

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
LEEDS DISTRICT CONSULTATION SUB-COMMITTEE
HELD REMOTELY ON MONDAY, 15 MARCH 2021**

Present:

Councillor Peter Carlill (Chair)	Leeds City Council
Councillor Neil Buckley	Leeds City Council
Councillor Colin Campbell	Leeds City Council
Mark Parry (Deputy Chair)	Public Representative
John Birkby (Public Representative)	Public Representative
Linda Bishop (Public Representative)	Public Representative
Charlotte Davenport (Public Representative)	Public Representative
Howard Dews (Public Representative)	Public Representative
Peter Dixon (Public Representative)	Public Representative
Catherine Keighley (Public Representative)	Public Representative
Judith Rhodes (Public Representative)	Public Representative
Eric Smith (Public Representative)	Public Representative
Bill Tymms (Public Representative)	Public Representative
Leslie Webb (Public Representative)	Public Representative
Clive Woods (Public Representative)	Public Representative

In attendance:

Paul Foster	Leeds City Council
Stuart Fillingham	First Group
Graham Meiklejohn	Transpennine Express
Ben Mansfield	TransDev
Pete Myers	Northern Trains
Richard Isaac	Northern Trains
Kim Purcell	Arriva Yorkshire
Dwayne Wells	Arriva Yorkshire
Dave Pearson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Helen Ellerton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Tom Gifford	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Aaliyah Younis	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

21. Open Forum

No questions or concerns had been received from members of the public prior to the meeting.

The Sub-Committee and members of the public in attendance were given the opportunity to raise any issues which were not covered on the agenda and the following comments were made:

- The consultation relating to the park and ride and rail station proposals at Leeds Bradford Airport was discussed, with concerns raised over the high cost of the project with potentially limited benefits. It was agreed that further information on the points raised would be provided after the meeting.
- Members suggested that the proposed bus shelters in the area of the Corn Exchange did not appear to be of large enough capacity to meet expected demand. It was agreed that this would be revisited.

22. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Groves, Brittany Stead and Brannoc Stevenson.

23. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no pecuniary interests declared by members at the meeting.

24. Exempt Information - Possible exclusion of the press and public

There were no items which required the exemption of the press and public.

25. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2020 be approved.

26. Chair's Update

The Chair welcomed Leeds City Council elected members as they had been invited to attend the meeting in order to participate in the workshop session on the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan.

27. Information Report

Members considered an information report which provided an update on transport issues in Leeds.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

28. Operator Updates

Members received updates from the representatives of transport operators in the district:

First Bus

First Bus reported that bus service had been ramped up to 95% of pre-Covid levels in the previous week in line with Department for Transport (DfT) guidance. Passenger numbers were currently at roughly 45% of pre-Covid levels.

Discussions were underway with Leeds City Council and Bus Alliance partners regarding implementing passenger recovery campaigns once the expected easing of lockdown restrictions had begun.

TransPennine Express

Rail services would be returning to the December 2020 timetable from 29 March 2021, which would bring them to 85-90% of pre-pandemic levels.

Work would start in May on the installation of toilets and changing facilities at Dewsbury station, and was expected to finish later in the summer.

Arriva

Arriva reported that after having reduced their timetables in February in response to a request from the DfT to reduce mileage, Monday-Friday service had since been restored to full pre-Covid levels. Capacity was reduced due to social distancing measures but extra journeys had been implemented to mitigate this, particularly to cater for travel to and from schools.

Weekend services remained on a reduced timetable but would return to full service levels once non-essential retail opened in April.

Transdev

Transdev advised the Sub-Committee of planned service changes in April, May and June following the announced easing of lockdown restrictions.

Northern

Northern advised that patronage remained very low compared to pre-Covid figures, although the return to school had increased this figure. A new timetable would be introduced in May 2021 when it was expected there would be a significant upturn in patronage, particularly due to the return to leisure activities. This would bring service levels above 90% of pre-Covid levels.

Northern reported on difficulties they had experienced training drivers while still maintaining social distancing. These problems had since been resolved, but resourcing of drivers would remain an issue effecting timetables for some time to come.

Resolved: That the operators be thanked for their updates.

29. Workshop Session - Connectivity Infrastructure Plan

The Sub-Committee was given a presentation on the Combined Authority's Connectivity Infrastructure Plan, which set out a long-term transport infrastructure programme for the next 20 years.

The plan comprised a series of documents which brought bus, active travel, rail, mass transit and future mobility together into a single integrated plan for the region, with plans and proposals supported by a series of evidence-based reports.

Feedback was being sought on all aspects of the plan and elected members of Leeds City Council had been invited to participate in the workshop as part of the public engagement process.

The following questions and comments were raised:

- It would be important to engage the growing youth population in any plans for the future. The consultation process aimed to gather feedback from as many hard-to-reach groups as possible.
- The need to consider places outside of West Yorkshire, such as Harrogate, was raised. Officers had been in contact with colleagues in North Yorkshire County Council to discuss joining up key flows, but it was noted that the prime focus of the plan was West Yorkshire.
- Wetherby was discussed as a potential area of connection for mass transit routes.
- The importance of off-highway cycle routes was noted, with segregated cycling infrastructure for as many routes as possible.
- Members questioned how the net-zero carbon target for the Combined Authority aligned with that of Leeds Council, and how this would affect the plan.
- The need to reduce the overall number of private car journeys as part of the Highways Demand Management Scheme was highlighted. Members questioned whether this would include congestion charges; no congestion charges were currently planned.
- Building a mass transit system could mean disruption to businesses in city and district centres for months and possibly years. Business support measures were a possibility to mitigate the effect of this disruption on support for any potential project.
- The inner east Leeds and outer northeast Leeds areas were highlighted as having poor connectivity to the city centre and/or areas of economic development. Officers were invited to attend the next meeting of the Outer North East Community Committee to gain further feedback on this. The enhanced partnership with bus operators would be an important part of improving connectivity in these areas.
- What effect would planned bus infrastructure expansion have on the implementation of mass transit due to the limited road space available? It was emphasised that the aim of the plan was for mass transit to integrate with the bus network rather than competing against it – potentially using the same infrastructure and with intermodal ticketing solutions.
- Members questioned whether the carbon impact of any mass transit construction costs had been taken into account.

- Would bus companies need to be subsidised as their role changed within the wider transport network? As part of the enhanced partnership, there would be a greater level of risk sharing between the Combined Authority and bus operators where the overall network would be more of a focus than individual routes.
- What long-term guarantees exist for funding? The initial aim would be to create a deliverable first phase, but the need to look at other funding streams, including private sector funding opportunities, was noted.
- The need for high-demand corridors to be able to economically support the case for mass transit was highlighted.
- The importance of gathering views from both frequent bus users as well as car drivers was noted.
- Members questioned whether existing infrastructure from closed railways could be utilised, with the Wortley curve being highlighted, and asked what was being done to protect this infrastructure for future use.
- The relative distance of the rail station in Pudsey from the centre of the community was noted – could mass transit better connect Pudsey with both the rail network and the centre of Leeds? Cycling and walking access alone was not sufficient in all situations, such as for families with young children or for the elderly.

Resolved: That the presentation of the Connectivity Infrastructure plan and members' comments be noted.