

## AGENDA ITEM NO: 7(b)

### WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

#### AT A MEETING OF THE TENDERED SERVICES WORKING GROUP HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE ON THURSDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2008

**PRESENT:** Councillor T Brice (Chair)

Councillors C Campbell, S Khan, G Phelps and G Wainwright

#### **85. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Congreve.

#### **86. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor G Wainwright declared a personal interest in Item 6 - Tendered Bus Services in Elland and Denholme.

Councillor C Campbell declared a personal interest in Item 7 - Bus Service Changes in Yeadon.

Councillor S Khan - declared a personal interest in Item 11 - Metro Connect Services (MC3 - Little Horton, Bradford).

#### **87. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2008 be approved.

#### **88. AWARD OF BUS SERVICE CONTRACTS - WAKEFIELD AREA**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive concerning the award of contracts for local bus services tendered in the Wakefield area.

It was reported that although the batch had been split to encourage bids from small operators, the bid from Arriva Yorkshire was still the cheapest and represented best value for money.

It was acknowledged that there would be implications for the bus network in making the award to Arriva Yorkshire, which involved certain services presently provided by Stagecoach. Members noted the high and unacceptable cost of maintaining the status quo and the award of tenders to enable the continuation of cross boundary services to the current operator. It was also reported that South Yorkshire PTE had been advised of the

implications surrounding the award of the tenders and had agreed to the awards recommended.

It was agreed that the contracts be awarded to Arriva Yorkshire, although it was noted that further action might be required following advice to Stagecoach of the recommended awards and their subsequent commercial decisions on network provision. Discussion also ensued regarding the areas that would be affected by the changes and members requested that funds saved from the new contracts be utilised to alleviate any resultant service/route problems.

**RESOLVED** - That, in keeping with the Authority's policies for the provision of tendered local bus services, contracts for Batches 442, 446, 447 and 458 be awarded to Arriva Yorkshire in accordance with the proposals contained in the submitted report.

## **89. TENDERED BUS SERVICES IN ELLAND AND DENHOLME**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive to secure the operation of local minibus services in the Elland and Denholme areas using low floor buses by the award of a de minimis contract to the Halifax Bus Company.

It was reported that the Halifax Bus Company operated the local network of minibus services in Elland and Denholme in hilly terrain using vehicles that were not accessible to those passengers with limited mobility. In this respect, it was acknowledged that new low floor vehicles would significantly improve social inclusion and make the services more attractive for all passengers, thus increasing overall patronage.

Discussions had been held with Halifax Bus Company towards upgrading the services to low floor operation and, as a result, it was proposed to award a 5 year de minimis contract to the company for operation of both services from the beginning of March 2008 using low floor vehicles. Members were advised that the Denholme service would continue to operate at the current cost plus RPI adjustment. However, due to low passenger revenue/tender income on the Elland service the Halifax Bus Company could not afford to run a larger bus at the current contract price. Members noted that despite the additional cost, the company's price remained cheaper than other comparable services of this type.

It was also noted that in order to facilitate the provision of new Optare Solo low floor minibuses on both services, Metro would make an initial payment to the Halifax Bus Company in March 2008.

**RESOLVED** - That, consistent with the Authority's policies for the provision of local bus services, de minimis contracts be awarded for the operation of services in Elland and Denholme, as detailed in the submitted report.

## **90. BUS SERVICE CHANGES IN YEADON**

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the implications on tendered services of recent changes to local bus services in the Yeadon, Guiseley and Otley areas.

As reported to the last meeting, an interim Service 969 was introduced to run until April 2008 pending consultation on residents' preferred route for Service 966. Various options were outlined in the submitted report.

The results of the 'consultation' showed that the majority preferred the reinstatement of the previous service in preference to the through link with Otley and Menston. A revised route had been devised and would be introduced in May 2008. A half hourly link between Otley and Menston station would be maintained by a revised Service 967, resulting in an half hour loop around Menston village.

**RESOLVED** - That the amendments to tendered bus services, as detailed in the submitted report, be agreed.

## **91. SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING FOR TENDERED BUS SERVICES**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the award of a contract for the operation of a service in Calderdale following supplementary funding to provide additional tendered bus services from the approved budget for 2007/08.

It was reported that of the bids submitted only one operator, First, had tendered for all options specified. Members agreed that the contract be awarded to First for the hourly operation of a low floor bus Monday to Friday between 0800 hours and 1700 hours. The service would operate on a trial basis for one year commencing in April 2008. Continuation beyond April 2009 would be considered using the adopted performance criteria for the supplementary services.

**RESOLVED** - That the award of a de minimis contract for the operation of a service between Halifax and Calderdale Royal Infirmary to First, be noted as consistent with the Authority's adopted policies for local bus services.

## **92. BOXING DAY BUS SERVICES**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the trial performance of the Boxing Day (2007) bus services and recommendations to plan services over the Christmas 2008 period.

Members noted that usage of the services in both Huddersfield and Leeds had been uniform across all routes, with 37,300 passengers using the service.

In this respect, the overall performance data of the services was outlined in the report and Appendix A detailed the usage of each operator's service and patronage by time of day. It was further reported that cross town/city services showed higher patronage, particularly on those services serving St James' Hospital and Huddersfield Royal Infirmary. Members were disappointed at the low usage for the Huddersfield FreeTownBus, which had carried only 25 passengers all day.

Conclusions from the trial had shown a successful first year trial. However, further trials would be required in order to establish whether Boxing Day services were viable and sustainable in the long term. For that reason it was proposed that future Boxing Day provision continued to focus on centres with high levels of retail activity, such as Huddersfield and Leeds, and that operation of 2008 services be based upon principles outlined in the report, subject to the Authority's endorsement. In the interim, further discussions would be held with operators and City/Town Centre Management to determine deliverability, routing and third party financial support.

Members asked that consideration be given to extending services to other areas when a network of services for 2008 was determined. Any suggestions would be considered in any future proposals, but it was stressed that the 2008 network would be focussed again on Huddersfield and Leeds unless retail activity in other centres supported wider expansion.

Discussions also ensued regarding the feasibility of running services into the evening in order to cater for hospital visiting and aid the Christmas/New Year anti-drinking/driving campaign. Members were advised that for the past 2 years Metro had liaised with West Yorkshire Police to encourage the use of evening public transport at Christmas. However, poor passenger figures had deemed the initiative unsuccessful.

#### **RESOLVED -**

- (a) That the performance of the trial of bus services on Boxing Day 2007 be noted.
- (b) That in principle, a further trial of Boxing Day and if appropriate New Year's Day services proceed in 2008, based upon the principles set out the submitted report and subject to a further report being brought to the Working Group detailing services planned, together with the costs and contractual arrangements.

### **93. DENBY DALE BUS SERVICE ISSUES**

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive concerning issues relating to the operation of bus services in the Denby Dale and Kirkburton area.

Members were reminded that following significant public concern as a result of the network changes in these areas, a public meeting was held to discuss service delivery and network issues. Stagecoach had now introduced new timetables to address the issues of reliability and punctuality of their services, although some problems still remained. They had also acknowledged that further changes were required to the timetables and they would, therefore, continue to monitor their services. The company's failure to deliver new vehicles as promised had also been criticised, however, these were now expected in March 2008.

It was stressed that the revised network continued to be of local concern, particularly the loss of through services to Barnsley. The limited market day service to the town on Wednesdays and Saturdays in November/December 2007 had been well used and local people considered that this had demonstrated the need for its continuation. It was reported that the feasibility of an hourly service would be investigated by extending the existing Stagecoach services from Kexbrough to Denby Dale.

Members were advised that Arriva's new Service 435 (Holmfirth - Denby Dale - Wakefield) route/timetable had been endorsed at the meeting, subject to inclusion of off peak services to the Chapel Hill area of Clayton West. As part of the new timetable, West Bretton would lose the service. However, this area would maintain links to/from Wakefield via the Service 444, which would also be revised to incorporate Hollin Lane presently served by Service 435. The revised timetable would commence at the April 2008 service change date.

**RESOLVED -**

- (a) That the concerns expressed by residents of the Denby Dale area regarding bus services be noted.
- (b) That the revisions to tendered bus service 435 be noted.
- (c) That a further report be submitted to the Working Group regarding the operation of services to Barnsley.

**94. METRO CONNECT SERVICES**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the continuation of the Metro Connect branded services.

**Metro Connect Aire Valley**

Members were informed that the current contract was due to expire at the end of April 2008. Passenger use currently averaged 65 trips per day with approximately 30 people relying on the service. In its present form the service was financially unsustainable. It was reported that no short to medium term funding opportunities had been secured, although longer term public transport solutions were being developed for the Aire Valley employment area, which

would include links from South/East Leeds. It was, therefore, proposed to extend the service until January 2009 to allow a review of employment growth/travel demands following the opening of the East Leeds Link Road and investigating ERDF funding from the Objective 2 programme.

### **Metro Connect Little Horton**

It was reported that the original funding package agreed by Bradford Trident and City of Bradford Primary Care Trust had failed, as Bradford Trident could no longer provide the level of funding. Bradford Council had recently submitted a bid to Yorkshire Forward for ERDF funding to improve access to employment sites in South Bradford which included 2 year's funding support for the MC3 service. An early indication of the Council's bid was currently anticipated. In view of these developments, it was proposed to extend the operating contract for the MC3 service at Metro's expense, until the end of October 2008 pending the outcome of the bid.

### **Metro Connect Lowfields**

It was proposed that following a consultation exercise it was proposed to provide a link to Brighouse rail station to strengthen service operation between Brighouse and Lowfields. To facilitate that, the current contract with First would be extended to operate a service between Brighouse Rail Station - Brighouse Bus Station - Elland Town Centre - Lowfields to co-ordinate with rail services. Off peak the service would not call at Lowfields.

It was noted that operation of the Ryburn Valley Metro Connect TaxiBus between Brighouse and Elland on Saturdays had demonstrated a level of demand. It was proposed to run the MC4 service as an hourly link on a Saturday. It was also reported that Metro's review of TaxiBus services in the Elland and Ryburn Valley areas in anticipation of their contracts ending in July 2008 had determined potential for the expansion of the MC4 timetable to provide further links in the area. In this respect, Metro had secured the operation of the service until October 2010 through Urban Challenge Funding and a revised cost agreement with First. The 2 year de minimis contract would be awarded to First until April 2010.

### **RESOLVED -**

- (a) That the non-renewal of the contract for the operation of Metro Connect Aire Valley service be noted.
- (b) That the extension of the contract for the operation of the Metro Connect Little Horton service until October 2008 be noted, pending the outcome of discussions.
- (c) That the award of a de minimis contract to First for the operation of the Metro Connect Lowfields service, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

## **95. COLNE VALLEY TAXIBUS SERVICES**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding action to be taken following the end of the current contract for the operation of the Metro Connect Taxibus services in the Colne Valley area of Kirklees.

Members were advised that the services had performed poorly resulting in a significantly higher cost per passenger compared to tendered services and AccessBus trips. It was reported that in order to maintain services for existing users, the local bus network would be adapted to meet passenger demands. Members expressed concern regarding the possible loss of travel arrangements to/from Wilberlee School as a result of the changes and reiterated the need to retain a facility.

Members requested that wide spread advertisement regarding revisions to the local bus network be undertaken well in advance of the changes.

### **RESOLVED -**

- (a)** That the performance of the Metro Connect Colne Valley Taxibus be noted.
- (b)** That the contract for the operation of the service not be renewed.
- (c)** That the amendments to the route of tendered bus services outlined in the submitted report be noted.

## **96. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Tendered Services Working Group considered a recommendation to exclude the press and public from Agenda Item 13 which contained exempt information defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12a Local Government Act 1972.

**RESOLVED -** It was agreed that because disclosure of the report might prejudice future negotiations due to the commercial confidentiality of tender prices, the public would be better served by maintaining the exempt information and, therefore, the press and public be now excluded.

## **\*97. ARRIVA SERVICE CHANGES**

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding proposed bus service changes in the Wakefield area.

**RESOLVED -** That the award of contracts, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted as consistent with the Authority's policies for the provision of local bus services.