

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY, 26 JANUARY 2024 AT CONFERENCE ROOM 1/2,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS, LS1 2DE**

Present:

Councillor Amanda Parsons-Hulse (Chair)	Calderdale Council
Councillor Andrew Pinnock (Deputy Chair)	Kirklees Council
Councillor Joanne Dodds	Bradford Council
Councillor Anna Watson	Bradford Council
Councillor Dot Foster	Calderdale Council
Councillor Harry McCarthy	Kirklees Council
Councillor Kayleigh Brooks	Leeds City Council
Councillor Izaak Wilson	Leeds City Council
Councillor Tony Hames	Wakefield Council
Councillor Charlie Keith	Wakefield Council
Councillor Dave Merrett	City of York Council

In attendance:

Khaled Berroum	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Mick Bunting	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Andrew Fitzpatrick	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Simon Warburton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Katie Wright	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

18. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mark Thompson, Oliver Newton, Wyn Kidger, Joe Atkinson and Sabiya Khan.

The meeting initially began inquorate but became quorate with 11 members present (out of 11 needed for quorum) and restarted from the first item.

19. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

20. Possible exclusion of the press and public

There were no items requiring the exclusion of the press and public.

21. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2023

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2023 to be approved.

22. Chair's comments and update

The Chair invited the Executive Director for Transport to provide an update on the situation at Bradford Interchange:

- Bradford interchange was closed for safety reasons due to concrete falling in the basement.
- The basement was closed immediately on the 22 December and the whole bus station was closed on the 4 January.
- A structural survey is underway and will take place over the next two months.
- Further details on the damage and repairs are unavailable until the survey is complete.
- The concrete is not RAC but a concrete slab used to reinforce and level the surface.
- The CA is focusing on service continuity and 16 staff were deployed to support customers outside the station alongside staff from bus operators.
- The rail station remains open and unaffected with a long-term passenger interface established in the rail ticket office.

Members were informed that they should contact Mick Bunting, interim director of transport operations, as the main contact if they had any issues to report or further questions.

Resolved: That the Chair's verbal update be noted.

23. Level 4 Devolution

The Executive Director of Transport presented a report providing an update on the government's newest devolution offer to combined authorities.

Following questions and discussions, the following main points were made:

Level 4 Devolution

- The Executive Director of Transport noted that the CA has a robust Assurance framework around the capital programme as well as strong audit processes and well-established governance processes to manage risk – and is, in his view, ready for deeper devolution.
- The Level 4 Devolution offer doesn't come with additional funding but instead gives the CA the ability to consolidate capital funding into two pots to allow for flexibility in moving funding between previously 'ringfenced' funds based on the source department: the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Department of Transport (DfT) funding.
- Transport powers under Level 4 Devolution have an "all or nothing" stipulation meaning the CA must apply for all powers available or none.
- The CA is working with the government to further understand the details and to negotiate if all transport powers are necessary, especially around

taxi licensing and the highways elements of the key route network.

- There is no requirement for a public consultation regarding whether the CA should apply for Level 4 Devolution and which powers it should apply for.

Scrutiny Protocol

- A joint working group has been established under the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to review the Protocol and make recommendations to the CA regarding how scrutiny can be improved.
- The government has said that long-term compliance with the Scrutiny Protocol is required for deeper devolution.
- It was noted that the Scrutiny Protocol recommends a single, or overarching, committee structure for MCAs, but it is not a requirement.
- Some Members raised concerns that there may be too much CA activity for one scrutiny committee to cover and it may be challenging for members to keep up to date with and understand all areas of work within the CA.
- Other Members suggested a single or overarching committee structure may be more effective to look at interconnecting issues strategically where it goes beyond the committee's remit.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted and the committee's feedback be considered further.
- (ii) That any Members who want to be part of the Scrutiny Protocol Working Group contact the Scrutiny Officer.

24. Bus franchising and BSIP update

A report providing an update on the consultation and next steps of bus reform and the Bus Service Improvement Plan was presented.

Following questions and discussions, the following main points were made:

Mayors Fares funding and next steps

- An additional £11 million for Mayors Fares is being made available to continue the scheme until 2025.
- This enables the CA to remain instep with the Department of Transport (DFT) national scheme which runs until the end of 2024.
- During this time the longer-term position and next steps will be considered further and reported back to committee.

Mayors Fares impact

- A Mayor's Fare Survey, which sits alongside the CA's annual Public Perception for Transport survey, was conducted to understand how effective the Mayors Fares scheme is.
- In conclusion, the survey showed that younger people (19-30) and those who identified as 'Black, Black British, Caribbean or African' and regular bus users were more likely to have increased bus use, which aligns to the national DFT findings.
- Further information on the impact of Mayors Fares on other existing ticket types like mcards will be provided to members.

Affordability vs Reliability

- There is a debate as to whether it is better to invest in affordability or reliability, as if buses are not reliable no amount of affordability will get people on them.
- As a result, BSIP Phase 3 funding intends to balance both affordable and reliability, with around £77 million of funding so far has been allocated fairly evenly between Mayors Fares (affordability) and improving the network, with network improvements to begin next month (reliability).

Punctuality

- Concerns were raised around the apparent drop in punctuality of buses and the impact this could have on modal shift and people's travel choices.
- The CA is working with operators to identify congestion hotspots and to identify alternative routes to avoid these hotspots which are the main contributors to the punctuality issues.

Concessionary ticketing costs

- Further information will be provided to the committee regarding the cost of possibly extending concessionary travel before 9:30 am as has been suggested in the past.

Resolved: That the report be noted and the committee's feedback be considered further.

25. Mass Transit

The Executive Director of Transport provided a report outlining the latest updates on the Mass Transit programme.

Following questions and discussions, the following main points were made:

Potential Mass Transit corridors and fleet

- Both rail and bus network will be needed alongside Mass Transit to provide a reliable Integrated Transport System.
- Mass Transit aims to build on existing services so improvements to bus stations which are already planned by the CA are a key part of Mass Transit.
- Assurance was provided that the CA is working closely with local authorities to understand the needs in each area.
- The CA is looking at all technology options as part of the first phase of work around the fleet.
- There will need to be the right balance between minimising the number of structures needed for Mass Transit (such as use of batteries instead of power lines) and ensuring plans are deliverable.
- It was confirmed that there was funding for the airport station at Otley through the West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund and it is hoping to have the final business case developed in the next two to three months. The CA is in discussion with Network Rail and Northern on how this project fits into the existing rail corridor.
- The CA is interested in any potential travel corridors, not just those

currently included in the Mass Transit Vision. The first step is to develop the basis of a Mass Transit system which is based on the strongest corridors identified.

- There will be a one-off cost associated with this stage such as building depots and securing the fleet. Once this stage is completed then other areas could be considered.
- The decision regarding Bus reform, which the Mayor is due to take later this year, will also influence the overall shape of the Mass Transit network.

Challenges

- There several challenges with the programme, including the timeline which are a challenge in all major transport infrastructure schemes.
- This project will require the CA to receive funding from government in a timely fashion and coordinate closely on use of powers, especially around land acquisition.
- A new sponsor position has been established with the Department of Transport and the Treasury to help support delivery.
- Consultation is also needed to ensure the final plans deliver for communities with the least possible disruption.
- There is a need to learn from other programmes as well as developing realistic timescales and being clear up front there are significant capital costs required for Mass Transit.
- There is also a need to closely monitor the project's costs and is drawing on a range of expertise from around the country including project management, back office and legal skills.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted and the committee's feedback be considered further.
- (ii) That further updates regarding the progress of the Mass Transit be provided to future Committee meetings.

26. Work Programme

Resolved:

- (i) That the work programme be noted.
- (ii) That the Bus Franchising paper which will be provided to the CA in March to be circulated to members once published.

27. Date of the next meeting - 15 March 2024