

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY
HELD REMOTELY ON TUESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2020**

Present:

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe (Chair)	Bradford Council
Councillor Tim Swift MBE (Deputy Chair)	Calderdale Council
Councillor Judith Blake CBE	Leeds City Council
Councillor Andrew Carter CBE (Substitute)	Leeds City Council
Councillor Andy D'Agorne (Substitute)	York Council
Councillor Stewart Golton	Leeds City Council
Councillor Jack Hemingway (Substitute)	Wakefield Council
Roger Marsh OBE DL	Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership
Councillor Shabir Pandor	Kirklees Council
Councillor Rebecca Poulsen	Bradford Council

In attendance:

Peggy Haywood	MHCLG (minute 53 only)
Councillor Kim Groves	Chair, Transport Committee
Councillor Peter Harrand	Chair, Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Ben Still	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Caroline Allen	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Brian Archer	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Melanie Corcoran	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alan Reiss	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Angela Taylor	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Heather Waddington	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Seamus McDonnell	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Justin Wilson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ruth Chaplin	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

43. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Keith Aspden, Denise Jeffery and Steven Leigh.

44. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Kim Groves declared an other interest in Agenda Item 7, Future-Ready Skills Commission as she is a Director of Inspiring Positive Futures.

45. Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: That in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendices 1-4 to Agenda Item 11 on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information and for the reasons set out in the report that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

46. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Authority held on 4 September 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 4 September 2020 be approved.

47. Covid-19

The Combined Authority considered a report of the Director, Economic Services on COVID-19.

The Chair referred to the national lockdown, rising infections in the region and the effects this was having on the health service and stressed the importance of following national guidelines in order to reduce the infection rate.

The Authority noted the update on the current position and discussed the economic impact the pandemic had had on the region. They expressed their concern regarding the rise in unemployment, particularly amongst the 18-24 age group. The importance of providing skills support and help with training and job opportunities through initiatives such as FutureGoals was discussed and the Authority would continue to work with JobCentre Plus on the Youth Guarantee offer which will include local co-ordination of support for young people through a Youth Hub model.

The details of the business support packages to be provided as a result of the Tier 2, Tier 3 and ultimately the national lockdown were noted and the importance of communicating the support available to small businesses was stressed.

In respect of the economic recovery for West Yorkshire, it was noted that the economic recovery plan which included funding asks had been submitted to Government. This will be further refined and developed subject to future announcements and further understanding of the impact of the crisis and direction of recovery. The outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review

on 25 November 2020 was awaited where the Government will have an opportunity to make further announcements about economic recovery.

The report also provided an update on the transport response. It was reported that bus patronage had been increasing before the national lockdown and Members discussed the impact the new restrictions would have on the demand for public transport. Concern was expressed about the future sustainability of services/routes particularly in the rural areas and the need to press Government regarding future funding was stressed. Discussions were being held with transport operators to ensure service levels continue to support key workers and access to health and education.

Resolved: That progress on the delivery and development of the response to the COVID-19 crisis be noted.

48. Capital Spending and Project Approvals

The Combined Authority considered a report of the Director, Delivery on the progress and funding for the following schemes through the Combined Authority's assurance process:

- Huddersfield Stations Gateway package – preparing for Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) at Huddersfield and opening up employment sites
- Halifax Walking, Cycling and Bus Transformation package – North Halifax cycle super highways, park ward streets for people, bus priority
- Active and Sustainable Travel in Wakefield City Centre
- York Station and City Centre Access package

Members also considered the Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund allocation 2020/21 which was outlined in the submitted report.

In addition, it was noted that since the last meeting, decisions and change requests had been approved by the Investment Committee on the following schemes:

- TCF Leeds Rail Station Sustainable Travel Gateway
- Beech Hill, Halifax
- Strategic Business Growth
- A629 Phase 2: Halifax Town Centre
- Wakefield SE Gateway (Kirkgate)
- Tranche 2 Emergency Active Travel
- Wakefield SE Gateway (Rutland Mills)
- Bradford Heritage Properties (High Point)
- Rail Park and Ride Phase 1 (Steeton & Silsden, Moorthorpe, Normanton)

It was reported that the Investment Committee had considered the Active and Sustainable Travel in Wakefield City Centre and York Station and City

Centre Access package projects at their meeting held on 5 November 2020 and recommended them to the Authority for approval.

Members discussed the importance of provided transport links from rural areas to the transport hubs and it was noted that the West Yorkshire Connectivity Plan would be brought to a future meeting. It was noted that the impact of COVID-19 on travel behaviour into and around towns and cities is assessed as part of scheme appraisal. However, the business cases for some schemes in the submitted report were developed prior to COVID-19 and aim to address issues identified prior to lockdown restrictions. It was acknowledged that whilst public transport patronage is lower than pre COVID-19 levels it remains a priority to invest in public transport infrastructure to both help with economic recovery and to have the required infrastructure in place to respond to increase in demand post COVID-19. As scheme business cases develop further, growth assumptions will be re-tested.

Details of all the schemes were provided in the submitted report.

Resolved:

- (a) In respect of Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund allocation 2020/21 –
 - (i) That the expenditure of the DfT Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund grant totalling £3.334 million be approved.
 - (ii) That the allocations of the DfT Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund grant of £1,075,329 to Bradford, £1,514,155 to Leeds and £744,209 to Wakefield, totalling £3.334 million be approved and that allocations are paid quarterly to partner councils.
- (b) In respect of Huddersfield Stations Gateway package - Preparing for Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) at Huddersfield and opening up employment sites –

That following a recommendation from the Investment Committee, the Combined Authority approves:

- (i) That the Huddersfield Stations Gateway package proceeds through Decision Point 2 and work commences on Activity 3 (outline business case).
- (ii) That an indicative approval to the Combined Authority contribution of £28 million from the Transforming Cities Fund, with full approval to spend once the package has progressed through the assurance process to decision point 5 (full business case plus finalised costs). Total project costs are £42 million (£28 million TCF, £10 million WY+TF and £4 million from Kirklees Council's Kirklees Town Centre Capital fund).

- (iii) That development costs of £0.1 million are approved, to progress the scheme to decision point 3 (outline business case), taking the total approval to £0.916 million.
 - (iv) That the Combined Authority issue an addendum to the existing Funding Agreement with Kirklees Council for expenditure of up to £0.916 million from the Transforming Cities Fund.
 - (v) That future approvals are made in accordance with the approval pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report, which will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the report.
- (c) In respect of Halifax, Walking Cycling and Bus Transformation Package - North Halifax Cycle Super Highways, Park Ward Streets for People, Bus Priority –

That following a recommendation from the Investment Committee, the Combined Authority approves:

- (i) That the Halifax Walking, Cycling, Rail and Bus Transformation package proceeds through decision point 2 and work commences on Activity 3 (outline business case) for individual schemes.
 - (ii) That an indicative approval to the Combined Authority contribution of £53.9 million from the Transforming Cities Fund, with full approval to spend once the package has progressed through the assurance process to decision point 5 (full business case plus finalised costs). Total project costs are £71.805 million (£53.9 million TCF, £16.5 million WY+TF, £0.405 million CMBC and £1 million LTP for Park Ward Streets for People.
 - (iii) That an indicative approval to the total package value of £53.9 million is given from the Transforming Cities Fund with full approval to spend being granted once the scheme has progressed through the assurance process to decision point 5.
 - (iv) That future approvals are made in accordance with the approval pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report, which will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the report.
- (d) In respect of Active and Sustainable Travel in Wakefield City Centre –

That following a recommendation from the Investment Committee, the Combined Authority approves:

- (i) That the Wakefield City Centre Bus, Cycle and Walking improvements package proceeds through decision point 2 and work commences on Activity 3 (outline business case).

- (ii) That an indicative approval to the total package value of £13.6 million is given from the Transforming Cities Fund with full approval to spend being granted once the package has progressed through the assurance process to decision point 5.
- (iii) That development costs of £0.119 million are approved to progress the scheme to decision point 3 (outline business case) bringing the total development costs approval to £0.525 million.
- (iv) That the Combined Authority enters into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with Wakefield Council for expenditure of up to £0.525 million from the Transforming Cities Fund.
- (v) That future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report, which will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the report.

(e) In respect of York Station and City Centre Access Package –

That following a recommendation from the Investment Committee, the Combined Authority approves:

- (i) That the York Station and City Centre Access Gateway package proceeds through Decision Point 2 and work commences on activity 5 (full business case with finalised costs).
- (ii) That an indicative approval to the total package value of £14.547 million is given from the Transforming Cities Fund with full approval to spend being granted once the package has progressed through the assurance process to decision point 5.
- (iii) That future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report, which will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the report.

49. Future-Ready Skills Commission

The Combined Authority considered a report of the Director, Policy, Strategy and Communications on Future-Ready Skills Commission.

The final report of the Future-Ready Skills Commission was launched online on 24 September 2020. Members welcomed the report which set out the blueprint for a radical shift in powers and responsibilities for a future-ready skills systems. They discussed the Skills Commission's recommendations outlined in the submitted report and noted the executive summary which was attached at Appendix 1.

The next steps for implementation and the need for the investment strategy to be aligned with the Skills Commission's recommendation of creating skills

funding for every public infrastructure project were discussed. The importance of inclusivity was recognised and the work of the school partnership team, Kickstart programme and SEN hub noted. The skills gaps in the region were discussed and the aspiration for skills funding to be devolved to local level in order to ensure that training was provided to fill those gaps was emphasised.

Members were thanked for their feedback and a report on the next steps for infrastructure investment and skills would be prepared for a future meeting.

Resolved:

- (a) That the findings of the final report of the Skills Commission be noted.
- (b) That the Combined Authority agrees the next steps of the Commission's work for implementation and a report be prepared for a future meeting.

50. Comprehensive Spending Review

The Combined Authority considered a report of the Director, Policy, Strategy and Communications on the Combined Authority's submission to the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review.

It was reported that the Combined Authority had submitted a representation to the Comprehensive Spending Review which set out detailed proposals aligned to the long-term vision for a more productive, inclusive and greener Leeds City Region. It recognised the significant impact of COVID-19 and focussed on three key areas crucial to enabling a recovery that will deliver for the Leeds City Region and support the national recovery which were outlined in the submitted report.

The Comprehensive Spending Review will be for one year, setting government department's resource and capital budgets for 2021/22 and full details are expected from Government on 25 November 2020.

Resolved: That the content of the Comprehensive Spending Review submission be noted.

51. Business Planning and Budget 2021/22

The Combined Authority considered a report of the Director, Corporate Services on the work underway on the business plan and budgeting for 2021/22.

It was reported that the business planning for 2021/22 will take into account the transition to becoming a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), the response to COVID-19, preparing for the EU exit and the conclusion of funding streams such as the Growth Deal.

Members discussed the current position of the revenue budget for 2020/21 and the projections which indicated a £4.6 million deficit position due to COVID-19. Work was underway to refine the revenue budget forecasts and discussions continue with Government to provide support for the estimated losses.

The budget 2021/22 would be set within the context of the business plan and a revised medium term financial strategy. It was acknowledged that the challenging financial position for local authorities as well as the Combined Authority would make setting the budget difficult, particularly with the uncertainty of future bus funding.

The report set out a number of key budget assumptions including that the gainshare expected as part of the devolution deal is not available for general revenue budget issues. Work on options to address the budget gap without the use of reserves was being undertaken. A further report will be prepared for the Combined Authority meeting to be held on 10 December 2020.

Resolved: That the business planning and budget work being undertaken be noted.

52. Corporate Planning and Performance

The Combined Authority considered a report of the Director, Corporate Services which provided an update on corporate performance including progress against corporate plan priorities, risk management and budget position.

Members noted the summaries of the performance against the key performance indicators and strategic organisational risks which were provided in Appendix 1. A summary of the 2020/21 spend as at August 2020 compared to the approved revenue budget was attached at Appendix 2 and included a RAG rating to identify budgets that need further review.

It was acknowledged that there were a number of 'red' areas of concerns relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Key impacts were being felt across commercial income, bus station costs, commission from travel card/MCard sales, bus revenues (for gross cost contracts) and transport service costs.

Resolved: That the information provided on corporate performance be noted.

53. European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) – Sustainable Urban Development (SUD)

The Combined Authority considered a report of the Director, Corporate Services on the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) – Sustainable Urban Development (SUD).

It was reported that the Investment Committee had considered the detail and endorsed the advice included in each of the outline assessments and the prioritised list which were attached as exempt Appendices 2-4.

In its role as the Intermediate Body (IB), the Combined Authority considered and agreed the advice provided in the exempt appendices. The assessment forms will now be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) who, as Managing Authority (MA), will finalise its assessment and make its decision based on a reconciliation to the available budget.

It was also agreed that once the MA has reconciled the budget, the final selection of projects be delegated to the Director, Corporate Services in consultation with the Chair of the Combined Authority.

Resolved:

- (a) That the Combined Authority, in its role as the Intermediate Body, approves the advice included in the outline assessment forms at part 3 of exempt Appendices 2, 3 and 4, the decision and any respective conditions outlined in part 5a, in its role as the Intermediate Body for the SUD part of the ESIF programme, and the prioritisation list for SUD included in exempt Appendix 1.
- (b) That once the MA has reconciled to the budget, the final selection of projects be delegated to the Director, Corporate Services in consultation with the Chair of the Combined Authority, as required, to ensure no further delays in progressing applications under the European programme occur.

54. Minutes for Information

The Combined Authority noted the minutes of the committees and panels that have been published on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's website since the last meeting.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Combined Authority's committees and panels be noted.