

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**REPORT FOR RESOLUTION****COMMITTEE:** Bus Network and GMPTE Services**DATE:** 6th August 2010**SUBJECT:** Yellow School Bus Development**REPORT OF:** 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:-

1. Note the review process including stakeholder consultation.
2. Approve the resulting changes to existing Yellow School Bus routes and services.
 - Withdraw the North Reddish to St Anne's RC High School service.
 - Amend the Syke Chapel to Falinge Park High School service.
 - Amend the Hattersley to Alder Community High School service.
 - Amend the Wigan to Shevington High School service.
 - Amend the Atherton to St Mary's Catholic High School services.
 - Introduce a Norden to St Cuthbert's RC High School service.
 - Introduce a Brinnington to Reddish Vale Technology College service.
3. Note the estimated annual reduction in the school transport budget of £7,635 (Net) resulting from these changes.
4. Note that, at the request of the Chair, officers will arrange a visit to a local school to observe Yellow School Bus services in operation.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Reports to Transport Network Committee - 20th February 2009 and 27th March 2009
Reports to Bus Network Committee – 7th August 2009 and 13th November 2009

CONTACT OFFICERS

Michael Renshaw	0161 244 1026	michael.renshaw@gmppte.gov.uk
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. Background

- 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.

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 identifies 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 or non use by pass holders or
- overlap with suitable alternative home to school and general transport network links;

- 3.3 Conversely, other existing services or potential new links may 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 are 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 is also 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.
- 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 in 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. Current Service Assessment

- 5.1 Although results from this year's annual review are encouraging, some services have been identified which require changes. Overall average patronage across the fleet for each journey is 46, with some services averaging 59, against an average of 58 passes issued, equating to 87% of capacity. The two poorest performing services, for which changes are proposed below, had 35 passes issued for service Y83 Falinge Park and 56 for Y86 St Anne's. However despite GMPTE officers undertaking encouragement of use marketing campaigns jointly with all schools, and particularly targeting these services, actual patronage averaged only 15 and 22 per journey respectively.

5.2 Anti Social Behaviour at Schools served by Yellow School Buses remains stable, with no reported incidents onboard Yellow School Buses this school year. 49 incidents have been reported across 28 schools served by Yellow School Buses. However, these have occurred on alternative conventional schools services or been attributed to students identified as from these particular schools. Thus the incident is logged against that school.

6. Changes to existing Yellow School Bus Services

6.1 Following the 2010 annual review and based on the above analysis, officers propose to introduce the following service changes, targeted at the most poorly performing services, from September 2010:

6.1.1 Withdrawal of Services

- To discontinue the Y86 North Reddish to St Anne's RC High School service in Stockport, due to current low patronage projected reduced future demand from the catchment from September 2010 and the availability of an existing high frequency commercial bus service.
- To withdraw the existing Y83 Syke Chapel to Falinge Park High School service in Rochdale due to current low patronage and projected reduced future demand from the catchment. Due to the lack of any suitable current general bus service, this will be replaced with a lower capacity conventionally operated home to school bus service.

6.1.2 Amendments to Services

- The route of the Y93 Alder Community High School service in Tameside will be extended to John Kennedy Road area to serve more students.
- The route of the Y60 Shevington High School service in Wigan will be re-routed to serve the Kitt Green area where further student demand has been identified due to the phased closure of the PEMBEC High School.
- The route of the Y89 St Mary's Catholic High School service in Wigan will be shortened due to excess demand. All students on the withdrawn section of route will be served by the Y90 Yellow School Bus Service to the same school.

6.1.3 Introduction of New Services

- The YSB vehicle released from the Y86 route will be re-assigned to the 846 Brinnington to Reddish Vale Technology College (Stockport) service, replacing the current conventional bus operated enhanced service. This will compliment extensive work being undertaken in partnership with the Brinnington Education Achievement Partnership to encourage school attendance and therefore be reflected in an increase in patronage on school services. The vehicle currently employed on the 846 service will be used to cover the recently de-registered commercial 808 Lane Ends to Marple Hall School avoiding any subsequent additional service replacement costs.

- The YSB vehicle released from the Y83 route will be re-assigned to the 882 Norden to St Cuthbert's RC High School (Rochdale) service, replacing the current conventional bus service and addressing issues of Anti Social Behaviour currently experienced on the 882 service.

6.2 As a result of these changes there is an estimated annual reduction in the general school transport budget of £7,635 (Net). In addition the changes have avoided the cost of replacing a de-registered commercial schools service within the existing schools transport budget. The Yellow School Bus school transport budget remains unchanged.

7 Visit to see Yellow School Bus services in operation

7.1 At the request of the Chair, officers are arranging a visit for Members to see Yellow School Bus services in operation during the Autumn term. Officers will endeavour to include a discussion with students and school staff on their views of the service. Further details will be circulated in due course

8 Summary

8.1 In general Yellow School Bus home to school services continue to produce generally successful results, reducing ASB, and increasing mode shift to public transport.

8.2 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 Recommendations

9.1 Please see front sheet for recommendations.

Michael Renshaw
Bus and Rail Director