

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
TRANSPORT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON FRIDAY, 10 MARCH 2023 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1,  
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS**

---

**Present:**

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe (Chair)	Bradford Council
Councillor Peter Carlill (Deputy Chair)	Leeds City Council
Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw	Bradford Council
Councillor Colin Hutchinson (Transport Engagement Lead)	Calderdale Council
Councillor Jane Scullion	Calderdale Council
Councillor Martyn Bolt	Kirklees Council
Councillor Eric Firth	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
Councillor Izaak Wilson (Transport Engagement Lead)	Leeds City Council
Councillor Kevin Swift (Transport Engagement Lead)	Wakefield Council
Councillor Andy D'Agorne	City of York Council

**In attendance:**

Dave Haskins	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Dave Pearson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Mick Bunting	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Jonathan Rogers	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ian Parr	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

**58. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Amir Hussain, Cllr Butt, Cllr Caffrey, Cllr Clarke, Cllr Jones, Cllr Kaushik, Cllr Khan, Cllr McLoughlin.

**59. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

**60. Exempt information - possible exclusion of the press and public**

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

## **61. Minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee held on 10 February 2023**

A member requested an error in the attendance list for the previous meeting be corrected.

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

## **62. Bus Service Improvement Plan Update**

Members received a report seeking approval of the Passenger Charter for bus services required as part of the Bus Services Improvement Plan, and to provide an update on bus infrastructure funding relating to the recently successful Levelling up Fund bid.

Officers noted that the outcome of the Mayor's Big Bus Chat consultation as discussed at the previous meeting is now available on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority website.

Officers explained the draft text of the new passenger charter has been made available to members. The charter is a requirement of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and has been developed in tandem by operators and officers. The Charter has taken on board feedback from a variety of consultations and working groups, and sets out the standards to be expected by all bus users in West Yorkshire and also directs users to how a complaint can be made if necessary. The final draft was presented to the Bus Alliance in January, and if approved can be fully designed for publication by 20 March 2023. Transport Focus have been consulted for formatting guidance in line with national standards, and have provided positive feedback regarding the content. The finalised charter will be made available in hard copy in transport hubs and other key transport locations, and also made available online through QR codes and web links posted at all bus stops and stations.

Members noted the importance of complaints information being made accessible to customers, and the need for a consistent response and approach from all operators to address issues. Members agreed with the principles and emphasised they can still be built upon to improve further. It was noted that more remote areas of West Yorkshire receive phone signal and so hard copies of the charter and bus timetables must be available where QR codes and online links are unreliable. Officers noted that the volatile nature of bus timetables throughout the pandemic and to this day have made it difficult to post up-to-date timetables when services change, but there is more that can be done to ensure users in rural areas are not disadvantaged.

Members queried how some the qualitative aspects of the charter will be measured, officers responded that qualitative and quantitative data is received from a variety of sources and acted upon. Quantitative data can be analysed by officers as usual and used to inform reports as appropriate. For qualitative data the Combined Authority works closely with Transport Focus who conduct national surveys of transport users for support and guidance. The results are

not always able to be broken down into the same level of detail as with statistical data, however the data is useful when compared with that of similar authorities and more can still be done to improve its efficacy. Members noted that online surveys are more likely to capture the views of younger demographics and those with access to the appropriate technology and suggested a text or call option also be made available. Officers confirmed that equality and diversity impact assessments are completed for all schemes, and that the final design will be as accessible as possible. There already exists a phone contact centre called 'Metroline' where passengers can report damaged bus shelters, which can be made more visible to customers.

Members queried if the passenger charter covers any elements of antisocial behaviour that can occur on buses. Officers noted that the BSIP funding will allow for more police community support officers on buses, and there is more that can be done separately to further tackle the issue.

Members questioned the use of the word 'should' as opposed to 'will' at various points within the charter, as well as the lack of ability for bus passengers to claim for a cancelled service in a similar way train passengers can when their arrival at work is disrupted. Members suggested that a preferred taxi operator be designated which can then invoice the bus operator for the fare where passengers did not expect to require a taxi. Officers responded there is already a similar system, and operators already agree not to cancel the final service of the day except for the case of an unforeseen emergency.

Members noted the challenge of growing passenger when operators are consistently reducing services, but the agreement of the charter shows they are willing to commit to high-quality service as much as possible and the charter should not be used to punish any missed targets in favour of developing higher standards. Many elements of the BSIP will contribute to service improvements and will be reviewed each year to ensure targets are met and to make any necessary revisions. Officers noted that quarterly meetings are already arranged with the relevant working groups and will feed into the yearly review.

**Resolved:** That the adoption of the West Yorkshire Bus Passenger Charter be approved.

### **63. Passenger Experience Update**

Members received a report providing a quarterly update on the performance of the transport network in West Yorkshire, including an update on the Combined Authority's passenger facing activity.

Officers noted that bus and rail performance seems to have levelled out at a rate lower than it was before the pandemic. Service punctuality remains roughly stable, and operators are still reporting some staff shortages affecting performance, as well as congestion. The bus service recovery funding granted to operators by the central government has been extended until the end of June 2023, though unless there are alternative arrangements announced in the Spring budget on 15 March 2023 it is feared that the funding will only delay

the need for further cuts. First Bus and other operators have already declared reductions in their timetables, and there is insufficient Combined Authority funding to cover every lost service.

Members noted the majority of service reductions affect Leeds and have a high impact on communities, since routes directly to and from the city centre are being preferred over routes between communities. Members queried if affected communities should be made aware of impending service cuts and the need to use their existing services so they are not cut in the future. Members noted that the earliest buses from some communities are operating too late for commuters to arrive at work on time, but operators have reported their staff numbers have recovered to support more services. Members expressed some sympathy for operators who have been forced to act with little forward planning from the government, and urged for longer term assurance to provide some certainty. The Chair noted that herself and the Mayor continue to engage with the government to express the needs of the region.

Members noted that the poor coordination of rail services is having a detrimental impact on passengers by cutting services and not re-introducing others as planned, leaving some services to be covered by a replacement bus. Members questioned the efficacy of the Rail North Partnership and Network Rail in resolving the issues, and noted that previous government proposals such as Great British Railways seem to have disappeared with no alternative. The Chair responded that Cllr Kaushik is aware of the ongoing rail issues and has met with TransPennine and Rail North, and the Mayor has met with the Secretary of State to further push for a resolution.

Officers noted that the underlying theme between the operators is the cost of running services, and urged that the region should not be disadvantaged as a result. Bus reliability can still improve, and congestion issues should also ease. The bus operators have already signalled what they will need to do if the recovery funding ends, which gives the Combined Authority some time to consider how the impact can be mitigated.

Members queried if there has been any feedback regarding the improved passenger experience at renovated rail stations, officers agreed that feedback can be provided at a future meeting.

Members requested greater visibility of us information at rail stations, which would improve the experience of commuters who travel multi-modally. Officers noted the available information is taken into consideration and there are improvements to make, especially where bus services are far or have been moved away from rail stations.

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

#### **64. Project Approvals**

Members received a report seeking the progression of, and funding for projects under Investment Priority 5 – Delivering Sustainable, Inclusive and Affordable Transport.

Officers informed the committee about the Transforming Cities Fund: Bradford Interchange Station Access scheme, which aims to develop the existing access to Bradford Interchange into a world-class gateway that enables safe, seamless interchange between all transport modes. Improvements will be made to the lower level concourse as well as the area immediately outside the interchange, creating a more attractive and safer environment for users. A new taxi rank will be created, and a walkway developed between the interchange and Hall Ings allowing for improved connections to the city centre. The development aims for completion before Bradford's tenure as UK City of Culture 2025 begins.

Members noted that the works will significantly improve the surrounding area of the interchange and be a positive first impression for first time visitors to the city. The scheme will also encourage more passengers to use bus and rail as well as cycle to and from the city centre.

Members noted the potential detrimental impact of construction on accessibility, as well as by moving the taxi rank and blue badge parking further away from the station. Officers responded that the Combined Authority is working closely with Bradford City Council to engage with accessibility groups and mitigate any impact. Equality Impact Assessments have been completed in line with the assurance process, and the completed project will be an improvement from the current facilities. Members noted that the increased space and added green elements will improve the accessibility for those who are neurodivergent, and should be considered alongside those with physical disabilities.

Members noted the contributions of Kit Allwinter toward this and many other WYCA schemes, and expressed their thanks to him ahead of his move to a new role with Active Travel England

**Resolved:** The Transport Committee approved that:

- (i) The TCF Bradford Interchange Access scheme proceeds through decision point 3 (outline business case) and work commences on activity 4 (full business case).
- (ii) Development costs of £2,054,127 are approved in order to progress the scheme to decision point 4 (full business case) taking the total scheme approval to £8,751,849.
- (iii) The Combined Authority enters into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council for expenditure of up to £8,751,849.
- (iv) Future approvals are 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 this report.