

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WAKEFIELD DISTRICT CONSULTATION SUB-COMMITTEE
HELD REMOTELY ON THURSDAY, 18 MARCH 2021**

Present:

Councillor Kevin Swift (Chair)	Transport Committee
Cliff Baker (Public Representative)	Public Representative
David Hogg (Public Representative)	Public Representative

In attendance:

Kim Purcell	Arriva Yorkshire
Dwayne Wells	Arriva Yorkshire
Pete Myers	Arriva Rail North Limited
Dave Pearson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Tom Gifford	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
James Nutter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ruth Chaplin	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

21. Open Forum

No questions had been received from members of the public prior to the meeting and no issues were raised which were not covered on the agenda.

22. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from public representatives, Usman Ali and Nigel Ashton.

23. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no pecuniary interests declared by members at the meeting.

24. Exempt Information - Possible exclusion of the press and public

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

25. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2020 be approved.

26. Chair's Update

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that Wakefield District Council's elected members had been invited to participate in the workshop session on the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan.

27. Information Report

The Sub-Committee noted a report which provided an update on matters relating to the Wakefield district.

It was noted that the Transport Committee receive updates on regional and national issues and the latest information was available on the Combined Authority's website. A list of current project activity in the Wakefield district was attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

The continuing challenges of providing bus services during the pandemic and the funding issues were discussed. Approximately 90% of bus services were being provided focussing on the most needed areas but the social distancing measures only allowed buses to carry half their normal capacity. The importance of promoting safe travel and encouraging passengers remained a priority for the operators and the Combined Authority.

It was noted that the Government had recently announced £3 billion funding allocated to a bus strategy to help the longer term recovery. Whilst this was welcomed by the Sub-Committee, it was noted that it did not however address current funding issues.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

28. Operator Updates

The meeting was attended by representatives from the rail and bus operators who provided the Sub-Committee with updates.

Arriva

Arriva provided an update on the current bus network in the Wakefield district which included the reinstatement of Monday to Friday services. As previously reported, the services were working on reduced capacity but additional vehicles were being provided for busy services, eg. school journeys.

From 12 April 2021, Saturday services would be reinstated to pre-pandemic levels and Arriva were looking forward to welcoming passengers back.

Northern

Northern advised that patronage remained very low compared to pre-Covid figures although the return to school had increased the figures. The Combined Authority were thanked for their recent help in providing bus services to assist in the increased patronage on the Wharfedale Line due to young people returning to education.

A new timetable would be introduced on 16 May 2021 when it was expected there would be a significant upturn in patronage particularly due to the return to leisure activities.

In respect of Wakefield Kirkgate Station, Northern apologised that they had not been able to provide a temporary shelter on platforms 2 and 3 because it would not have been able to withstand the weather due to its positioning on an embankment. The plans to build a new permanent waiting room would go ahead and be completed by Grand Central.

It was reported that the waiting room at Castleford Station was completed and a café would be opened once lockdown restrictions were lifted.

Resolved: That the operators be thanked for their updates.

29. Workshop Session - Connectivity Infrastructure Plan

The Sub-Committee was given a presentation on the Combined Authority's Connectivity Infrastructure Plan which set out a long-term transport infrastructure programme for the next 20 years.

The plan comprised a series of documents which brought bus, active travel, rail, mass transit and future mobility together into a single integrated plan for the region, with plans and proposals supported by a series of evidence based reports.

Feedback was being sought on all aspects of the plan and elected members of Wakefield District Council had been invited to participate in the workshop as part of the public engagement process.

The following questions and comments were raised:

- Comment made that electric cars still cause pollution.
- Difficult to see how HS2 will benefit Wakefield and concerns re cost raised.
- Disappointing that not much emphasis on South Wakefield in the plans.
- Concerns raised re tram train using rail routes .
- Would like services to Doncaster/Goole in future.
- Need to ensure good local connectivity eg to Bradford and Liverpool.
- Must have connectivity to 5 towns.
- Punctuality and reliability essential.
- Need to ensure evening services provided for shift workers
- Cost of bus fares – it is expensive to travel short distances

It was noted that all the information was on the website and the Sub-Committee and Wakefield Councillors were thanked for their valuable feedback.

Resolved: That the presentation and feedback be noted.