

**Report to:** West Yorkshire Combined Authority

**Date:** 6 February 2020

**Subject:** **Leeds City Region Mass Transit**

**Director:** Alan Reiss, Director of Policy, Strategy and Communications

**Author(s):** Tom Gifford

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	

## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. To provide an update on mass transit, including the emerging conclusions from the advanced urban transit market testing.
- 1.2. In advance of further capital approval being sought for mass transit development from the Combined Authority in April 2020 (subject to consideration through the Assurance Framework), to recommend that the Combined Authority continues to undertake early preparatory works to plan for mass transit across the Leeds City Region.

## 2. Information

### Latest Position

- 2.1. To support the development of the emerging Connectivity Plan and investment programme, the Combined Authority considered a report in December 2018<sup>1</sup> which opened a conversation about how mass/urban transit could play a role in meeting the future needs of the region. The paper outlined how mass transit can support the region's aims of raising productivity, delivering inclusive

<sup>1</sup> <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=742&Ver=4>

growth, and addressing the climate emergency through clean growth, all of which are underpinned by a 21st Century transport system.

- 2.2. Mass transit also continues to be regularly reported in the press. Mass transit for this region was highlighted as a key Conservative manifesto pledge, as well as being supported by Labour and the Liberal Democrats in the recent general election. The Conservatives also announced in December a £4.2 billion fund for mass transit<sup>2</sup>, which referenced the Leeds City Region as a potential beneficiary.
- 2.3. The Leeds City Region Transforming Cities Fund<sup>3</sup> submission included a £20 million 'ask' for mass transit development funding as well as a commitment to see it delivered from Central Government. West Yorkshire Leaders have also recently written to the new Prime Minister highlighting mass transit as a key priority for the region<sup>4</sup> and it was raised at the recent meeting with the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 2.4. With announcements likely around future funding of mass transit during the next few months, the project team is now looking to accelerate work, with capital funding approvals likely to be sought at the April 2020 Combined Authority for further mass transit development.

### Context

- 2.5. The Leeds City Region is thriving and forecast to grow rapidly in the coming years, creating thousands of new jobs. As the economy grows, there are new employment opportunities across the region, but particularly within city centres. Whilst investment is already taking place through the Growth Deal and other funding sources to transform the transport network, it is clear that the historic underinvestment in the transport system is increasingly constraining the region's prosperity and productivity.
- 2.6. To achieve the region's ambitions around cutting carbon, improving air quality and enabling inclusive growth, it is essential to transform the transport system from one which is currently car dominated to one which offers real alternatives for people in all parts of the region – cities, towns and rural areas. This means investing to create an efficient and integrated transport system which includes walking, cycling, bus, light rail and heavy rail, coupled with meaningfully managing down car travel into dense urban areas in order to create people focused, vibrant neighbourhoods with well-connected district, town, and city centres.
- 2.7. To achieve this, the Combined Authority is taking an integrated approach to an overall vision for transport by:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2019-50651235>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/3373/tcf-exec-summary-final.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/all-news-and-blogs/support-our-ambitions-leaders-urge-prime-minister-to-back-region-s-priorities/>

- 2.7.1. Developing a Connectivity Strategy which will set out a pipeline of interventions for the region's transport network up to the 2040s in order to meet our targets and priorities.
  - 2.7.2. Taking an active role in the sale process of the largest bus operator in West Yorkshire, to guarantee passengers' interest are represented and taken into account whoever ends up owning the company and running services (as set out in Item 10). This is in addition to continuing to work with other City Regions who are different stages of bus franchising.
  - 2.7.3. Through the Bus Alliance, continuing to deliver the Connecting Leeds and West Yorkshire-Plus Transport Fund investment programmes, to help transform the bus offer in the short term.
  - 2.7.4. Developing ideas and possibilities for an advanced mass transit system. Through devolution and Transforming Cities Fund, calling on central Government to fund its development and delivery, so that construction can start from the mid 2020s on a first phase.
  - 2.7.5. Working with Transport for the North and other partners to secure the investment needed to deliver transformational improvements to the rail network. This includes Northern Powerhouse Rail with a city centre Bradford stop, HS2, an upgraded Trans-Pennine line, more local stations and transforming Leeds Station into a world-class transport hub.
  - 2.7.6. Development a vision for the future of the rail network.
  - 2.7.7. Working with partners to develop Local Cycling and Walking Plans.
- 2.8. Cycling, walking, road, rail and bus all have a role in meeting future transport demands and even coupled with investment in the road network, congestion relating to an over reliance on car trips will continue. It is clear from economic and land use evidence that an integrated and affordable mass transit system capable of transporting large numbers of people is required. Mass transit proposals will not only move more people, they will be designed to accelerate and shape future clean growth in the region.
- 2.9. Whilst the cost of implementing mass transit can be high, the scale of benefit for the region is significant. Other cities in the UK and beyond are demonstrating mass transit offers high value for money. Evidence from around the country continues to illustrate that once mass transit opens, it delivers both substantial patronage growth and passenger satisfaction levels which are significantly higher than standard bus services.

2.10. The Combined Authority<sup>5</sup> endorsed opening a conversation about a ‘tube-style’ map indicating the communities most likely to be served by mass transit. In a post-Brexit world, there is a need for a transport system worthy of a region that is seeking to compete on a global stage. There is a significant opportunity to truly transform the transport system over the next decade through blending best in class, innovative technologies to create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century mass transit system.

#### Advanced Urban Transit Technologies: Market Testing / Call for Evidence

2.11. The market testing has been a key tool to establish the views of industry about how mass transit technologies are anticipated to change by the late 2020s/early 2030s.

2.12. The feedback received will help the Combined Authority develop/design an advanced urban transit system which is best in class, to ensure the system meets the region’s priorities of raising productivity, delivering clean and inclusive growth and delivering a 21<sup>st</sup> century transport system.

2.13. The market testing is also a key milestone in ensuring the private sector is influencing from the earliest stages the design and scope of any transit scheme in the region. It is being undertaken in partnership with Universities of Leeds and Huddersfield (who are experts in this field) and is targeted towards all promoters, manufacturers, suppliers, constructors, engineers, system developers and operators of urban transit systems from across the world.

2.14. Following consideration by Transport Committee and LEP Board, a market testing prospectus<sup>6</sup> was published in August 2019 and posed a range of discussion questions, for example including:

- Whether new Urban Transit systems should be designed for autonomous vehicle operation?
- The skills programmes which are required to be in place to maximise the opportunity around development and delivery of an Urban Transit system?
- The prospects of delivering a zero emission system (such as hydrogen or battery power operation) to help address climate change?
- The opportunities for inward investment and the scale of Urban Transit system which would be required in Leeds City Region for a manufacturer to set up a new assembly/manufacturing base for Urban Transit vehicles in this region?

2.15. Around 120 organisations are taking part in the market testing, from sectors including monorail/pod/bus/tram/train manufacturers and operators and consultancies as well as interested stakeholder groups. With the market testing in its final stages of completing, the full feedback is anticipated to be

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<sup>5</sup> <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s10082/Item%207%20-%20Planning%20for%20Growth%20-%20The%20Leeds%20City%20Region%20Connectivity%20Strategy.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> The Prospectus and the Market Testing materials are available online: <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/urban-transit/>

reported to Transport Committee in March, but typical messages received from the market testing so far include:

- Segregation of public transport from general traffic is the most important factor for journey reliability and journey times regardless of the type of vehicle
- As part of an integrated transport strategy, bus, light rail and heavy rail all have an important role. The choice between modes is dependent on level of capacity required and the ambitions of the region
- Regardless of the public transport mode, meaningfully managing down car demand is essential to have any impact on public transport and reducing congestion, cutting carbon and improving air quality
- Transit technologies already exist for autonomous operations, but only in a fully segregated environment (for example, Docklands Light Railway)
- Transit systems which require some interface with car/pedestrians are very likely to continue to require a driver over the next decade due to standards, safety and certification challenges
- Autonomous cars are not a solution to mass transit, they are likely to make congestion worse
- In the short to medium term, battery technologies are likely to be the most viable option, but it is increasingly realistic to plan for end-to-end systems which do not need overhead wires
- Almost all major cities are investing in a combination of bus, bus rapid transit and light rail
- New systems have the opportunity to make use of 21<sup>st</sup> Century digital technologies which will help to revolutionise how mass transit systems are monitored, operated and maintained (for example, moving from a cyclical maintenance regime to the ondemand monitoring system to enable component replacement prior to it failing).

2.16. The full feedback is anticipated within the next few months. The evidence received through the market testing will be used to inform and shape the mass transit strategic outline business case as it develops during 2020. As the business case develops, the next steps would include engagement with local communities to consider the best routes and the blend of transit technologies (which could include bus rapid transit and light rail/tram) that are best required to meet their needs.

2.17. Further reports ahead of any engagement will be brought to the Combined Authority in the coming months.

### **3. Clean Growth Implications**

- 3.1. A net zero carbon advanced mass transit system for West Yorkshire will need to help address the climate emergency and improve air quality, through:
- Utilising zero emission at source vehicles, powered by green electricity
  - Being designed to reduce road space for cars, coupled with disincentivising car trips into dense urban areas
  - Integrated with rail, and bus to encourage mode shift from car

## **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 4.1. An inclusive and advanced mass transit system would be:
- Integrated public transport: buses & 'uber type vehicles' feed mass transit, rather than compete against it
  - 100% accessible: can be used by disabled people, buggy users, cyclists etc
  - Open everyday, serving communities of greatest economic need across the region.
  - A high capacity transit system: so everyone who needs to get to work can do so in comfort
  - Inclusive and affordable: could have more innovative fare options – but beyond farebox, has to be paid for through other sources of revenue

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1. There are no direct financial implications from the report, but to note that mass transit is anticipated to be high cost but also deliver high value for the region.
- 5.2. In April 2018 the Combined Authority allocated £7 million into the Growth Deal Programme (WY+TF Transformational Programme) of which £2.395 million was approved for development of the Inclusive Growth Corridors and undertaking initial feasibility works for schemes including mass transit. Capital approval for the remaining amount is likely to be sought from the April 2020 Combined Authority meeting for development of mass transit, subject to satisfactory progression through the Assurance Framework. This funding will be used to undertake further scheme development including a funding strategy for mass transit.

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1. The market testing is being undertaken through a formal procurement process called a 'prior invitation notice' ('PIN'). This ensures a level playing field for all industry suppliers. However, the market testing should not be viewed as a procurement; it is an opportunity for the Combined Authority and its partners to talk with industry to develop and design an advanced urban transit system.

## **7. Staffing Implications**

- 7.1. Mass transit is continuing to be developed by the Transport Policy team within the Combined Authority, with support from district partners.

## **8. External Consultees**

- 8.1. Subject to endorsement from the Combined Authority, public engagement on mass transit is proposed to take place during 2020. A further report is proposed to be brought to the Combined Authority regarding engagement around Mass Transit.

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1. The Combined Authority notes the emerging conclusions from the advanced urban transit market testing.
- 9.2. In advance of further capital approval being sought for mass transit development from the Combined Authority in April 2020 (subject to consideration through the Assurance Framework), to recommend that the Combined Authority continues to undertake early preparatory works to plan for mass transit across the Leeds City Region.

## **10. Background Documents**

9 November 2018: West Yorkshire Transport Committee – “Planning For Growth: The Leeds City Region Connectivity Strategy”: Agenda Item 7 (plus appendices):<https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=138&MId=730&Ver=4>

13 December 2018: West Yorkshire Combined Authority – “Planning For Growth: The Leeds City Region Connectivity Strategy”: Agenda Item 7 (plus appendices):  
<https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=742&Ver=4>

6 September 2019: Transport Committee: Advanced Urban Transit Technologies – Market Testing:  
<https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s13175/Item%2010%20-%20Connectivity%20Strategy%20Update.pdf>

25 September 2019: LEP Board: Advanced Urban Transit Technologies – Market Testing:  
<https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s13374/Item%206%20-%20Advanced%20Urban%20Transit%20Technologies%20Market%20Testing.pdf>

## **11. Appendices**

None.