

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**REPORT FOR RESOLUTION****COMMITTEE: BUS NETWORK AND PTE SERVICES****DATE: 7th AUGUST 2009****SUBJECT: YELLOW SCHOOL BUS DEVELOPMENT****REPORT OF: INTERIM BUS AND RAIL DIRECTOR, GMPTE**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the review of Yellow School Bus services and to request their endorsement of the consequent changes to existing services, the introduction of two new Yellow School Buses in Wigan and one in Stockport.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:-

1. Note the review process including stakeholder consultation.
2. Endorse the resulting modification to existing Yellow School Bus routes and services and continued expansion of the scheme.
3. Endorse the procurement and deployment of two further Yellow School Bus utilising Wigan Transport Infrastructure Fund monies and agree to fund operating costs and on-going repair and maintenance.
4. To seek agreement to procure and deploy a further Yellow School Bus in Stockport subject to the August meeting of the Authority approving funding of vehicle.
5. Note the forecasted net annual reduction in expenditure on school transport of £86,931 resulting from these changes.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Reports to Transport Network Committee - 20th February 2009 and 27th March 2009

CONTACT OFFICERS

Paul Lucas: 0161 244 1645 paul.lucas@gmppte.gov.uk
Steve Wurr: 0161 244 1653 steve.wurr@gmppte.gov.uk
Michael Mitchell: 0161 244 1732 michael.mitchell@gmppte.gov.uk

YELLOW SCHOOL BUS DEVELOPMENT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report informs members of the review process and the consequent changes, where necessary, to existing Yellow School Bus (YSB) service routes to ensure that they continue to deliver optimum benefits.
- 1.2 Members are also asked to endorse the introduction of three further YSBs, two in Wigan, and one in Stockport from September 2009, bringing the total number of services in operation to 42 serving 26 schools in 9 districts.

2. YSB Scheme Objectives

- 2.1 The main objectives of both existing and new YSB services remain to:
 - Meet significant unmet demand;
 - Deliver modal shift from car;
 - Reduce anti social behaviour (ASB) and
 - Reduce social deprivation.

3. Annual Review of YSB Services

- 3.1 Each year all existing YSB services are reviewed against these objectives using the following information:
 - Boarding and alighting counts;
 - Full YSB monitoring survey and questionnaire (including monitoring of service operation);
 - Ticket machine data;
 - Comments received, from students, parents (including on the application questionnaire) schools and service providers;
 - Performance targets: % pass take-up, % seats taken-up, ASB, and modal shift from car;
 - Ad-hoc observations;
 - Information on proposed changes to school locations or catchments from schools and LEAs, for example under Building Schools for the Future.
 - Plots of pupil postcodes and Indices of Multiple Deprivation data;
 - Current and proposed contracted conventional home to school and general bus network;
 - ASB incident reports and summaries to identify hotspots;
 - Input from district officers on school travel plans and planned infrastructure and highway improvements.
- 3.2 Analysis of this information will identify some services as currently carrying, or likely in the future to carry, fewer passengers due to:-

- reduction in the number of or low take-up of passes by pupils in the catchment area;
 - school re-location or down-sizing;
 - infrequent use by pass holders or
 - overlap with other home to school and general transport network links;
- 3.3 Conversely, other existing services or potential new links will be identified as currently or likely in the future to carry more passengers.
- 3.4 Any existing or potential new services identified in this way will be investigated in more detail to quantify or estimate the extent of any current or future change.
- 3.5 Separately, the effectiveness of services in addressing ASB or social deprivation will also be examined.

4. Service Design

- 4.1 Where this process identifies the need for a new service or the revision or replacement of existing services, routes are designed to maximise the number of pupils who will benefit, while not making the route excessively circuitous.
- 4.2 For service planning purposes, experience with existing services indicates that a take-up of at least 66% of students resident in the service catchment area should be assumed. After allowing for day to day absences of pass holders due to sickness, work experience and before or after school activities this translates to a target minimum average load per trip of 50 pupils for each single YSB journey from an available seating capacity of 67.
- 4.3 Where services are identified as failing to reach their patronage targets, or are likely to do so in the future, due to changing catchments or other factors, the following actions are available:
- Redesign or re-route the existing service;
 - Re-assign the YSB vehicle to either a different service at the same school or a different school and service in the same district; or
 - Re-assign the vehicle to a different school and service with a different district.
- 4.4 Depending on the capital funding source of the vehicle concerned the latter option may not be possible. For example, Wigan Transport Infrastructure Funded vehicles are restricted to Wigan district catchments.

5. Changes to existing Yellow School Bus Services

5.1 Following the 2009 annual review and based on the above analysis, officers propose to introduce the following service changes from September 2009:

- To discontinue the Y92 Hattersley to Alder Community High School (Tameside), due to current low patronage and projected reduced future demand from the catchment, from September 2009. Service Y93, also serving Hattersley to Alder Community High School, will be extended to cover the existing Y92 route, accommodating all students
- The YSB vehicle released from the Y92 route will be re-assigned to the 790 South Reddish and Dane Bank to St Thomas More RC High School (Tameside) service, replacing the current conventional bus operated enhanced service.
- To discontinue the Y79 Beswick to Cedar Mount High School (Manchester), due to current low patronage and projected reduced demand, from the catchment from September 2009. Service Y76 Miles Platting to Cedar Mount High School will be extended and diverted to cover the existing Y79 route, accommodating all students.
- The YSB vehicle released from the Y79 route will be re-assigned to provide a joint service from Clayton and Miles Platting to Our Ladies High School (Manchester) and North Ridge SEN High School (Manchester). This service replaces the current conventional vehicle operated 686 School Bus service. The extension to serve the SEN school arises from regular discussions with officers of Manchester City Council who indicated a requirement for these students, with Special Educational Needs to travel, for which a payment of £9k will be made to GMPTE reflecting the savings made by Manchester City Councils SEN Transport provision budget
- The route of the Y96 Standish Community High School (Wigan) will be shortened due to excess demand. All students on the withdrawn section of route will be covered by extended Service Y70 to the same school.

6. Proposal for new YSB services – Funded by Wigan Transport Infrastructure fund (2009/10)

6.1 Wigan Council has again given the purchase of YSBs a high priority. In addition to the 3 yellow buses introduced in April 2009, they have confirmed the allocation of more of their Transport Infrastructure (mini TIF) funding to procure a further 2 yellow school buses to enter service in September 2009.

6.2 GMPTE officers have consulted with Wigan Council's Engineering and Education colleagues and following the application of the selection process

described above, have jointly agreed the prioritised proposals for two new home to school services. These services to Shevington High School and Bedford High School will commence from the start of the Autumn term in September 2009.

Shevington High School

- 6.3 The proposed Shevington High School service will replace the current conventional bus operated 935 school service and will operate from Wigan Bus Station, also serving the Beech Hill area. This school has been identified as currently having high levels of parental school runs, despite the introduction of a school travel plan, resulting in congestion around the school site. Car journeys equate to 33.2% of pupil home to school trips.

Bedford High School

- 6.4 The proposed Bedford High School service will provide students with a new direct bus service in place of their current journey which involves two service buses with an interchange at Leigh Bus Station at peak times. This service will run from Plank Lane and serve the Common Lane area of Leigh. Anti-social behaviour by students from this school has been identified as a concern, with 11 incidents of ASB during the 2008/9 school year. In addition, the school has been identified as having medium levels of school run car use, notwithstanding on-going work on a school travel plan. Car journeys equate to 17% of pupil home to school trips.

Financial Implications

- 6.5 Table 1 below shows that the changes to existing services, together with the introduction of the two new services in Wigan will, when revenue from fares is taken into account, result in an estimated net budget saving of £58,200 per annum. In addition the Manchester LEA contribution of £9,000 to the Y92 service for SEN Pupils, results in a net annual reduction in the school transport budget of £67,200.

7. Proposal for new YSB service – Funded from SEMMMS Minor budget 2009/10

Reddish Vale Technology College

- 7.1 A proposed Reddish Vale Technology College service will operate from the Brinnington Estate area. Brinnington has a high indices of multiple deprivation score. Normally this would be reflected in lower than average school attendance levels but research shows that Reddish Vale currently has a 92% attendance from the Brinnington area, although attractive transport links such as Yellow School Bus have the potential to improve, particularly where the alternative walk and service bus modes are unattractive. Reddish Vale has undertaken and completed a full school travel plan.
- 7.2 Because the PTE's capital settlement is fully committed for this year, officers have, as in previous occasions, sought alternative funding from other sources, in particular local transport infrastructure fund and SEMMMS.

7.3 Subject to the agreement of this Committee approval will be sought at the forthcoming meeting of the Authority to fund this vehicle from the 2009/10 SEMMMS Minor schemes budget.

7.4 A new Yellow School Bus will cost £150k including Repair and Maintenance cover.

7.5 However, a former manufacturer's demonstrator vehicle of the same model is currently available at a cost of £101k including 4 years Repair and Maintenance. Contract operating costs for a Yellow School Bus would be around £25k p.a. This is 18k less than the £43k cost of either of the existing double deck or coach contracts due to the operator not meeting Yellow School Bus vehicle procurement maintenance costs.

8. Summary of Financial Implications

8.1 The table below compares the 2009/10 operating costs for existing conventional bus services with the estimated operating costs for the proposed replacement Yellow School Bus provision for this service. An overall revenue cost saving of £83,931 is estimated and based upon anticipated savings from revised contract costs at contract renewal.

8.2 Table 1 - Revenue costs of new and revised existing Yellow School Bus services

Service	Current gross costs £pa	Proposed Gross cost £pa	Net overall gross savings (cost) £pa
Y79 (790) St Thomas More RC High School	43,757	Nil (re-deployed from former Y92)	43,757
Y92 (686) Our Ladies High School/North Ridge SEN School	37,616	Nil (re-deployed from former Y79)	46,616
Y60 (935) Shevington High School	36,658	24,700	11,958
Y59 Bedford High School	N/A	24,700	(24,700)
Y58 Reddish Vale Technology College	43,000	24,700	18,300
Total saving	161,031	74,100	86,931

9 Summary

- 9.1 As reported to the Transport Network Committee Meeting of 20th February 2009 Yellow School Bus home to school services continue to produce very successful results, reducing ASB, and increasing mode shift to public transport.
- 9.2 This report reviews the selection process for new services and the comprehensive annual review undertaken of existing services. Furthermore, additional education related journeys are also being provided.
- 9.3 It also proposes the use of Authority monies to supplement mini TIF funding in order to provide an opportunity to further increase the number of Yellow School Buses in the County thereby contributing to the achievement of the PTA's aspirations, albeit these costs are more than balanced by savings resulting from the changes described in this report.

10 Recommendations

- 10.1 Please see front sheet for recommendations.

Michael Renshaw
Interim Bus and Rail Director