

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY, 7 JULY 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 Chris Hayden	Bradford Council
Councillor Liz Rowe	Bradford Council
Councillor Colin Hutchinson (Transport Engagement Lead)	Calderdale Council
Councillor Scott Patient	Calderdale Council
Councillor Ammar Anwar (Transport Engagement Lead)	Kirklees Council
Councillor Eric Firth	Kirklees Council
Councillor Matthew McLoughlin	Kirklees Council
Councillor Neil Buckley	Leeds City Council
Councillor Oliver Edwards	Leeds City Council
Councillor Abdul Hannan	Leeds City Council
Councillor Helen Hayden	Leeds City Council
Councillor Annie Maloney (Transport Engagement Lead)	Leeds City Council
Councillor Armaan Khan	Wakefield Council
Councillor Jakob Williamson (Transport Engagement Lead)	Wakefield Council
Councillor Peter Kilbane	City of York Council

In attendance:

Simon Warburton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Melanie Corcoran	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Mick Bunting	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Dave Haskins	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Rachel Jones	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Fiona Limb	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Steffi Nolan	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ian Parr	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Bolt, Cllr Caffrey, Cllr Ross-Shaw, and Cllr Salam.

The Chair welcomed the new and returning Transport Committee members for the 2023/24 municipal year. A round of introductions took place for the benefit of those present.

2. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

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

There were no items that were identified as exempt from the press and public.

4. Minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee held on 26 May 2023

Members requested a response to a query raised at the previous meeting regarding the insurance liability in the case of an accident involving an e-bike. Officers responded that an update will be circulated to the members outside of the meeting.

Members noted an error regarding the profits received by the council in the Leeds City Bikes scheme. The original passage:

The equipment would be owned by Leeds, with the operator receiving 25% of profits to reinvest into the scheme.

Should instead read:

The equipment would be owned by Leeds, with the council receiving 25% of profits to reinvest into the scheme.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee held on 26 May 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair.

5. Bus Service Improvement Plan Update

The Transport Committee considered a report to provide update regarding the state of the bus network and to seek delegation of approval for the BSIP+ funding. Officers clarified the £3,875,221 of BSIP+ funding would be used to ensure a faster response to the challenges faced by the bus network and the protection of services that might otherwise be cut by operators.

Officers noted the Transport Committee had previously approved the initial delivery costs of £6.23 million for development work, £3 million for tranche 1 of the Network Protection and Quick Win Enhancements, and £4.23 million for Enhanced Bus Services. Officers noted the breakdown of the issues

faced by the bus network, and the actions being taken to understand and address the challenges, with the next steps to agree which services should be supported with the first tranche of funding, to begin the delivery of the schemes previously agreed by the Transport Committee, and to engage with operators about the delivery of enhanced bus services. Officers noted that the Mayor's Fares Scheme was approved to continue until at least the end of March 2024, and there was a target for BSIP-funded support officers to become available in bus stations across West Yorkshire from October 2023.

The Chair expressed thanks to officers for their work, and noted the difficulty of making longer-term plans based on the funding cuts made by the government. The Chair noted that £3.8 million of confirmed funding had not yet been received, officers responded that a meeting with the Department for Transport would take place to attain more clarity regarding when the funding would be available. Members noted that delays to funding had prevented improvements and stability for the network and operators had already been asked to delay any changes to their services over the summer, but more than 70 changes had already been made and not all could be restored.

Members noted the withdrawal of services had an impact upon rural communities, and had disrupted residents getting to work, education, and health appointments. Members suggested that it was difficult for operators to justify service cuts when their profits had risen. The Chair noted the Mayor had previously written to transport operators regarding their profits, and how they may be used to prevent cuts to services. Members suggested transport operators be invited to district meetings so members of the public can hear about the changes taking place and pose any questions to operators.

Members questioned why the funding had not yet been received from the government, officers responded that the BSIP process had begun towards the beginning of the pandemic, and the disruption over that period had slowed an already slow process. Officers confirmed the Combined Authority had an agreement in place to receive the funding which had provided confidence, but actions were limited until the funding became available.

Officers acknowledged the impact of cuts to evening services, which had impacted younger community members who are often employed in the night-time economy. The Combined Authority had made it clear to operators and the Department for Transport that the bus network was fundamental to vitality of the centres and the confidence of public.

Members requested clarification on the proposed target to increase radial routes by 5%, and housing accessibility by 55%. Officers responded baseline figures were set in 2019, and the 5% increase would be based on that figure. The housing accessibility measures the amount of housing situated within 400 metres of a suitably frequent bus route, and increasing that figure would support modal shift from cars to public transport.

Members queried what would happen operators deemed the Super Bus routes to be unviable in the fourth and fifth year, and what promotion would take place. Officers responded engagement would be undertaken to develop

a greater understanding of the needs of each district, and passenger confidence would be developed over the first three years. The scheme suggested that by the fourth and fifth year the new routes would become commercially viable for operators to continue funding.

Members noted that some bus services end at 7pm on a Saturday but 9pm on a Sunday which had caused confusion among residents. Members noted that the Combined Authority has funded the Sunday service but operators had cut back on the Saturday service. Members suggested the Combined Authority should not be required to fund what should be core services, but the extra funding would go some way towards restoring services which had been cut as well as introducing new services to meet the needs of communities.

Resolved:

The approach to further development of the Bus Network Plan be endorsed, including the use of criteria to prioritise Combined Authority-funded interventions in the bus network in order to:

- Continue to provide socially necessary connectivity.
- Restore, stabilise and protect the network from further cuts
- Enhance and grow the network

Delegation on the £3,875,221 BSIP+ budget to the Interim Director of Transport Operations and Passenger Experience (Mobility Services and Transformation) in consultation with the partner councils, for the 2023/24 financial year be endorsed.

The next steps for delivery of the Bus Network Plan and wider BSIP programme updates be noted.

6. East Leeds Flexibus Trial Review

Members considered a report to provide an update on the outcome of an internal review of the East Leeds Demand Responsive Transport service. Officers clarified the decision made was to propose early termination of the trial, as per the agreed contract. Officers explained that the trial provided a flexible transport option for passengers, and allowed bookings to be made via an app for pickup and drop-off at specified locations. The trial intended to introduce a new service model and improve access to wider transport and reduce emissions, and would also allow officers to develop further knowledge on the efficacy of such services.

Officers informed members that the trial comprised of seven vehicles at a total cost £3 million, split approximately equally between the cost of vehicles and operating costs. The contract began in September 2021, and featured a break clause which could be exercised after 18 months of operation. The decision had been made to take the option to end the contract after reviewing the evidence collected by Go Travel Solutions following six months of operation. The evidence collected by the review showed that the service had 242 passengers per week spread across 620 trips for an average cost per journey of £16, which fell below the anticipated use set out

in the business case. Vehicle issues had also meant that it was not always possible to have all of the available vehicles in operation, further impacting the delivery.

Officers noted that approximately 22% of journeys made were to St James' Hospital, which showed the success regarding allowing key workers and residents to access employment and healthcare in an area with low vehicle ownership. Only 2% of journeys were to the Cross Gates rail station, and no journeys were made to park and ride services. Overall the trial did not indicate evidence of modal shift or greater connectivity to healthcare, employment, or educational settings. Officers explained that the cost pressures caused by inflation would further increase the overall cost for the remaining trial period. Officers reassured members that consultation with communities would be undertaken to establish the impact caused by withdrawal of the service, which would inform discussions about how best to meet the needs of the communities with new or existing services.

The Chair noted the trial was important to gather information, and that similar schemes across the country had arrived at similar conclusions. Members noted the trial could be effective in rural areas where transport options are more limited, and expressed hopes that the outcome would not prevent trials in other areas. Members added that smaller accessible vehicles may be better suited to serve areas with more difficult geography. Members queried the operating range of the electric vehicles which suggested they were required to return to the depot frequently and take more wasted trips as a result. Officers responded that the lessons taken from the trial would be used to inform future trials, such as the types of vehicles commissioned for use. Officers noted that the batteries for mid-sized buses were not as robust as those used for conventional buses, and members suggested that there were additional factors such as weather conditions that may affect the life of an electric vehicle battery.

Members questioned if an equality impact assessment had been undertaken. Officers responded that the only data collected from passengers were their name and email address and so only limited conclusions could be drawn. A breakdown of the names showed that 85% of service users identified with a female name which could suggest that female passengers were drawn by the safety offered by the service.

Members raised concerns that the withdrawal of the service meant the needs of the residents in East Leeds would not be met. Officers responded there were already measures in place to minimise the impact and that a team was working with St James' hospital to identify how connections with the hospital may be improved.

Resolved: The proposed early termination of the trial East Leeds Flexibus service in accordance with the terms of the trial be noted

7. Transport Policy Update

Members considered a report to provide an update on transport policy. Officers noted the verbal update provided at the previous meeting regarding

the Active Travel Fund. Officers noted the breakdown of the funding received, as well as the breakdown of the funding allocated to each West Yorkshire district. An additional meeting had been arranged with Active Travel England to assess any failed schemes before further funding becomes available in autumn 2024. Meetings with Active Travel England had also been held with Bradford and Leeds Councils

The Transport for the North Board had put its draft Strategic Transport Plan out for public consultation. The plan would provide a high-level opportunity for the north of England to speak with one voice, and provide further context about the needs of West Yorkshire alongside the Local Transport Plan. The consultation can be accessed online, and the consultation period ends in August, with the aim for the full plan to be in place by end of 2023.

The Rail North Committee met on 7 June 2023, and Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe was appointed as one of two Vice Chairs, with the other Vice Chair to be appointed at a future meeting. Other discussions took place regarding the business plans, the Manchester Taskforce, and TransPennine. The next meeting will take place on 13 September 2023.

The Chair requested the feedback from Active Travel England to be provided to districts as soon as possible to allow for the schemes to meet the criteria before the funding deadline. Officers confirmed the meetings would take place within the coming weeks.

The Chair noted that since the meeting of the Rail North Committee, it had been announced that ticket offices in rail stations would be closing across the UK. Members raised concerns about the closures particularly for the elderly and those with disabilities, and added that women and girls could also be vulnerable in unstaffed stations especially in the winter. Members noted that ticket office closures would make stations more inaccessible and discourage passengers from using the trains. The Chair noted that the closures were due to budget cuts from the government and there would only be a 21-day consultation period for the public.

Officers noted the majority of the approximately 1,000 ticket offices in the UK would close, and all of the 19 staffed offices in West Yorkshire would close except for Bradford, Huddersfield, and Leeds. Officers noted there were further implications regarding redeployment of staff, and the impact of waiting room closures. Officers noted that details were minimal and the consultation period was short, but Transport for the North had requested the consultation period to be extended up to 56 days. Members requested that the Chair write to the government to voice the concerns of Transport Committee members regarding the issues caused by the closure of ticket offices.

Members raised concerns that many members of the public were not digitally included and require face-to-face interaction at stations. Staff would also be heavily impacted by the changes which would reduce the expertise available and could make stations less safe as a result. Members added that the changes would result in fewer visitors to the region, affecting the whole of West Yorkshire.

Officers suggested that external transport engagement groups be consulted to increase the response to the consultation, members agreed to the suggestion.

Resolved:

That the updates provided in the submitted report be noted.

The Chair of the Transport committee write to the Department for Transport on behalf of the members to raise members' concerns regarding the closure of staffed railway ticket booths, and to request an extension of the 21-day consultation period.

Combined Authority officers to engage with disability and other transport interest groups regarding the rail station staffing consultation.

8. Project approvals

Members considered two projects progression through the assurance process.

Active Travel Tranche 4 and Capability Fund 2023

Officers outlined the scheme, which aimed to build on previous funding to deliver improved walking, wheeling, and cycling infrastructure for improved access to work and training. The funding would be received from Active Travel England and split between the five partner councils, and would develop a pipeline of delivery by assessing the feasibility of projects.

The Capability fund would develop policy initiatives for future schemes and contribute to the expansion of the behaviour change program.

Members noted that some of the included projects were closer to delivery than others, and questioned if they would be delivered simultaneously. Officers confirmed the projects would be treated individually which would allow for swifter delivery.

A638 Dewsbury Cleckheaton Sustainable Travel Corridor

Officers outlined the scheme, which would provide transport improvements along the A638 corridor between Oakenshaw and Dewsbury. The project was initially approved in June 2022, and approval was sought to increase the available funding to support development of the scheme, with inflation and improved cost accuracy contributing to the rise in initial cost. The scheme would improve the existing infrastructure including cycle lanes, barriers, and changes to the road layout to improve bus journey times and pedestrian access. Officers noted that the value for money assessments returned a low value, but members noted that such schemes do not always capture the improvements made to road users. Members welcomed the scheme, noting the improved links between Bradford and Kirklees would provide significant benefits to residents of both districts.

Resolved:

With respect to the Active Travel Tranche 4 and Capability Fund 2023, the Transport Committee approved that:

- (i) The Active Travel Tranche 4 programme proceed through decision point 2 (strategic outline case) and work commence on development of individual project business cases as outlined in this report.
- (ii) The Capability Fund programme proceed through decision point 2 (strategic outline case) to activity 5 (Delivery) subject to approval to proceed.
- (iii) An indicative approval to the Combined Authority's contribution of £19,961,635 be given. The total scheme value is £19,961,635.
- (iv) Delivery costs of £990,000, be approved in order to progress into activity 5 (Delivery) subject to approval to proceed. Grant funding agreements be entered into with the respective partner councils for the following projects:
 - o £240,000 for the School Streets Fund scheme (West Yorkshire Combined Authority),
 - o £400,000 for the Eastern Gateway scheme (Leeds City Council)
 - o £350,000 for the Bentley's Residential Streets scheme (Leeds City Council)
- (v) Development costs of £2,353,309 be approved in order to progress Active Travel Tranche 4 schemes to decision point 4 (via business justification case or full business case) and £150,000 for the Hebble Trail Development Works (Calderdale).
- (vi) Delivery costs of £2,530,967 for the Capability Fund programme be approved in order to progress to activity 5 (Delivery) subject to an approval to proceed.
- (vii) Taking the total scheme approval to £6,024,276.
- (viii) The Combined Authority enter into a funding agreement with each partner council for the following amounts:
 - o Kirklees Council up to £436,477.
 - o Calderdale Council up to £1,370,000.
 - o Wakefield Council up to £719,390.
 - o Bradford Council up to £488,056.
 - o Leeds City Council up to £1,444,823.
- (ix) Delegation be given to the Director of Transport Policy and Delivery to amend allocated funding amounts released as part of this decision as required.
- (x) Future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathways and approval routes outlined in the submitted report,

subject to remaining within tolerances. Where further approval is required, the respective programme or schemes will return to the Transport Committee.

With respect to the A638 Dewsbury Cleckheaton Sustainable Travel Corridor, the Transport Committee approved that:

- (i) The change request to the A638 Dewsbury Cleckheaton Sustainable Travel Corridor scheme to increase the Combined Authority contribution funding to £15,269,915, release £560,200 funding to support business case development and to reduce the outputs as detailed in the submitted report be approved. The total scheme value will increase from £12,884,315 to £15,799,977.
- (ii) Development costs of £560,200 be given to progress the scheme to Activity 4 (full business case), taking the total approval to £1,927,670.
- (iii) The Combined Authority enter into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with Kirklees Council for expenditure of up to £1,927,670.
- (iv) Future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report.

9. Governance arrangements

The Chair outlined the report which provided a breakdown of the membership of the committee, as well as confirmation of the Transport Committee meeting dates for the 2023/24 municipal year. Members raised concerns that the change from the usual Friday meeting would cause inconvenience among the membership and clash with other district meetings, and members from Kirklees expressed their disapproval of the change of meeting dates. The Chair responded that holding meetings on Fridays caused issues for some members, and that changing the day and time of the week would allow for members who were unable to attend regularly. The Chair emphasised the importance of setting meeting dates in advance, but noted that the future dates could still be reviewed in conjunction with members if necessary.

Resolved: The Transport Committee noted the governance arrangements approved by the Combined Authority at the Annual Meeting on 22 June 2023.

The Active Travel Working Group be established for the municipal year 2023/24, with the terms of reference and arrangements as set out in Appendix 5 to the submitted report.