

# WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

DATE: 24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2005

AGENDA ITEM NO: **26**

## SUBJECT: CAPITAL PROGRAMME

### Report of the Passenger Transport Executive

#### 1. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1.1. To seek approval to the replacement of life expired AccessBus vehicles and the second phase of the MyBus yellow Bus Project.

#### 2. INFORMATION

##### Yellow Bus Phase 2

- 2.1. In December 2004 Metro secured funding of £18.7 million for the MyBus Yellow Bus Project. The funding approval was in three phases, with release of funding being dependent upon good progress with the scheme and monitoring of outcomes to demonstrate that targets were being met.
- 2.2. There has been close liaison with the Department for Transport (DfT) on the first phase of the scheme. The release of funding of £7.315 million for the second phase was announced on 3 February 2005. This funding covers the procurement of a further 60 vehicles and the highways measures and staffing costs associated with the project.
- 2.3. There has also been close liaison with the five Local education Authorities on the selection of schools for MyBus services. This liaison has also included reporting to the Education Transport Liaison Group.
- 2.4. The implementation of the scheme is being overseen by the Authority's Bus Working Group, who considered a detailed report on MyBus vehicles at their meeting of 22 June 2005. The approach considered by the Working Group as being most financially advantageous involved the procurement of 60 low floor BMC buses for Phase 2 of the project).
- 2.5. The further DfT funding also covers the costs of related highway works and staff resources, which has been considered by the Authority's Staffing Standing Group.
- 2.6. Formal approval is now sought to the Phase 2 expenditure of £7.315 million, which would be fully funded through Section 56 grant from the Department for Transport.

- 2.7. The scheme continues to attract national attention. On 16 June the Sutton Trust launched a report calling for a national Yellow Bus scheme through an approach based upon the model pioneered by Metro

#### AccessBus Vehicles

- 2.8. The AccessBus fleet comprises 37 vehicles, of which four vehicles are held as “spares” to facilitate the robust delivery of the service. The current fleet includes 19 low floor buses purchased in 1999/2000. The other 18 vehicles are high-floor and are fitted with wheelchair lifts. These older vehicles are at or approaching the end of their working life and require replacement in 2005/06 and 2006/07.
- 2.9. The AccessBus vehicle replacement programme was deferred pending the Best Value Review of Accessible Transport, which has now been completed and reported to the Authority. The Review endorses the continuation of the service with improvements through a Best Value Improvement Plan.
- 2.10. The condition of the AccessBus fleet is now causing significant operational problems as four vehicles are no longer roadworthy and one other cannot be used on a daily basis.
- 2.11. Approval is sought to implement the vehicle replacement programme through the use of Local Transport Plan funding. This replacement programme would involve the replacement of fifteen of the tail-lift buses purchased before 1997/98, with the other three retained as spares.
- 2.12. The proposed replacement programme comprises two phases, as set out below:
- **Phase 1 – 2005/06 – Eight vehicles** – comprising replacements of the seven oldest N registration vehicles which entered service in 1996 and one of the 1998 R registered vehicles that has experienced major corrosion and has been taken off the road pending replacement.
  - **Phase 2 – 2006/07 – Seven vehicles** – comprising the remaining high floor vehicles, which are at the end of their useful life.
- 2.13. The condition of the fleet has been reported to the Bus Working Group who endorsed commencement of a procurement programme (which involved no commitment to purchase) in parallel with the completion and Authority consideration of the Best Value Review. Competitive tenders were sought for low-floor vehicles with ramps side access, capable of carrying a minimum of 12 passengers (3 of whom may be in fixed wheelchair) with safe storage facilities for shopping and maximum dimensions of 8500 mm body length and 2500 mm body width in order to access narrow streets. Two bids were received, both meeting the tender specification, from Optare and Mellor Coachcraft.
- 2.14. Both vehicles have been closely inspected and successfully road-tested to confirm their ability to negotiate narrow streets and access residential

properties. The vehicle offering the best value for money is that offered by Mellor Coachcraft and approval is sought to acquire 15 of these vehicles.

### **3. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. The capital costs associated with Phase 2 of the MyBus scheme would be met in full by DfT Section 56 Grant of £7.315 million.
- 3.2. The capital cost (£1.189 million) of replacing AccessBus vehicles in 2005/06 and 2006/07 would be met from West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan block funding.

### **4. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. There are no staffing implications.

### **5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. The MyBus project involves the use of low-floor accessible vehicles.
- 5.2. AccessBus provides a service to people who are unable to use conventional public transport.

### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1. That the Authority approves expenditure of £7.315 million on MyBus Phase 2 and £1.189 million to replace life expired AccessBus vehicles as set out in this report.

Director General  
West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive

9 June 2005