

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

**AT A MEETING OF THE KIRKLEES PASSENGER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE TOWN HALL, DEWSBURY
ON WEDNESDAY 31 MARCH 2010**

PRESENT: Councillor T Brice (Chair)

WYITA

E Firth
G Lowe
A Pinnock

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

John Appleyard
Don Burslam
Richard Fieldhouse
David Hargreaves
Shaun Jordan
William Kirby
Kathleen O'Shea
Keith Parry
Christopher Taylor

KIRKLEES MC

Councillor L Smaje

Also in attendance:

C Newbury	-	Arriva Yorkshire (Heckmondwike)
S Ottley	-	Arriva Yorkshire (Dewsbury)
C Simpson	-	CentreBus
T Singh	-	CentreBus
D Haley	-	Northern Rail
D Mallender	-	TransPennine Express

17. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Patrick and L Wilkinson (Kirklees MC) and public representative Mr M Denton.

18. MINUTES

Further to Minute 16 - Operators' Comments (Northern) - Members queried whether there had been any further developments regarding the opening of three vacant units at Batley rail station by Batley Grammar School. In response, Mr Haley advised that Network Rail was in discussions with the school regarding the terms/conditions of the leases. He would pursue the matter further with Network Rail and provide an update to the Committee. Councillor Lowe advised members that the issue could be of some interest to the Batley Area Committee and it was, therefore, agreed that a progress report be provided by Mr Haley and circulated to members when available.

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2010 be approved.

19. MEMBER FEEDBACK

The Committee considered a report advising members of the feedback received at the meeting of the Committee held on 13 January 2010 and to report the action taken.

Members were advised that a special joint PCC meeting to discuss the Local Transport Plan 3 and realtime system had been arranged for 15 April 2010 where members would be given an opportunity for more in depth consultation.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

20. INFORMATION REPORT

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

Service Changes

The Committee was updated on the forthcoming service changes scheduled for 24/25/26 April 2010. It was reported that following a re-tendering exercise Service 435/436 (Holmfirth - Wakefield) would be operated by Centrebus with very minor changes to the timetable. A copy of the Changing Times leaflet giving full details of all changes would be circulated to members in the near future.

Members commented that Service 435/436 only operated to the Shepley area every two hours and members asked that this be reconsidered. Metro officers confirmed that further investigations would be undertaken to determine the feasibility of providing an hourly service at a later date.

Service 388 Meltham – Milnsbridge – Huddersfield Royal Infirmary

It was reported that patronage on the new service between Meltham, Milnsbridge and Huddersfield Royal Infirmary was averaging 60 passenger trips per day and would be reviewed during the Spring.

Boxing Day 2009 Services

It was reported that approximately 54,000 passenger trips were made on the Boxing Day 2009 bus services linking communities across West Yorkshire with Leeds and Huddersfield. This was a 10% increase on the previous year and operation in other Districts would be considered for 2010 in the context of the proposed retail offer in these areas.

DalesBus Services

It was noted that the DalesBus service improved access to the Dales for West Yorkshire residents on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Metro would continue to

support the initiative in 2010. Metro was also investigating the possible extension of the Peak District service to commence in June 2010.

Comment was received regarding the last bus from the Dales, which operated at 5.00 pm. Members considered this too early, especially in the Summer months when the service was well used by ramblers. Members asked that consideration be given to running a later service. Metro officers noted the proposal, but advised that this would not be possible this year as the funding costs for the service had already been allocated. This matter would be considered when determining the service for 2011.

Quality Bus Contracts

The Committee was updated on progress regarding the development of the business case and Public Interest Statement for Quality Contracts (bus franchising). It was anticipated that the Public Interest Statement would be available for consultation during the summer and progress would be reported to future meetings of the Committee.

Members expressed their thanks to officers regarding the Quality Bus Contracts seminar held in February, in particular the high calibre of verbal information and presentation material provided to members.

Dewsbury and Huddersfield Rail Station Improvements

Members had previously been advised of the improvements schemes being developed by TransPennine Express for Dewsbury and Huddersfield Rail Stations. It was noted that work was expected to commence at Dewsbury at the beginning of April 2010, which included improvements to the ticket hall. At Huddersfield the size of the station entrance and booking hall would be increased and other passenger improvements included enhanced waiting facilities.

Mr Mallender of TransPennine Express advised the Committee that improvement works to Dewsbury rail station were scheduled to commence on 6 April 2010 and would take 10 weeks to complete. He advised that no commencement date for works to Huddersfield rail station had been determined. Planning consent for changes to the original proposals was currently being sought.

East Coast "Eureka" Timetable

Members were advised that a standard hour 'clockface' timetable would be introduced on the East Coast Main Line from May 2011. Trains would arrive and depart Leeds at the same time every hour and journeys between Leeds and London reduced by 11 minutes.

Discussions ensued regarding the timings of services from Wakefield Westgate rail station to London Kings Cross, which impacted on connecting rail services from the Huddersfield, Mirfield and Dewsbury areas. Mr Haley explained that due to infrastructure constraints it was impossible to connect

with every service on the route in question. Members further suggested that the problem could be alleviated by reinstating the service which previously ran from Wakefield Westgate to Marsden. Whilst this was not practical at the current time, Mr Haley advised that if the Manchester Hub proposals were implemented then the matter would be re-examined.

Grand Central Trains - Bradford - London Rail Service

The Committee noted the details of the new 'West Riding' service which would be operated by Grand Central between Bradford and London from May 2010.

Comment was expressed regarding the length of the train units and whether the stations concerned could accommodate the services. It was explained that the new units would have 'selective door opening' and, therefore, platform length would not be an issue for trains calling at those stations with a shorter platform. Members discussed the possibility of services calling at Mirfield rail station. However, it was explained that this would be impossible to implement due to line capacity issues at the station.

Additional Rail Carriages

Members had previously been advised of Metro's work with the Department for Transport, Northern Rail and the other PTEs to secure additional rolling stock. It was hoped that an announcement would be made before the General Election with regard to part of phase 1 although there was concern that no clear proposals for the delivery of phase 2 had been developed.

In this respect, it was confirmed to members that an announcement had been made by the DfT advising that 18 carriages would be allocated to Northern Rail for utilisation across their franchise area. In response, Mr Haley of Northern confirmed that West Yorkshire had only been allocated one 'new' unit, which would be provided in 2012.

Smartcard Funding

It was reported that the Department for Transport (DfT) had announced a funding package of £20m to support the development of smart and integrated ticketing. Metro and South Yorkshire PTE had been allocated £2.2m each and would work together to jointly procure the necessary infrastructure for implementing an ITSO smartcard scheme.

The DfT had also announced an 8% increase to the Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) if bus operators introduced smartcard infrastructure on their buses. This would equate to approximately £800 per vehicle per year.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

21. **CONSULTATION ITEMS:-**
- (a) **Review of the Last Term of PCC Meetings**
 - (b) **Integrated Ticketing**
 - (c) **Disruptions Due to Bad Weather**
 - (d) **Operators' Comments**

Review of the Last Term of PCC Meetings

Members were thanked for their valuable input on the wide range of consultation items considered at PCC meetings during their term of office. They were given a short presentation on the topics that had been covered and were given the opportunity to comment on their experience as a PCC public representative and whether there were any areas for improvement.

It was noted that the recruitment process for public representatives for the next 3 year term would commence in the near future and all current members would be forwarded an application form in due course.

Members commended the initiative to implement timetables at all stops in West Yorkshire. It was reported that during the next financial year a further 3,000 timetable cases would be rolled out across the county.

The Committee commented on the lack of liaison with members regarding the agenda content. In response, it was explained that members were able to submit items for discussion by contacting the ITA office 2 weeks prior to the meeting taking place. Metro officers confirmed that this facility would be reiterated to future public representatives at the 'new' member seminar.

Integrated Ticketing

It was noted that there was currently a wide range of ticket options available to public transport users and it was recognised that these could be confusing for passengers.

Members were advised of the development and roll out of SmartCard ticketing project and the work to introduce Quality Contracts, both of which would offer opportunities to develop a more fully integrated ticketing scheme in West Yorkshire. They were given a short presentation and their views were sought on how to take forward a ticketing plan for West Yorkshire.

Members commended the initiative, but commented on the necessity of working with operators in order to achieve better integration and simplification of ticketing in the short term. It was also reported that Metro hoped that the Government's announcement to increase BSOG would be sufficient incentive to encourage operators to invest in the new ticketing equipment essential to facilitate the scheme.

Disruptions Due to Bad Weather

The Committee was advised that Metro had undertaken a review of how customers had been kept informed of the disruptions to public transport during

the recent bad weather. Members were given a brief presentation and noted the action plan which had been developed to take the recommendations of the review forward. Their views on areas for further improvement were sought.

Members suggested better utilisation of the media, MetroLine and the Internet to provide members of the public with the necessary information, as communication was key. It was also important to improve the way that information was provided to passengers waiting at both staffed and unstaffed bus stations.

Members commended on the high level of service provided by the bus and rail operators during the disruption due to adverse weather.

Operators' Comments

Operators were invited to report on issues and developments for members' consideration.

Arriva

Mr Newbury advised the Committee of the following:

- During the bad weather Arriva had continued to run services where possible with punctuality for this period shown as 92.9%.
- Results from a national opinion poll undertaken by Arriva had shown that 95% of passengers were satisfied with the level of service provided by the company.
- As a result of improvements made to the Heckmondwike depot/services it was now considered one of Arriva's top ten depots in the country.
- No fare increases were currently planned.

Centrebus

Mr Singh advised the Committee that the company had recently recruited 60 more drivers to operate services. He would be overseeing operations at the company's Calderdale depot and would no longer be attending the meeting. Mr Singh gave thanks to the Chair and members for their assistance and feedback during his time on the Committee.

Northern Rail

Mr Haley advised the Committee of the following:

- Service punctuality had declined during the last period compared to the year before, but this was attributed to the bad weather. He paid tribute to

those members of staff that had ensured the operation of services during the inclement weather.

- Members were made aware that from Tuesday 6 April to Friday 9 April 2010 Network Rail staff were planning to undertake industrial action, which would seriously affect the rail network nationally and regionally. Network Rail was in the process of submitting a legal challenge in order to prevent the industrial action from taking place. Members were advised to consult the Internet and travel help lines in order to keep abreast of which services would be operating in the region.

TransPennine Express

Mr Mallender reiterated Mr Haley's comments regarding the planned strike action affecting TransPennine Express services and for members to consult the Internet and travel help lines before travelling.

Mr Mallender gave thanks to Kirklees Council in respect of the partnership funding provided towards their development of Huddersfield and Dewsbury rail stations.

Other Issues

Comment was made regarding the lack of representation from First at the meeting. It was agreed that a letter be sent to First seeking their attendance at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chair expressed his thanks to officers, councillors and public representatives for their valued service and commitment to the Committee during the past 3 years.

Members were asked to forward any further ideas or comments on the questionnaire provided at the meeting or by email to erica.ward@wypte.gov.uk.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That PCC members' feedback and views be noted.
- (b) It was agreed that a letter be sent to First seeking their attendance at the next meeting of the Committee.