

AGENDA ITEM NO: 8(b)

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE TENDERED SERVICES WORKING GROUP HELD IN WELLINGTON HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY 6 AUGUST 2008

PRESENT: Councillor T Brice (Chair)

Councillors E Firth, C Greaves, G Phelps and G Wainwright

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Pinnock.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

13. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2008 be approved.

14. BATCH 468 – SERVICE 586

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the results of tenders received in Batch 468 for the running of service 586 which operates on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays providing off peak journeys to Sowerby Bridge from Norland village and other settlements south of the town.

It was reported that of the 4 bids received, the most favourable bid was submitted by DK Minibuses. Whilst the bid represented a significant increase, it was noted that the price remained competitive against the cost of other similar services in West Yorkshire.

The Working Group expressed concern about the number of small operators who had gone out of business or were experiencing financial difficulties due to the increase in oil prices and lack of resources to comply with the introduction of new legislation. In this respect, it was noted that in other PTE areas local transport needs had promoted the development of small social enterprise co-operatives or community transport schemes. The Working Group was advised of ongoing work through the Community Transport Association to

build capacity in the CT sector. This work would be the subject of future reports to the Bus Working Group.

RESOLVED - That the award of the contract to DK Minibuses as detailed in the submitted report be noted as being consistent with the Authority's policy for the provision of local bus services.

15. ARRIVA BUS SERVICE CHANGES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the changes to tendered bus services following Arriva's decision to reduce operational costs by revising their commercial bus services in the Wakefield and Leeds areas.

The Working Group was given full details of the changes proposed by Arriva and discussions which had been held to address the issues arising from the forthcoming changes. These included:-

Sunday Services – Chequerfield – Discussions provided for the provision of an hourly service linked to the Castleford service.

Garforth Cliff – Proposed diversion of service 174 which would provide residents with four journeys per day to Garforth and Castleford. The diversion had withdrawn links to Castleford from the Aberford Road area. However patronage on that section was very low and that area was served by an hourly service to Garforth and Leeds.

The Working Group were also informed of two other outstanding matters arising from changes made earlier in the year –

Early morning services from West Bretton - Following concerns from residents in West Bretton regarding the lack of an early morning bus service, arrangements had now been made to start one journey on service 443 in West Bretton which would travel to Wakefield via Hall Green. An evening peak journey had also been facilitated by the diversion of a service 435 trip.

Loss of direct service between Airedale and Pontefract New College – Following complaints by students, discussions had been held with M Travel to award a short term contract for the Autumn Term in order to assess usage during that period.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the impact of the service changes implemented on 1 August 2008 be noted.
- (b) That the award of contracts as detailed in paragraph 2.5 of the submitted report be noted as being consistent with the Authority's policy for local bus services.

16. FIRST BRADFORD – BUS SERVICE CHANGES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on changes to tendered bus services arising from First Bradford service changes which commenced on 27 July 2008.

Following the changes, Metro had received letters of complaint from commuters regarding the withdrawal of peak trips between Bradford, Otley and Harrogate.

The Working Group was informed that various options had been considered including revisions to service 940 operated by TLC. However, the solutions to the problems caused by the withdrawal of the service were very expensive at over £20 per passenger trip for the 5 daily passengers. In line with the Authority's policy on the withdrawal of commercial services, immediate reinstatement of the service could not be justified. It was noted that travel between Otley and Harrogate continued to be possible utilising services 737 and 767 and that work would continue to identify possible cost effective solutions.

RESOLVED - That the impact of the service changes implemented on 27 July 2008 be endorsed.

17. BOXING DAY SERVICES 2008

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on proposed Boxing Day services for 2008.

It was reported that in 2007, Metro had taken a selective approach to service provision based upon retail activity in Leeds and Huddersfield.

Members were informed that significant expansion was not financially sustainable and therefore it was proposed to continue to focus on city/town centres where high levels of retail activity were planned. A copy of the services which operated last year and would continue to operate in 2008 were detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report. It was also proposed to run the following services subject to further discussions with the operators –

- Service 254 Cleckheaton – Leeds (extended to Dewsbury Hospital and Dewsbury)
- Service 167 Pontefract – Junction 31 Park – Castleford – Kippax – Leeds
- Service 760 Shipley – Greengates – Calverley – Leeds
- Service 444 Wakefield – Stanley – Rothwell – Leeds (this service only ran as far as Rothwell in 2007).

The Working Group were informed that an extensive promotional campaign had already commenced seeking financial contributions from the business/retail sector. It was also reported that the services would be publicised as early as possible to ensure maximum awareness amongst the travelling public in order to give every opportunity for the services to succeed. The Working Group suggested that the services be publicised in hospitals, health centres, supermarkets, public houses etc.

It was reported that a standard adult fare of £2.00 would be charged enabling passengers to travel all day on any service. Comment was made that if the trials continued to demonstrate strong passenger demand as in 2007, the incumbent operators would be approached with a view to operating the most successful routes on a commercial basis in future years.

RESOLVED - That the proposals to secure the operation of bus services on Boxing Day 2008 be endorsed.

18. BOSTON SPA HIGH SCHOOL – AWARD OF DEMINIMIS CONTRACTS

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the award of deminimis contracts for the operation of home to school services at Boston Spa High School and within school hours transport in the Leeds district.

It was reported that the current contract was awarded to First Leeds in 2003 for a 5 year period which expired at the end of the 2007/08 academic year. In view of the efficiency and stability of the previous arrangements, First had been approached to continue to run the service, but with significant improvements including low floor buses, CCTV, additional capacity to ensure no standing passengers and a designated route manager.

The Working Group were advised that although the bid was higher than RPI inflation, it was competitive and it was considered that it still represented value for money given the level of satisfaction with the current arrangements and the improvements now being offered.

RESOLVED - That the award of deminimis contracts to First Leeds be noted as being consistent with the Authority's policies for the provision of schools transport services.

19. BATCH 456 – BRADFORD DISTRICT – TENDERED SCHOOL TAXI CONTRACTS

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the results of tenders received in Batch 456 for the provision of school taxi and minibus services in the Bradford district, administered by

Metro on behalf of Bradford LEA as part of the Education Transport Agency Agreement.

It was reported that the contracts had been progressed on a minimum cost basis to secure the lowest cost for the batch and were to a mix of existing and new PCV minibus or licensed taxi and private hire operators. The awards to new operators were subject to a one term probationary period and satisfactory inspection by Metro and/or the Freight Transport Association dependent on the type of operation.

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