

AGENDA ITEM No: 19

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

AT A MEETING OF THE RAIL WORKING GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON FRIDAY 20 MAY 2005

PRESENT: Councillor C Townley (Chair)
Councillors J S King, G Phelps and J Prestage
Councillor P McBride (Observer)

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Lyons.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

19. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2005 be approved.

20. NORTHERN FRANCHISE UPDATE

The Working Group considered a report on progress with the Northern Rail franchise and the current performance of local services.

Members noted that there were overall improvements with performance although cancellations on the Wakefield line had increased. It was noted that the line was one of the most congested and was used by a number of operators. A new initiative which involved joint working was developing a constructive approach to alleviate the problems and improve performance. It was noted that there had been a significant improvement in the numbers of strengthened trains and the modification to Class 333 units were on schedule.

It was reported that a new regime for measuring the maintenance and cleanliness of rail stations and trains would be introduced at the end of

May 2005 and the results would be reported to future meetings of the Working Group.

Members were advised that there would be no significant changes to rail services in West Yorkshire when the subsidiary timetable commenced on 12 June 2005 although it was noted that a revised timetable would be introduced on the Penistone Line from 19 September 2005 to overcome the effects of leaf fall.

The Working Group noted that the Penistone Line had been established as a Railway Development Company as part of the development of the pilot Community Rail Partnership. A business plan was being drawn up which would explore the opportunities to improve the sustainability of the line.

It was noted that Malcolm Brown, Area Director for Northern Rail was now in post and it was suggested that he be invited to attend a future meeting of the Working Group.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Area Director for Northern Rail, be invited to attend a future meeting of the Working Group.

21. THE RAILWAYS ACT 2005

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the implications of the Railways Act 2005.

It was reported that an overview of the impact of the Railways Act 2005 had been considered at the meeting of the Authority on 29 April 2005. The PTEs had contributed to the drafting of the Department for Transport's guidance note which set out how it was intended for PTEs to be involved in the franchise development and management process. The PTEs had sought to ensure that they continued to have an appropriate level of involvement in future franchises although the guidance note could be revised by the Department for Transport in the future.

Members noted that the Department for Transport was to commence a review of services in the Northern franchise for implementation after 2006 and the PTEs were pressing to remain a co-signatory for the duration of the franchise.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

22. ROLLING STOCK AND NETWORK DEVELOPMENTS

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on proposals for additional rolling stock, new stations and information regarding GNER's new franchise and Grand Central's proposals.

Rolling Stock

Members were advised that Metro had been in discussions with Yorkshire Forward about the possibility of funding for rolling stock and consultants were developing a detailed business case. It was possible that as part of the funding package, it could be necessary to seek local funding contributions through a fares increase and the funding available through the transfer of ownership of the three Class 321 trains.

The Working Group requested a report on comparison of fares with other areas to a future meeting of the Working Group.

Low Moor Station

It was noted that following the approval of the Authority to purchase land required in order to protect the site of the station, Northern Rail had been provided with an outline specification of the required timetable changes, which would include improvements to the Bradford to Manchester journey times.

New Stations

Members were updated on the position regarding the three priority sites identified in RailPlan 5, Horsforth Woodside, Kirkstall and Apperley Bridge.

The Working Group noted that Metro had been in discussion with the developer of Kirkstall Forge who was keen to include a new railway station as part of the development and would be prepared to make a substantial contribution to the cost of the station and/or the rolling stock required to serve it. The developer was undertaking further development work on the detailed station feasibility and further reports would be prepared to future meetings of the Working Group.

GNER Franchise /Grand Central Railway

Members were advised that the East Coast Main Line franchise had been awarded to GNER who were to work with the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) and Network Rail to undertake feasibility studies on the electrification of 15 miles of track between York and Doncaster. The

scheme would improve reliability and it was proposed to run 5 trains an hour to and from London Kings Cross. However, there was concern that there would be a reduction in the number of direct trains from Bradford and discussions would be held regarding optimising and improving direct services. It was noted that discussions had been held with GNER and the SRA regarding the possibility of continuing the proposed electrification to York and/or Selby. Metro had highlighted the strategic opportunities which would be created as part of the Northern Way and the Leeds City Region Development Plan. However, it was reported that the GNER proposals for additional services created a potential conflict with the proposals by Grand Central which would also require capacity on the East Coast Main Line.

It was reported that Grand Central had dropped its proposal for Trans-Pennine services and was focussing on the Bradford and Sunderland to London proposals. They had announced that they would seek to call the Bradford to London services at Pontefract Monkhill station.

Members expressed their concern that GNER's proposals centred on Leeds and connections to other regional cities were poor. The importance of providing better rail links to all areas of West Yorkshire was stressed. The Working Group noted that the next stage would be for the Office of Rail Regulation to issue a formal consultation on GNER's proposals. The Working Group considered Metro's response in light of the conflicts between the proposals and it was suggested that the response should set out the needs of West Yorkshire overall.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a report on fare comparisons with other areas be prepared for a future meeting of the Working Group.

23. RAILPLAN 6

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on Metro's revised rail strategy, RailPlan 6.

Members had received a copy of the draft RailPlan 6 and suggested several amendments. It was noted that this was an early draft which would be used to develop a consultation draft.

It was noted that further consultation would be held with rail user groups, the rail industry and the wider public via the mechanisms developed for the Local Transport Plan and a draft final version of RailPlan 6 would be brought to a subsequent meeting of the Working Group.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That subject to members' views, further consultation work be undertaken together with further testing of options.

24. STRATEGIC RAIL AUTHORITY – ‘RAILWAYS FOR ALL’ CONSULTATION

The Working Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the Strategic Rail Authority's (SRA) proposed accessibility strategy for the national rail network and specific implications for West Yorkshire.

The report also recommended the key issues to be highlighted in Metro's response to the SRA proposals and the future accessibility strategy to complement the SRA and existing industry proposals, which Metro would adopt as part of RailPlan 6. It was proposed to develop a strategy which identified where match funding could be used and to roll out the strategy and link it with Northern Rail's investments.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the issues to be raised in the response to the SRA's "Railways for All" strategy consultation be approved.
- (b) That the development of a future programme of accessibility improvements at local rail stations based upon the priorities identified in the report be approved.