

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

**AT A MEETING OF THE TENDERED SERVICES WORKING GROUP
HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS ON
THURSDAY 17 DECEMBER 2009**

PRESENT: Councillor G Lowe (Chair)

Councillors E Firth, J Jarosz, A Pinnock and K Watson

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no personal or prejudicial interests declared by members.

49. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2009 be approved.

50. CALDERDALE TENDERED BUS SERVICES UPDATE

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress with the award of contracts to Centrebus Holdings Ltd for tendered bus services in the Calderdale area previously operated by First.

It was reported that Centrebus had submitted registration documents and was progressing vehicle purchase and the establishment of a depot in Elland. The company had also registered to operate the commercial sections of the part tendered routes between Halifax and Greetland and Halifax and Rochdale. Centrebus would also supplement Service 900 with additional off peak trips between Barkisland and Huddersfield to compensate for the loss of Service 343.

Members were advised that, as a result of the tender awards to Centrebus, First has advised it would reduce its resources in the Calderdale area. As a result, it was reported that the commercial service between Halifax and Kershaw Estate/Luddendenfoot would be withdrawn. Service to the area would be maintained by a tendered service, which would operate beyond Kershaw Estate to Booth and Midgley.

Members were also advised that in reducing the resources currently deployed on the tenders, First would undertake adjustments to other services, which involved retiming some commercial/tendered services. The most significant impact concerned the withdrawal of the evening commercial Service 560 to Rishworth after 1900 hours. Officers also reported that the Halifax Joint Committee (HJC) bus company intended to withdraw the bus service between

Halifax and Calderdale Hospital at the end of January 2010. Following urgent discussions the operator had agreed to continue to run it as an off peak service. This would result in a significant loss in service in the Skircoat Green area.

The revised network of services would be presented to a special meeting of Calderdale Passenger Consultative Committee on 18 December 2009.

RESOLVED - That the current position regarding the award of contracts to Centrebus be noted.

51. TENDERED BUS SERVICES TO BRADFORD ROYAL INFIRMARY

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the award of contracts for Services 619 and 629 and for the introduction of additional evening and Sunday journeys following requests from residents of Shipley.

Service 629

Members were informed that Service 629 had operated successfully since its inception in January 2008 funded by the “use it or lose it” budget for supplementary tendered services. The contract had been extended for a further 12 months from January 2009 pending further investigation of options to enhance links to Bradford Royal Infirmary (BRI). It was noted that the service had exceeded its original target and had greatly enhanced accessibility to the hospital. Residents and users of the service in the Shipley area had now requested that the service operate earlier in the morning, later into the day and on Sundays to serve visiting hours and early appointments at the hospital.

Service 619

Members were advised that daytime links between Cottingley and Bingley and links from the Aire Valley to the BRI would have been lost as a result of First’s proposal to withdraw Service 619 beyond the BRI in July 2009. Metro had agreed to fund the continuation of this section of the service until January 2010 pending a review of its operation. Passenger usage surveys had evidenced an average of 13 passengers per journey using Service 619 Monday to Friday and an average of 24 passengers per day on the journey between Cottingley and Bingley.

Details of the proposed services were outlined to members in the submitted report. It was reported that bids to operate the services had been received from 4 operators, with the most favourable bid being received from the Halifax Joint Committee (HJC) who proposed to operate the services utilising low floor single deck vehicles. It was, therefore, agreed to award a 3 year contract for the enhanced daytime service to HJC until January 2013 on the basis set out in the submitted report. Due to the level of demand for evening

and Sunday services being unknown at this stage, it was agreed to introduce evening and Sunday services on a trial basis between January and October 2010.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the award of a contract for an off peak Monday to Saturday bus service between Shipley, Bradford Royal Infirmary and Bingley, as set out in the submitted report, be noted as being consistent with the Authority's policy for the provision of local bus services.
- (b) That the award of a contract for evening and Sunday bus services between Shipley and Bradford Royal Infirmary on a trial basis between January and October 2010 be noted.

52. BATCH 482 - WAKEFIELD AREA TENDERED BUS SERVICES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the renewal of contracts for the operation of tendered bus services in the Wakefield area currently operated by Arriva.

It was reported that discussions had been held with Arriva to extend the current contracts of most services in the Batch for a further 12 months at current prices pending the outcome of the Kickstart bid. A number of complete services within the Batch stood alone from the Arriva commercial network and it was proposed to invite tenders for the operation of these services on an individual basis from the end of April 2010 to encourage competition from other bus operators.

The services concerned included 435/436 (Wakefield-Denby Dale-Holmfirth), 153 (Morley-Rothwell-Castleford) and 173/174/176 (Wakefield-Garforth-Wetherby/Castleford). It was noted that all the services were performing within Metro's patronage criteria and offered comparative value for money. The accessibility benefits of the services were outlined in the report and members further noted that no significant amendments to the current routes/timetables of the services would be undertaken.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That, in keeping with the Authority's policies for the provision of tendered local bus services, tenders be sought in accordance with the proposals outlined in the submitted report.
- (b) That the extension of the term of the current contract for services in Batch 482 until April 2011, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

53. BUS SERVICES TO LEEDS BRADFORD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the invitation of tenders for the operation of the network of tendered bus service to/from Leeds Bradford International Airport (LBIA).

It was reported that Metro and LBIA jointly funded the operation of Services 757 (Leeds-LBIA-Otley half hourly), 747 (Bradford-Yeadon-LBIA half hourly) and 737 (Bradford-Shipley-LBIA hourly). Members noted that the change in ownership of the airport had resulted in uncertainty regarding future arrangements of the services. However, LBIA's continued contribution to the services had been assured as a condition of the recent planning consent granted to enable the expansion of the terminal buildings. It was noted that a review of the airport services had been undertaken in partnership with the airport, which also took into consideration the local links the bus services provided. In this respect, details regarding the performance of the services and key issues arising from the appraisal were outlined to members.

The Airport Company had expressed a desire for higher profile bus links to the airport, in particular strongly branded services to Leeds and Bradford, together with local links to enable employees to access work at the airport. As the planning consent had secured the current level of financial contribution to local bus services, as well as securing additional funds to enable bus service enhancements when airport usage exceeds prescribed usage trigger levels, it was appropriate to establish a baseline service provision that could be expanded as airport usage grew.

It was noted that whilst strongly branded services would provide a more attractive and marketable service for air travellers, it was also important that local links provided by the services were safeguarded in the revised network of services. The Working Group was advised that public consultation events had been undertaken in Otley and Yeadon regarding the revised network. Comments from the consultation had been considered where possible and tenders would be invited for the following network of services:

- Leeds - Airport direct via Kirkstall Road (half hourly)
- Bradford - Yeadon - Airport direct via Greengates (hourly)
- Bradford - Shipley - Guiseley - Airport (hourly)
- Menston Station - Otley - Pool - Airport (half hourly)
- Guiseley Station - Yeadon - Airport (half hourly)
- Minor amendments to the route of 966 (Guiseley - Yeadon)

The revised network provided additional enhancements, which were outlined in the report. It was noted that the network would utilise the same number of buses as used at present and it would also fall within the current cost base. It was reported that Metro and LBIA would give consideration to the affordability of enhancements following the receipt of tenders. Members were informed that tenders would be issued during January 2010 for the services outlined above, with a view to reporting the outcome of the tenders to the February meeting of the Working Group.

RESOLVED - That, in keeping with the Authority's policies for the provision of tendered local bus services, tenders be sought in accordance with the proposals contained within the submitted report.

54. FIRST GROUP JANUARY SERVICE CHANGES

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding changes to First services planned for the end of January 2010, which First sought to implement in the Leeds and Bradford areas to address running time issues.

It was reported that some routes would be shortened. However, the major implication arising from the changes concerned the withdrawal of Service 33A from Menston village, which operated half hourly between Otley and Leeds via the A65 Kirkstall Road. First had proposed that the daytime service would now only operate on the A65. Tendered evening and Sunday trips would continue to operate via Menston. Members noted that the withdrawal of the service would require passengers to walk up to one mile for a direct bus service to Leeds and Guiseley, but that half hourly links to Otley would be retained by tendered Service 967. First had advised Metro that current passenger usage would not justify the cost of adding an additional bus to Service 33A to continue operation via Menston. In this respect, it was noted that this option would be too costly to maintain and Metro would, therefore, hold discussions with the operators of Services 653 (Bradford-Otley hourly) and X53 (Harrogate-Guiseley 2 hourly) to determine whether they would consider diverting via Menston to provide links through to Guiseley.

RESOLVED - That First's intended services changes in January 2010 be noted.

55. ARRIVA SERVICE CHANGES

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the withdrawal of bus services from the Chickenley area of Dewsbury and service change proposals for January 2010, as discussed at previous meetings.

Following the withdrawal of the hourly Service 116 (Wakefield-Ossett-Chickenley-Dewsbury) in July 2009, an option to divert Service 102 was explored and discussed by the Working Group in October 2009. However, following consultation with ward members it became apparent that local residents sought a link to Dewsbury rather than to Ossett and the option to divert Service 102 was deemed an inadequate solution. As a result of further discussions with Arriva it had now been agreed to run an hourly off peak service (Service 129) between Dewsbury and Chickenley on a 'use it or lose it' basis for 12 months as a de minimis contract.

Members were reminded that at the last meeting Arriva had sought to implement a cost reduction programme to maintain profitability through the

reduction/withdrawal of some commercial services throughout Arriva's operating area. It was reported that the issue of most concern was the withdrawal of Services 443/444 between Hall Green, Crigglestone and Barnsley, resulting in loss of bus service links for Woolley and West Bretton and cross boundary links to South Yorkshire. On a passenger trip basis the services did not meet the criteria for continued support. However, it was recognised that there would be significant accessibility consequences for local people in Woolley and West Bretton who would be left with no bus service. As a result, Metro had held discussions with Arriva, with a view to seeking to secure an hourly service to West Bretton and a two hourly service to Woolley. Arriva had proposed a timetable to provide a service that maintained links to Wakefield and Asda Durkar for the villages at a cost of £46,500 pa, which represented the marginal cost of extending existing commercial services. It was, therefore, agreed to award a de minimis contract for 12 months on this basis and to assess passenger usage of the service.

Members noted the regrettable loss of cross boundary links to South Yorkshire. It was reported that discussions had been held with South Yorkshire PTE with regard to retaining the link, however, both Metro and South Yorkshire PTE would not pursue this option, as the cost of retaining it was prohibitive.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the award of a de minimis contract to Arriva for the operation of Service 129 between Dewsbury and Chickenley until January 2011, as consistent with the Authority's policies for tendered bus services, be noted.
- (b) That the award of a de minimis contract to Arriva for the operation of Service 441/442 between Wakefield and Woolley/West Bretton until January 2011, as consistent with the Authority's policies for tendered bus services, be noted.

56. VARIATION TO CONTRACT: SERVICE 335 - HOLME VALLEY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the variation of the Service 335 contract to provide links between the Holme Valley Memorial Hospital and Holmfirth Bus Station.

Members were advised that withdrawal of Kirklees council funding for Service H8 at the end of July 2009 due to low patronage had resulted in considerable pressure from residents and local ward councillors to continue the service. Kirklees Council had subsequently agreed to extend funding for the service until the end of August 2009. However, an alternative funding package for the service could not be achieved and the service, therefore, ceased to operate.

Following strong lobbying from local ward members and the Holme Valley Parish Council for the service's restoration to provide valued accessibility to

the Holme Valley Memorial Hospital, opportunities to divert Service 335 to serve the hospital had been considered. The timetable for the service had been reviewed and five return journeys between Holmfirth bus station and the hospital would be provided by the current contractor, Stotts Coaches, from December 2009. In order to improve accessibility on the service for those passengers with mobility impairment, it was proposed that Metro increase the contract value and extend the term of the current contract. It was, therefore, proposed to vary the current contract to provide a single payment in December to Stotts Coaches to facilitate the purchase of two low floor vehicles and that the contract be extended until January 2014 at its present cost.

Members agreed that Service 335 offered a cost effective means of maintaining rural community links in Kirklees and that the enhancement proposed, which was also supported by local councillors and the Parish Council, would strengthen its role in this regard.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the amendment to the route of tendered Service 335 to include the Holme Valley Memorial Hospital, be noted as detailed in the submitted report.
- (b) That the adjustment to the value and term of the contract for the service to secure operation using low floor buses be noted.

57. SERVICE 500

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the variation of a contract to provide an additional early evening journey on Service 500 to assist commuters and students travelling between Keighley and Hebden Bridge following representations from the local communities.

Members noted that a later round trip would strengthen the role of Service 500 to provide for journeys to work and education. In this respect, discussions held with Transdev had identified that the operator could provide an additional round trip departing from Keighley at 1805 hours Monday to Saturday for a modest extra cost to the current contract price. It was reported that the present contract for the service expired in August 2010 and it was, therefore, agreed to introduce the additional trip from the January 2010 service change. The service would be subsequently monitored as part of the pre-tender value for money appraisal of the service.

RESOLVED - That the amendment of the current contract for Service 500 to include the provision of an additional early evening round trip, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

58. BUS SERVICES IN SCHOLES

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive regarding the latest position concerning bus service provision to the village of Scholes (Leeds).

As reported to previous meetings of the Working Group, withdrawal of Service 68/68A to Scholes, as a result of First's July service cuts, had left residents with a reduced service to Leeds, Seacroft and Cross Gates. Following significant criticism from residents First had agreed to divert one Service 64 (Service 64A) trip per hour into Scholes using residential roads to turn before returning to its usual route. At the same time Metro had also agreed to fund a 'use it or lose it' off peak service to provide links to Seacroft Medical Centre from July 2009 until January 2010.

Members were informed that due to objections from local residents regarding the use of the residential roads for the turning of Service 64A, a local ward councillor had asked Metro to consider the establishment of a shuttle service between Seacroft, Scholes and Cross Gates as an alternative to the present diversion of Service 64A. Local ward funds could contribute towards the cost of the shuttle service and, therefore, tenders had been invited on this basis. It was reported that under Batch 501 four bids had been received, but the most cost effective bid would have required Metro to contribute additional funds to support the service. Members had raised their concerns at a previous meeting of the Working Group with regard to the commitment of significant levels of public funds to resolve problems in the village, which was already served by buses. Further discussions were, therefore, held with the community regarding the implementation of an alternative route for Service 64A. It was confirmed that the new route had been accepted by most residents and that it would operate from 21 December 2009.

In this respect, members agreed not to proceed with the award of contracts for tenders received in Batch 501 as they did not represent value for money. They also agreed to extend the 'use it or lose it' period for Service 5A for a further 12 months, as the service was well used and provided bus service stability to the village.

RESOLVED -

- (a)** That the tenders received for Batch 501 (Seacroft-Scholes-Cross Gates) not be progressed, as they did not represent value for money.
- (b)** That the extension of the de minimis contract for the off peak extension of Service 5A until January 2011 be noted.

59. FREE TOWN/CITY BUS SCHEMES

The Working Group considered a progress report of the Passenger Transport Executive on development work towards a free town bus in Halifax and a

presumption against the development of any further free town/city bus schemes for the foreseeable future.

Members were advised that to-date Metro and the District Councils had successfully jointly funded free bus services in the city/town centres of Leeds, Huddersfield, Wakefield, Bradford and recently Dewsbury. It was reported that Metro was now progressing plans with Calderdale Council to establish a similar jointly funded service in Halifax to be implemented in 2010. Once the Halifax scheme became operational all the major centres in West Yorkshire would have a free town/city bus scheme.

Due to the present financial climate it was highly unlikely that Metro or the relevant District Councils would be in a position to fund further schemes in other towns. It was, therefore, agreed that there should be a presumption against any further free town/city bus schemes.

Members were informed that a further update regarding the Halifax free town bus scheme and the financial implications of the project would be reported to a future meeting of the Working Group.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That a further report be presented to a future meeting of the Working Group detailing proposals for a free town bus service scheme in Halifax.
- (b) That no further free town/city bus service schemes be developed.