

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2020**

Present:

Councillor Kim Groves (Chair)	Leeds City Council
Councillor Martyn Bolt (Leader of the Opposition)	Kirklees Council
Councillor Neil Buckley	Leeds City Council
Councillor Peter Caffrey	Calderdale Council
Councillor Peter Carlill	Leeds City Council
Councillor Colin Campbell	Leeds City Council
Councillor Andy D'Agorne	York Council
Councillor Sinead Engel	Bradford Council
Councillor James Homewood	Kirklees Council
Councillor Hassan Khan	Bradford Council
Mark Roberts	Beer Hawk Ltd
Councillor Taj Salam	Bradford Council
Councillor Daniel Sutherland	Calderdale Council
Councillor Kevin Swift	Wakefield Council

In attendance:

Councillor Lisa Mulherin	Leeds City Council
Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw	Bradford Council
Councillor Jane Scullion	Calderdale Council
Councillor Peter McBride	Kirklees Council
Claire Haigh	Greener Journeys
Dave Pearson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Liz Hunter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alan Reiss	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Andrew Bradley	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Helen Ellerton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
James Nutter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ben Kearns	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

20. Two Minutes' Silence

A two minutes' silence was observed in memory of transport workers who had lost their lives as a result of the pandemic.

21. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ellis, Councillor Kaushik

and Simon Pringle

22. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

There were no declaration of interest made at the meeting.

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

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

24. Minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee held on 4 September

Councillor Mulherin requested that the minutes be corrected to record her attendance at the September Transport Committee meeting.

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Transport Committee be amended and approved.

25. Presentation from Greener journeys

Claire Haigh, from Greener Journeys, provided Members with a presentation on the current research being undertaken by the organisation:

Members raised the following questions and comments:

- That road user charges could be used to address both the air quality and decarbonisation agendas.
- If there was scope for a devolved approach to road pricing and the possible opportunities for it to provide funding to public transport.
- That enacting policies such as road pricing to meet decarbonisation targets would be challenging to implement.
- The possible conflict that reducing the need to travel could have on the viability of public transport. The main shift which was needed was from private vehicles to public transport and active travel.
- The need to model for future trends on public transport to ensure their viability as a service.
- The differing approach to greener journeys in towns as opposed to cities, such as the role demand responsive transport could play in areas with less connectivity.
- The importance of planning holistically on a long term and integrated basis so that employment opportunities, education and leisure were all serviceable by public transport.
- The need to amend the way schemes are appraised and the need to quantify wider benefits of schemes so the benefits are more accurately reflective of the decarbonisation agenda.
- The need to implement better bus infrastructure to make bus more attractive for people and the need for affordability, reliability and a just transition.
- The benefits of shared transport and mobility as a service as an important part of the solution.

Resolved: The Committee thanked Claire Haigh for the presentation

26. Covid-19 Impacts and Recovery

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the impact of the pandemic on transport in the region as well as proposals for the recovery.

The Chair wished to thank the officers working in the transport teams and operators for maintaining levels of service during the pandemic with reference to teams responsible for school transport.

Bus travel had declined because of the second lockdown, but it was noted that the restrictions were less prohibitive compared to the Spring and so bus patronage was at between 40% and 50%.

The delegated decision making arrangement which was approved at the March Transport Committee was rescinded.

Members had the following questions and comments:

- Whether there was potential for in person meetings of the Transport Committee. It was noted that the main building for committee meetings was closed for renovation and provision would need to be made for the public to view meetings.
- The bus patronage figures were recorded at 55% and clarity was requested as to whether this figure referred to 55% of the figures from the previous year or 55% relative to the period where restrictions were loosened in the summer.
- Members noted that the 55% figure related to the same week in the previous year. There had been a few instances in which buses had had to leave passengers behind because there were at socially distanced capacity but that these had been carefully monitored and managed.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Committee notes the updates provided in this report.
- (ii) That the delegated decision-making arrangement approved by the Committee on 13 March be rescinded.

27. Concessionary bus fares for Under 19s

The Committee considered a report which proposed amendments to the Concessionary Fare Scheme to ensure an affordable and simplified range of fares for under 19s when the Covid restrictions end.

A provisional date of the 15 February 2021 had been set for the new fare structure to be introduced. This date was dependant on the course of the pandemic and national restrictions from Government. The Committee would be kept informed of any amendment to the date.

Members had the following questions and comments:

- Members welcomed the hard work to date and emphasised the importance of the scheme for encouraging young people to use the bus.
- Members noted that fares were capped rather than flat – so if an operator can charge less for any given journey than they will be able to do so.
- That an M card mobile app was in development which would allow an adult to buy a product for their child so they can pay via the app.
- Members asked for clarity around the introduction of the scheme in February and the recommendation to amend the West Yorkshire Concessionary Travel Scheme in April. The April date was lined up with the end of the financial year for administrative purposes.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Fare Deal for Young People as set out in this report be endorsed.
- (ii) That the West Yorkshire Concessionary Travel Scheme be amended as set out in this report and published come into effect from 1 April 2021.
- (iii) That the new fare structure be introduced on the lifting of COVID restrictions with a provisional date of 15 February 2021.
- (iv) That any amendment to this date will be made in consultation with the Chair of Transport Committee and notified to members of the Committee.

28. Bus Network Sustainability and Post COVID Recovery

Members considered a report that provided an update on the work to develop a new approach to delivering bus services in West Yorkshire.

Members noted that the Combined Authority had asked Government that the funding currently supporting bus services nationally through Covid should be devolved to the Combined Authority to oversee the recovery of bus services locally.

An enhanced partnership was proposed between the Combined Authority and bus operators to help manage the recovery.

Members raised concerns about Cooper bridge and Birstall and the absence of a direct route to Leeds. To increase bus patronage after the pandemic it would be vital to have convenient and reliable links between major conurbations.

It was noted that the work to date had been about identifying the broad flows where development could influence bus travel and the work to look at journeys on a route by route basis would follow.

Resolved:

- (i) That the way forward to support the bus service as it recovers from the effects of the COVID emergency be endorsed the work towards the development of an Enhanced Partnership be initiated.
- (ii) That the findings of the West Yorkshire Strategic Bus Network Review and its inclusion as part of the draft Connectivity Plan be endorsed.

29. Rail Vision

The Committee considered a report that set out the draft rail vision for consideration.

It was noted that the vision was dependent upon investment from Government, in the form of Northern Powerhouse Rail, Transpennine Route Upgrade, the electrification of the Calder Valley Line and HS2.

Members noted that the Rail vision document sets out how the railway can better serve the region both in the short term recovery from the pandemic and in the longer term as well.

Members emphasised the importance that all rail stations provided an attractive passenger experience and whether the Combined Authority had made any representations to Network Rail regarding the TRU and Mirfield station. Members noted that strong representations had been made to Network Rail and the Department for Transport that all stations on the line in West Yorkshire meet a modern standard.

Resolved:

- (i) That the draft Rail Vision document be approved.
- (ii) That the draft Rail Vision document to be considered by the Combined Authority for public engagement as part of the wider Connectivity Plan suite of documents be endorsed.

30. West Yorkshire Connectivity Infrastructure Plan: Investing in the future of West Yorkshire

Members considered a report which provided an update on the development of a West Yorkshire Transport Connectivity Infrastructure Plan.

Members asked about the proposals to use the Spen Valley Greenway as part of a mass transit corridor. It was noted that the different modes of transport would be integrated and complimentary.

Resolved:

- (i) That the verbal update from the Transport Committee workshop held on

13 November be noted and the implications for the development of the connectivity plan and pipeline be considered.

- (ii) That the timescales for publication of the Plan be endorsed
- (iii) That the escalating consideration of the Connectivity Investment Plan to the Combined Authority be endorsed.

31. Developer Contributions update and Developer Advice Note

Members considered a report which provided an update on the Combined Authority's approach to securing developer contributions through the planning process.

Members welcomed the report and highlighted the importance of advice and assessment at an earlier stage in the process to help align planning and land allocation with future bus routes and the wider transport networks.

Members suggested that the Combined Authority should be a robust consultee to help encourage a modal shift in transport use.

Resolved:

- (i) That the updates provided in this report relating to developer contributions be noted.
- (ii) That the publication of the Developer Advice Note be endorsed

32. Leeds City Region Transport Update

Members considered a report which provided an update on Transport issues across the region.

Members were also provided with an update regarding the latest TfN meetings. It was also noted that TfN had been in contact with the Combined Authority for their bid to government for Integrated Smart Ticketing.

More information would be brought to a future meeting Northern Powerhouse Rail and proposals for a Bradford Central station.

Members asked for clarity around the Transpennine Route Upgrade and the need for NPR to benefit all parts of the region. It was noted that representations had been made to TfN about the vital importance of the TRU for the Leeds City Region

Members raised the issue of the closure of the bus station travel centres at Dewsbury and Wakefield. Arriva have announced that the travel centres would not re-open in their current form and it would be necessary for the travel centres to be modified so there is an inquiry provision in both areas.

Resolved:

- (i) That the updates provided in this report be noted.
- (ii) That the updated spend profile for the Smartcard and Information Programmes as set out in this report be approved
- (iii) That the revision of the Integrated Transport Block Programme to accommodate the upgrading of the Real Time system as set out in this report be approved.

33. Summary of Transport Schemes

Members considered a report which set out the transport related schemes that had been considered by the Investment Committee since the last meeting.

Members discussed the importance of maintenance funding for cycleways and the need to make the point to government regarding funding for cycling infrastructure and a dedicated budget.

The need to share best practice from active travel schemes across the districts was discussed.

Members discussed concerns that the narrowing of carriageways to allow for active travel schemes could result in emergency services vehicles being hindered in their duties. It was noted that every scheme that had been implemented had been sent to the Emergency services to ensure that their comments were considered and that there was no evidence that schemes funded through the Emergency Active Travel Fund had caused delays to the emergency services in the region.

Resolved: That the report be noted.