

**WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**

**AT A JOINT MEETING OF THE BUS AND TENDERED SERVICES WORKING  
GROUP HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE ON  
WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2009**

**PRESENT:** Councillor D Congreve (Chair)

Councillors M Bolt, T Brice, E Firth, C Greaves, G Phelps and  
A Pinnock

**1. COUNCILLOR G WAINWRIGHT**

Before the meeting commenced a minute's silence was held by members in memory of Councillor G Wainwright.

**2. BUS STRATEGY**

The Working Groups considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive and a presentation on the development of Quality Partnerships and Quality Contracts and possible approaches for improving local bus services.

It was reported that the Local Transport Act contained new provisions relating to Bus Statutory Quality Partnership Schemes, which were now referred to as Bus Partnership Schemes, as well as changing the process for the introduction of Bus Quality Contracts.

A presentation updated the Working Groups on the 'parallel' approach, which Metro had adopted, which sought service improvement through Voluntary Partnership Schemes, as well as the development of a business case for Quality Contracts.

Members were informed of a number of successful partnership schemes including:

- Performance Improvement Partnerships (PIPs)
- Ftr
- Guideway schemes

It was also noted that these had not been sufficient to address the overall patronage decline and that Metro was continuing to hold meetings and work proactively with the operators in order to seek further improvements on a partnership basis. Meetings, which had already taken place, had identified lack of investment in the West Yorkshire bus fleet, which had prompted significant recent investment reducing the average age of the fleet.

With regard to Bus Partnership Schemes, the members endorsed a phased approach to developing further Bus Partnership Schemes.

It was reported that the District based approach, which was planned to be implemented in 2009/10, was based on Metro's planned and existing infrastructure and would also involve:

- (i) Memorandum of Understanding
- (ii) Shared Business Plans
- (iii) A Protocol for Consultation
- (iv) Stabilisation of Networks and Fares
- (v) Driver Training and IIP or Equivalent
- (vi) Carbon Reduction/Environmental Strategy

Members welcomed the work which had already been undertaken and considered that it was extremely important that the proposed consultation process should fully involve the relevant trade unions.

Members were also advised on work, which was currently being carried out on developing more extensive Quality Partnerships based on facilities provided in the main centres. Members welcomed this approach which could secure operator commitment to maximum fares, frequencies and timings and standards relating to vehicle and emission standards.

This work was most advanced in the Huddersfield area where operators had generally agreed to the shape of overall network and brand concepts. Town centre and corridor action plans were currently being developed with Kirklees Council. Discussions would be taking place in the very near future to seek agreement to a fares structure for the area.

It was also reported that initial discussions had take place with Wakefield Council with regard to the city centre regeneration, which could form the first of a number of city and town centre gateway schemes to be developed as part of Local Transport Plan 3.

With regard to the Quality Contracts it was reported that the new legislation now allowed the ITA to locally determine if a scheme was in the public interest. However, it was emphasised that any decision could still be open to legal challenge by an operator. Comment was also made that the new legislation incorporated TUPE provision.

Members welcomed the powers, which had been afforded to the ITAs giving them powers to own and let vehicles. They suggested that they could be used to support community transport and other innovative schemes where Metro might support a project by supplying vehicles. In this respect, they also recognised that prior to proceeding with any Quality Contract a number of significant obstacles would need to be addressed particularly acquisition and location of depots.

**RESOLVED** - That the report and presentation be noted.

### **3. REVIEW OF TENDERED SERVICES**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the work programme for the review of tendered services.

Members were advised of the different steps in the process of identifying, procuring and managing tendered services and a work programme, which was being developed to consider associated issues including:-

- Assessing and prioritising needs
- Specifying and tendering
- Evaluation and contract awards
- Monitoring

The review would consider whether the new value for money criteria should be adopted as the '6 and 20' rule was an effectiveness measure rather than a true value for money indicator. In this respect, members considered that in certain cases, a quantitative view should also be adopted with further criteria setting out other factors, including local issues, social inclusion/hardship considerations and should take account of areas with a low car population. An example was given of the issues surrounding the Houseshill area in Kirklees where a much valued service had been provided at a very small cost even though it did not meet the Authority's '6 and 20' rule for tendered services. Members also referred to the successes of the Kickstart scheme throughout the county and supported in principle the use of Metro resources to pump prime services including a role for marketing and promotion.

The Working Group was advised that the current economic climate was having a significant impact upon the demand for travel and the cost of providing bus services. Metro had now used the bus financial model to assess likely operator responses to the current pressures being encountered and the very real risk of de-registrations to reduce cost and maintain profitability in 2009. As a consequence, the review would consider how tendering strategies could assist in mitigating some of the economic impacts on bus services overall.

**RESOLVED** - That the approach, as detailed in the submitted report, be endorsed.

### **4. BUS SERVICE CHANGE CONSULTATION GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the adoption of a Good Practice Guide for consultation on proposed bus service changes.

It was reported that the Authority and the District Councils had expressed concern that bus operators did not always adequately consult before making changes to their bus services.

Reference was made to a number of examples where prior consultation had enabled the early identification and resolution of issues preventing negative passenger and media reaction to changes.

The Working Group was advised that, whilst the guide had been agreed with the operators, there was no statutory obligation on them to consult. This obligation could form part of the proposed district based Quality Partnership schemes.

**RESOLVED** - That the Good Practice Guide on Consultation on Local Bus Service Changes be endorsed.

## **5. FUTURE DELIVERY OF THE ACCESSBUS SERVICE**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive giving an update on the proposed operation of AccessBus as a registered local service in order to achieve cost savings by making the service eligible for BSOG (Bus Service Operators' Grant).

It was reported that a long term strategy for accessible transport that involved a more targeted approach including AccessBus, MetroLocal, community transport and taxi provision had previously been endorsed by both Working Groups.

The Working Group was informed that to secure BSOG, the new service would operate as a flexibly routed demand responsive registered local bus service. In order to comply, a passenger would pre-book a trip with an agreed pick up and destination point with other passengers being picked up enroute all of whom would pay a separate fare. Comment was also made that although the service must be available for anyone to book the operator was not obliged to accept the booking if all vehicles were committed at the time of travel.

Members were advised of proposals to prepare the AccessBus service as a registered bus service, scheduled to be introduced in October 2009, which would require:

- Amendments to the concessionary fare scheme to enable eligible holders of the West Yorkshire concessionary fare passes to travel free of charge before 9.30 am and that this amendment would be restricted to the AccessBus service.
- Amendment of the operating contracts for the service to include the requirements for operation as a registered service.
- A publicity campaign to encourage passengers who had not already obtained a concessionary fare pass to get a pass to enable them to continue to travel free of charge.

- Introduction of the monitoring and record keeping requirements for a registered service, which would be included in the specification of the new booking system to be introduced later this year.
- Pre-registration discussions with the Traffic Commissioner's office.

**RESOLVED -**

- (a) That progress towards the registration of the AccessBus service in October 2009, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.
- (b) That a report be prepared to advise the Integrated Transport Authority of this proposed initiative.

**6. KICKSTART**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the Department for Transport's Kickstart Scheme 2009.

It was reported that the Department for Transport had announced a further round of the Kickstart initiative, which encouraged transport authorities to prepare joint bids with bus operators for schemes, which made use of the new bus powers in the Local Transport Act. The DfT had indicated that they required all submissions by 3 July 2009 and all the successful bids would be announced in Autumn 2009.

The Working Group were advised that it was proposed to develop a bid for Kickstart funding to advance the partnership scheme in Huddersfield, which Metro was leading through the innovation forum. In this respect, it was reported that Metro had also approached other bus operators to explore interest in further Kickstart projects.

**RESOLVED -**

- (a) That the Department for Transport's Kickstart Scheme 2009 be noted.
- (b) That a further report detailing Metro's proposed bids be submitted to a further meeting of the Bus Working Group.