support and advice can be commissioned directly by the participating organisations.

4. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. There are no equal opportunity implications arising directly from this report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. That the Authority notes the establishment of the West Yorkshire Communities On The Move programme to develop third sector transport providers.

Director General
West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive

West Yorkshire Communities On The Move – Participating Organisations

The following organisations have made a commitment to the employment of a Transport Manager qualified to Certificate of Professional Competence and attainment of a Public Service Vehicle Operators Licence and will therefore participate in the West Yorkshire Communities on the Move programme;

- Shipley and Bingley Voluntary Services
- Newlands Community Transport
- Ilkley Council for Voluntary Services
- Community Transport Calderdale
- The Denby Dale Centre
- Leeds Alternative Travel
- TransportLINK CT - South Leeds Health For All
- Holbeck Elderly Aid
- Windmill Community Transport
- FDM (Disability Mobility) Rothwell
- Re-connect
- Halo (based at Fieldhead Hospital)
- Barnsley Dial A Ride
- British Red Cross
- CT Plus Yorkshire
- Otley Action for Older People
- Keighley Community Transport