

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY, 26 MAY 2023 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS**

Present:

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe (Chair)	Bradford Council
Councillor Manisha Roma Kaushik (Deputy Chair)	Kirklees Council
Councillor Peter Carlill (Deputy Chair)	Leeds City Council
Councillor Peter Clarke	Bradford Council
Councillor Hassan Khan	Bradford Council
Councillor Taj Salam (Transport Engagement Lead)	Bradford Council
Councillor Peter Caffrey	Calderdale Council
Councillor Aafaq Butt (Transport Engagement Lead)	Kirklees Council
Councillor Martyn Bolt	Kirklees Council
Councillor Eric Firth	Kirklees Council
Councillor Matthew McLoughlin	Kirklees Council
Councillor Neil Buckley	Leeds City Council
Councillor Helen Hayden	Leeds City Council
Councillor Annie Maloney	Leeds City Council
Councillor Eleanor Thomson	Leeds City Council

In attendance:

Dave Pearson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Dave Haskins	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Mick Bunting	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Rachel Jones	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Mark Auger	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alexandra Carpenter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Vicky Dumbrell	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
David Gill	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ian Parr	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

65. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hutchinson, Cllr Jones, Cllr Ross-Shaw, Cllr Scullion, Cllr Wilson, and Amir Hussain.

66. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

8. Bus Service Improvement Plan Update.
Councillor Taj Salam, Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Cllr Taj Salam disclosed his employment with First Bus.

67. Exempt information - possible exclusion of the press and public

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press and public.

68. Minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee held on 10 March 2023

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee held on 10 March 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair.

69. Rail Strategy Consultation

Transport Committee members received a report from the Rail Development Manager which sought approval to commence the public consultation of the emerging Rail Strategy in summer 2023.

Officers noted that investment in the rail network was vital to meet the challenges faced by passengers and to achieve a net-zero carbon economy. Transport Committee members had provided feedback on the strategy through dedicated workshops, and external partners and stakeholders were also consulted. The strategy would feed into the Local Transport Plan and inform future developments alongside other strategies up to 2040. If approved, consultation was proposed to begin with statutory consultees, industry members, and rail user groups in June 2023. Members of the public would be able to participate in the consultation via the 'Your Voice' platform.

Members queried if biodiversity was taken into consideration, officers responded that it is assessed within the Combined Authority appraisal process, as well as by the processes of industry partners.

Members requested in-person sessions to consult those who may not be online, officers agreed to take the matter into consideration. Members suggested the local transport forums would be a suitable opportunity to discuss the rail strategy.

Members asked if freight transport was covered by the strategy, officers confirmed a separate freight strategy was in development, a key element of which being rail. The freight strategy was slightly further behind in the development process and should be ready towards 2024.

Members questioned if there could be a more user-friendly version of the rail strategy as part of the consultation, officers agreed to feed the suggestion back to the rail policy team.

Resolved: That the consultation of the emerging Rail strategy in June be approved and agreed.

70. Local Transport Forum Arrangements 2023/24

Transport Committee members received a report from the Director of Transport Operations and Passenger Experience to establish arrangements for the Local Transport Forums in 2023/24.

Officers noted the role of Transport Engagement Lead was created and approved in 2022, with the aim of leading on engagement in their district with the transport portfolio holder, facilitating joint working with district partners, and leading two public forums per municipal year to discuss local transport matters. A senior officer will be allocated to support each forum and work with local councils. Forums would not have a set agenda or receive formal support from the Combined Authority, in favour of a more flexible format where relevant issues could be raised by the Engagement Lead or attendees.

Members requested that a minimum of two meetings be held, with the potential for more should circumstances dictate. Members also queried if items such as active travel could be a standing item to ensure some discussion takes place at each meeting. Members responded that there was no restriction on the number of meetings or the discussion topics, as long as the Engagement Leads and portfolio holders were in agreement and the appropriate resources were available. Members noted the value that WYCA and district council officers bring to a meeting in their ability to respond to local issues. Members further highlighted the need for an open and inclusive forum to accommodate the widest range of potential attendees.

Resolved: That the arrangements for Local Transport Forums in 2023/24 be approved as set out in the submitted report.

71. Transport Policy Update

Transport Committee members received a report from the Director of Transport Policy and Delivery to provide a quarterly update on relevant transport policy developments.

Officers noted some of the key updates since the Transport Committee previously met. The Transport for the North board met in March, and agreed the draft Strategic Transport Plan to enter into public consultation. The consultation would take place over summer 2023 with the finalisation at the end of the year. A public consultation session was scheduled to be held at the Queen's hotel, Leeds, on 5 July 2023.

The Rail north committee met in February and discussed ongoing frustrations with TransPennine Express. Other topics included the Manchester taskforce, east coast main line, connectivity between Leeds and Sheffield, and a strategic rail report. The next meeting of the Rail North Committee was scheduled to take place on 7 June 2023.

Following the publication of the UK Electric Vehicle Strategy in March 2022, the government announced £450 million of funding to facilitate the installation of charging infrastructure for residential areas with no off-street parking. The Combined Authority was working closely with districts to

identify suitable locations. Approximately £17 million of funding was awarded, which may be increased subject to successful private sector investment. The full business case was expected to be completed by November 2023, and subsequently brought for approval by the Transport Committee.

West Yorkshire received an air quality grant as part of the Public Particulate Improvement Program, the purpose of which was to improve the understanding and awareness of air particulates, enhance monitoring, create a dashboard for public information, and improve knowledge of particulate sources and their impact. Engagement will be undertaken with the West Yorkshire Low Emission Strategy Group and public health professionals.

Officers provided a verbal update regarding the Active Travel Fund 4 scheme, previously discussed by Transport Committee members in February 2022. The Combined Authority has been allocated approximately £17.5 million to deliver new cycle lanes, walkways, and towpaths. The bid was assessed by Active Travel England, and when combined with additional existing funds would total over £21 million for active travel in West Yorkshire. The Chair noted that she had held a meeting with the Chief Executive of Active Travel England to discuss the needs of districts to decide their own local priorities.

Members questioned how many charging points could be delivered with the awarded funding, officers clarified between 500 and 1,000 were possible, subject to the total available funding and suitable charging options. Members raised concerns that some EV charging points have created further issues with taxi-only parking and vandalism of infrastructure. Members responded there was still much to learn on the matter as local areas present different issues.

Resolved: That the updates provided in the submitted report be noted.

72. Bus Service Improvement Plan Update

Transport Committee members received a report from the Interim Head of Transport Policy to provide and update on the state of the local bus network, ongoing delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan revenue programme, and request the approval of further funding to support transport programmes.

Officers noted that following the pandemic, passenger levels had stabilised at around 85% compared to pre-pandemic figures. There was a desire to increase patronage using the available BSIP funding by prioritising cheaper fares, increasing service frequencies, and introducing new services. The Mayor's Fares scheme has supported up to half a million journeys each week, and saved 20% per journey on average in comparison with fares before the implementation of the scheme.

The Combined Authority was working with operators to identify improvements to services through the creation of a shortlist of ten routes.

Progress was made more difficult due to potential cuts from operators who still require further funding to continue to run services at the current standard. Three enhanced services were planned for introduction including in Keighley, Shipley, and Halifax, with more routes potentially introduced with future funding.

Officers noted the decision of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority on 25 May regarding bus reform, which concluded that bus franchising was the preferred option subject to audit and consultation. A final decision on bus reform will be made in March 2024.

Officers noted that government support provided bus operators at pre-pandemic rates was due to expire at the end of June 2023, with the uncertainty surrounding an extension causing concern among operators. The government has agreed to provide funding to support the £2 fare cap outside of London, though this does not apply to West Yorkshire since the Mayor's Fares initiative was already in place. £160 million has been provided to local transport authorities to improve services and infrastructure, with a further £140 million given directly to operators to protect against potential service cuts. Operators have welcomed the funding, however, it was still less than anticipated, resulting in the need for further service reductions. Officers suggested a workshop of Transport Committee members to take place in early June to discuss the ramifications of the announcement and potential next steps.

Members noted that despite the efforts of the Combined Authority and bus operators, the enhanced partnership model has not delivered the required network improvements and added that some operators were unwilling to cooperate at all and franchising would help to remove potential barriers. The Chair responded there has been a long history of partnership working but the issues raised by members showed that in any case, improved cooperation is required to meet the ambitions for the bus network.

Members queried the passenger numbers implied by the 85% figure compared to pre-pandemic levels, and if a previous 10% growth target had been abandoned. Officers responded that the data suggested growth in passenger numbers, but the pandemic made meeting the target set in 2019 challenging. Direct comparisons could not be reliably made due to the differences in commuting trends both pre and post pandemic. Members added that the pandemic was a detrimental factor, however growth has increased over the longer term and the focus should remain on long-term sustainability and attracting new passengers to buses. Officers noted that Transport Focus had been conducting research into new passenger trends which could be brought to a future meeting.

Members noted that the tap-on tap-off system was not supported by all operators, leading to confusion among passengers and a hesitancy to use bus services. Members also highlighted the system was not always clear to those who are neurodivergent

Members questioned if BSIP funding was being used to subsidise bus services when members were previously advised the funding was separate.

Officers noted that recent updates to legislation had made it possible to use BSIP funding to support services, and officers were working through the potential implications.

Members queried if the issue of 'ghost buses' which appear on real-time display systems but do not arrive was ongoing. Officers clarified that work was being undertaken to address the issue, though it was difficult to address since the information system relies upon updates from operators if services were cancelled.

Resolved: That the BSIP programme update and funding approval request (covered as part of Item 11) be noted.

73. Passenger Experience Update

Transport Committee members received a report from the Interim Director of Transport Operations and Passenger Experience to provide an update on the performance of the transport network in West Yorkshire, and on passenger-facing activity.

Officers noted that TransPennine Express had recently been taken under the control of the government's operator of last resort due to continued cancellations of services. At the time of the meeting, the figures did not show any improvement but it was hoped that improvements would become apparent with time. Members responded that despite the change of control, the same staff were still in place and commuters had already lost confidence in the rail service.

Resolved: That updates provided on the Passenger Experience in West Yorkshire provided in the submitted report be noted.

74. Review of MyBus Primary School Services

The Chair noted that the Combined Authority had sustained funding for several years, however, the current financial position has made it difficult to continue to provide support. Officers noted that funding was previously agreed in 2019, and set out the guidelines for services and how value for money was assessed. Though most secondary school services were full, some primary school services were relatively empty, and therefore did not provide good value for money. Underused services were identified, and consultations undertaken with schools to identify the available options.

Members raised concerns about the number of affected services, particularly those serving rural areas, and queried if a more pragmatic approach could be taken. Officers responded the services did not represent value for money and there was not enough funding to continue operation, and added that services had been adapted wherever possible but in most cases alternative travel methods were accessible.

Resolved: That the actions being taken to ensure the provision of MyBus primary school services remains within the policy guidelines set by the Committee in 2019 be noted.

75. Project Approvals

Bus Network Plan and Enhanced Bus Services

The Transport Committee considered the scheme which aimed to expand the core network of bus services in West Yorkshire.

Combined Services and Assets Database (CoSA) Replacement

The Transport Committee considered a scheme to procure and implement a replacement for the Combined Services and Assets (CoSA) system. Officers explained the new system would replace the current outdated system, and facilitate better management of the network. The new system would be fit for purpose, more efficient, and provide better value for money.

Members questioned if the scheme would improve the real-time information screens. Officers responded the real-time information system was different, but that it would link in to the CoSA replacement which would be beneficial if implemented.

Leeds City Bikes

The Transport Committee considered a scheme to introduce an electric bike (e-bikes) share/hire scheme in Leeds city centre and surrounding areas.

Officers explained the scheme had been given approval by the Combined Authority at an earlier stage. The e-bikes would be electric, making them more viable for shorter journeys and accessible to people. Approximately 650 e-bikes and 10 tricycles would be available, with 140 docking stations around the city centre, the locations of which was to be confirmed. The full fleet was targeted to be in place by March 2024. The equipment would be owned by Leeds, with the operator receiving 25% of profits to reinvest into the scheme. The operator has multiple similar schemes around the country, giving a high confidence the scheme will be a success.

Members suggested that further development of this scheme to other West Yorkshire areas would be beneficial for the region. Members agreed that they have found them useful and it would be a good incentive for members and officers to set a positive example.

Members queried the boundaries of the scheme and how users could monitor the battery levels of the e-bike. Members responded that the boundary extends for some distance outside of the city centre, but does not reach the outskirts of Leeds. Users may monitor the battery levels of e-bikes through the companion app in which has been available for use by service users in other authorities.

Members questioned if the e-bikes would be allowed in pedestrianised areas, members responded that the cycle restrictions already in place would also apply to the e-bikes. Officers added that training and guidance was

accessible within the companion app, and wider cycle training remains available from several avenues.

Bus Service Improvement Plan - Mayor's Fares

The Transport Committee considered a scheme to provide a further £11.2 million of funding to continue the Mayor's Fares scheme through to the end of March 2024, subject to further decisions by government.

Thorpe Park Rail Station

The Transport Committee considered a scheme to deliver a new rail station at Thorpe Park on the Leeds to York section of the Trans-Pennine railway.

Members questioned if there was any section 106 funding contributing towards the scheme, officers clarified that contributions have already been captured in the development of the scheme, however conversations were ongoing about further potential funding.

TCF Halifax Bus Station

The Transport Committee considered a scheme to redevelop Halifax bus station into a more modern, fit for purpose, and environmentally friendly station through several avenues of improvement. Work on the station began on site in September 2021, with a new completion date set in October 2023. Several factors including inflation had increased the required cost to complete the project, and a variety of barriers were encountered which slowed the progress of the work.

Resolved:

With respect to Bus Network Plan and Enhanced Bus Services the Transport Committee, subject to the conditions set by the Programme Appraisal Team, approved that:

(i) The Bus Network Plan & Enhanced Bus Services (previously Superbus) scheme proceed through Decision Point 2 (Strategic Outline Case) and work commence on Activity 3 (Outline Business Case).

(ii) An indicative approval to the Combined Authority costs of up to £29,700,000 be given. The total scheme cost is £29,700,000.

(iii) Approval to the development and initial delivery costs of up to £6,228,434 be given, subject to discharge of Condition 3, taking the total approval to £7,998,434. This comprises up to £770,000 for development costs, £3,000,000 for Tranche 1: 'Network Protection and Quick Win Enhancements and up to £4,228,434 for Enhanced Bus Services (Year 1).

(iv) The Combined Authority provide funding to bus operators for Network Protection, Quick Win Enhancements and for Enhanced Bus Services (Year 1), by using existing compensation arrangements, subject to the discharge

of Condition 3. The amount of funding allocated to each bus operator be delegated to the Director of Transport Policy and Delivery.

(v) The discharge of Condition 3 be delegated to the chair of the Transport Committee, in consultation with portfolio holders.

(vi) Future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.

Conditions

The following conditions have been set by PAT to gain approval to commence activity 3 (Outline Business Case):

(i) Evidence the key stakeholder engagement carried out as part of identifying and agreeing routes.

(ii) Update logic map with clearer and quantified outputs.

(iii) Details, including provision and costs, of the services to be protected and enhanced is provided to clarify what the funding allocation is to be used for, for Tranche 1 (Network Protection and Quick Win Enhancements) and Tranche 4 (Enhanced Bus Services).

(iv) A robust cost assessment for the different options is undertaken.

With respect to Combined Services and Assets Database (CoSA) Replacement the Transport Committee, subject to the conditions set by the Programme Appraisal Team, approved that:

(i) The Combined Services and Assets Database replacement scheme proceed through decision point 2 to 4 (Business Justification Case) and work commence on activity 5 (Delivery).

(ii) Approval to the Combined Authority's delivery costs of £615,000. The total scheme value is £615,000.

(iii) Future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.

With respect to Leeds City Bikes the Transport Committee, subject to the conditions set by the Programme Appraisal Team, approved that:

(i) The Leeds City Bikes scheme proceed through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commence on activity 5 (delivery).

(ii) Approval to the Combined Authority's contribution of £1,700,000 be given, taking the total approval to £2,000,000. The total scheme cost is £2,861,369.

(iii) The Combined Authority enter into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with Leeds City Council for expenditure of up to £2,000,000.

(iv) Future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.

With respect to Bus Service Improvement Plan - Mayor's Fares, the Transport committee approved:

(i) The change request to the BSIP Mayors Fares scheme to increase the funding allocation to continue the scheme until the end of March 2024 be approved.

(ii) £11,728,590 of additional funding be allocated from BSIP to the Mayor's Fares scheme, taking the total scheme approval to £23,621,766.

(iii) Future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.

With respect to Thorpe Park Rail Station the Transport Committee approved:

(i) The change request for the Thorpe Park Rail Station scheme to:

o Indicatively approve the increase of the Combined Authority's contribution to £20,900,000, an increase of £7,000,000.

o The release of additional development funding of £7,000,000 to continue to progress the scheme and carry out early works, bringing the total approved development costs to £12,236,000.

o The delivery timescale (decision point 5) be extended to 30 July 2025.

(ii) The Combined Authority enter into a Funding Agreement with Network Rail for expenditure up to £7,000,000.

(iii) Future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report.

With respect to TCF Halifax Bus Station the Transport Committee approved that:

(i) The change request for the Halifax Bus Station scheme to increase the funding approval by £2,800,000 to £20,500,000 and to extend the delivery timescale to October 2023, be approved.

(ii) Future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report.