

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2022 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 Manisha Roma Kaushik (Deputy Chair)	Kirklees Council
Councillor Martyn Bolt	Kirklees Council
Councillor Neil Buckley	Leeds City Council
Councillor Aafaq Butt	Kirklees Council
Councillor Peter Clarke	Bradford Council
Councillor Andy D'Agorne	York Council
Councillor Colin Hutchinson	Calderdale Council
Councillor Melanie Jones	Wakefield
Councillor Hassan Khan	Bradford Council
Councillor Matthew McLoughlin	Kirklees Council
Councillor Matthew Morley	Wakefield Council
Councillor Taj Salam	Bradford Council
Councillor Kevin Swift	Wakefield Council
Councillor Eleanor Thomson	Leeds City Council
Councillor Izaak Wilson	Leeds City Council

In attendance:

Dave Pearson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Liz Hunter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Kevin Murray	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Helen Ellerton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Dave Haskins	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ian Parr	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

18. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Amir Hussain, Cllr Peter Caffrey, Cllr Lou Cunningham, Cllr Eric Firth, Cllr Helen Hayden, Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw, and Cllr Jane Scullion

19. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

Cllr Taj Salam disclosed his employment with First Bus.

Cllr Eleanor Thomson disclosed her husband is an employee of Atkins.

20. Exempt information - possible exclusion of the press and public

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

21. Minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee held on 1 July 2022

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee held on 1 July 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair.

22. Mini-Budget - Accelerated Schemes

The Transport Committee considered a report providing details on the projects and programmes that were highlighted in the recent 'mini-budget' released by the Central Government. Officers clarified that there were nine West Yorkshire schemes that were named as candidates for acceleration, and updates are provided in the report for each.

It was raised that significant changes to the government were announced in the time between the publication of papers and the time of the meeting, and so it is uncertain if the details of the accelerated schemes will remain as presented in the mini-budget. Officers explained that progress is already being made on some of the projects such as the TransPennine Route Upgrade, and there is more concern regarding the impact of inflation on existing work than on whether the work will go ahead. Relevant meetings for each project continue to be undertaken to raise and manage issues regarding project delivery.

Resolved: The Transport Committee:

Approved that the Chair of Transport Committee writes to the Secretary of State, Transport to provide an overview of the progress that we are making on the named schemes, and to set out what government input is required to support the principles of accelerating projects.

Welcomed the establishing of an NPR 'Acceleration Board' locally to support expedited decision-making and progress on this key scheme.

23. Bus Service Revenue funding and Expenditure

Members considered an update on the position regarding Government funding for bus services and the implications for service delivery, as well as to set out some of the specific financial pressures impacting on spend on bus service and the actions taken to address additional costs emerging from the situation.

Officers explained that the bus network has not yet fully recovered from the pandemic, and that inflation is also causing further cost pressure. During the pandemic, the bus network was supported by the Government which has recently extended the support from October to December 2022. It is believed the support will be further extended to March 2023 but this has not yet been

confirmed. There remains to be a funding gap which makes future planning difficult, and it is important to encourage the Government to provide longer term support and plans which will ease pressure on operators to cut services.

The Combined Authority continues to spend on bus services, such as by supporting school services after the collapse of CT Plus. There was money available due to an underspend in the concessionary fares budget, however Inflation has resulted in higher spending than anticipated and as a result the Combined Authority is organising its budgets to accommodate. Further updates will be provided as the budget process continues.

Members raised concerns that many areas of West Yorkshire are rural and served by only one operator, and so service cuts can impact or cut off entire communities. Services are also not being restored to pre-pandemic levels as had been promised by some operators, and so schools are being impacted by infrequent services causing students to arrive late to schools. Officers responded there are still reports of low staffing levels which is preventing the restoration of services to pre-pandemic levels, and the schools issue is already being addressed. The Combined Authority has supported the recruitment and training of bus drivers which has lessened the overall impact, and further updates can be provided at a future meeting.

Resolved: The Transport Committee:

Approved that the Chair of Transport Committee writes to the Secretary of State for Transport urging that a clear funding plan for bus services is included in the Government's forthcoming fiscal review

Noted the current position with bus service and concessionary fare spending and the actions being taken to mitigate the current budgetary position.

24. Bus Service Improvement Plan Update

Members considered a report to provide an update on the Department for Transport funding for the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Officers explained the Combined Authority was successful in its bid for BSIP funding, and have a settlement of under slightly under £70 million over the next three years. The funding has been confirmed by a letter from the Secretary of State, and subject to the decision at the 21 October Combined Authority meeting, the Transport Committee will oversee delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The Mayor's fares were introduced at the beginning of September using BSIP funding, with the decision taken to bring the start date forward to before the new academic year. Officers explained it is still too early to present a clear picture of the impact of the scheme, and usage will be tracked over a three-month period. At the time of the meeting there are roughly 10,000 users each day.

It was questioned if the BSIP funding will be used to restore services or to purchase vehicles, and what checks are in place to monitor the spending. Officers responded that there is no exact definition of how the funding should be used, but it will not be used to buy buses or restore any reduced services, and the spending will be demonstrated to the Government against a set plan. The Combined Authority will aim for the best value for money and to attract as many people to use the bus as possible. There are existing agreements with operators to introduce new low-emission buses to the network, as well as funding streams such as the Zero-Emission Bus Regional Area programme which is dedicated to the same purpose.

Resolved: The Transport Committee:

Noted the update on the Bus Service Improvement Plan and that funding has been confirmed by the Department for Transport subject to the making of the Bus Service Improvement Plan Enhanced Partnership Scheme following statutory consultation.

Noted that the operation of the Mayor's Fare be funded for the first 3 months from the Combined Authority's concessionary fares revenue budget. The cost of the first three months of the scheme is estimated at £3m.

Accepted the delegation of authority to approve the Bus Service Improvement Plan strategic outline case in accordance with the Assurance Framework, so that delivery can commence in line with the tight delivery timeframes, subject to the agreement of the Combined Authority at its meeting on 21 October 2022

25. Bus Network Plan - Development Update

Members received a report providing an update on the development of a bus network vision and implementation plan, which will inform deployment of Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding and the Combined Authority's response to ongoing commercial challenges faced by the bus industry.

The Chair encouraged Transport Committee members to return their lists of transport priorities to WYCA officers which will assist in the design of the Bus Network Plan.

Members noted that the report suggests the BSIP funding will target areas of high deprivation and questioned if it is ward-level data or more targeted. Officers confirmed the data is taken from the census super-output area data which should target the areas of deprivation within wards.

Resolved: The Transport Committee noted the progress made to date on development of the bus network plan and endorses the next steps, including development of the funding criteria to prioritise investment in services.

26. Governance Update

Members considered a report providing an update on member roles and transport engagement matters for the 2022/23 municipal year.

Officers explained they held a meeting with the Transport Engagement leads in August to clarify their roles and set outlines for the first district engagement sessions, with further information to be sent to district engagement leads following the meeting. Members questioned if there should be two meetings per year or a minimum of two meetings per year, officers answered it should be a minimum and the report would be amended.

Resolved: The Transport Committee:

Noted the thematic roles of the Deputy Chairs set out in paragraph 2.2.

Noted the arrangements to be put in place to support the role of the Transport Engagement Leads including proposals for Local Transport Forums set out in paragraphs 2.4 to 2.11.

27. Mass Transit Vision 2040 Statutory Consultation

Members considered a report to provide an update on the proposals for statutory consultation on the Mass Transit Vision 2040 document in October 2022. Officers explained the consultation begin on 17 October and continue over the subsequent 12 weeks. Members were invited to provide their own feedback to the consultation.

Members raised concerns there have been no projected route maps released so far, officers answered that there will be maps drawn along with further consultation at a later stage in the process.

Resolved: The Transport Committee:

Noted and endorsed the timescales and proposals for the statutory consultation for the Mass Transit 2040 Vision document.

Were invited to provide any further feedback on the Mass Transit Vision 2040 document, and consultation and engagement processes.

28. Active Travel Update

Members considered a report providing an update on Active Travel policy and funding at the Combined Authority in light of the creation of Active Travel England (ATE), and to provide an update on the success of previous bidding and the outline approach and timeline for future funding applications.

Officers explained that Active Travel England will oversee inspection and scheme design for projects, ensuring the cycling and walking infrastructure is embedded within all highway schemes. The Combined Authority has been successful in a bid for £1.6 million of funding to support active travel in West Yorkshire. The funding was based on a self-assessment for each West Yorkshire district, and all districts have been awarded level 3 status which grants eligibility to bid for further funding from ATE in the future.

Members questions if ATE will have oversight of pipeline projects, officers confirmed they will and that there is a desire to begin working together on projects as early as possible. Members welcomed the oversight as a way to ensure current and future projects meet minimum standards for active travel, and suggested inviting representatives of ATE to a future committee meeting. Officers suggested the Active Travel Working Group meeting, to which all Transport Committee members are already invited.

Resolved: The Transport Committee:

Noted the Combined Authority's ambition to work closely with Active Travel England across its portfolio of projects and support the development of this new organisation.

Noted the significant change in the nature, ambition and scale of active travel funding that is forthcoming as a result of Active Travel England's role.

Endorsed the submission by the Combined Authority to the Capacity and Ambition Fund.

Supported the continued development of an Active Travel Strategy for West Yorkshire.

Supported the development of a pipeline of future Active Travel capacity and infrastructure schemes to inform future funding awards.

Supported the invitation of Active Travel England to a future Active Travel Working Group meeting

29. The Mayor's West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan

Members considered a report providing an update on the government's anticipated plans to update Local Transport Plan Guidance, and to provide an update on the development of the Mayor's new Local Transport Plan for West Yorkshire.

Officers explained the Department for Transport requires all local authorities to have a new plan by March 2024, with suggested timescales available within the next month. The plan sets out the overall objectives for transport in West Yorkshire, and it is suggested to hold a workshop with Transport Committee members to develop the content.

Members suggested including climate change and the safety of women and girls on public transport as key principles within the strategy. Members also suggested that transport modes such as taxis are also included within the plan. Officers responded that the guidelines for how to develop the plan will be released shortly, which will in turn allow for more targeted content for each of the West Yorkshire regions.

Resolved: The Transport Committee:

Noted the anticipated government update to Local Transport Plan Guidance.

Noted the development of an updated West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, and the timeline for this to be presented for adoption in early 2024.

Agreed to have a workshop on the emerging direction of the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan.

30. Transport Policy Update Report

The committee members considered a report providing a quarterly update on relevant transport policy developments, including details from the most recent Transport for the North meetings and Rail North Committee meetings. There are further updates about the Transpennine Route Upgrade and Electric Vehicle infrastructure strategy for which WYCA was unsuccessful in bidding for the pilot scheme.

Members questioned why the electric vehicle pilot scheme bid was unsuccessful, officers explained there has not yet been any feedback, but most of the successful bids appear to be from rural areas and so those bids may have been more suitable candidates for the funding. It is a requirement for the Combined Authority to write an EV strategy document which will outline the potential business models and infrastructure to be trialled in West Yorkshire.

Resolved: The Transport Committee:

Noted the updates provided in this report.

Endorsed the approach for Rail Station Accessibility set out in this report including the identified match funding in support of the Access for All station nominations

31. Passenger Experience Update Report

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

Members raised concerns regarding the widespread customer dissatisfaction with bus operators due to late and cancelled services, and requested that operators are invited to a future Transport Committee meeting to respond to the members in person. Officers agreed to invite representatives from the major operators, and reiterated that the Mayor and leaders are in contact with operators to voice concerns and ensure issues are addressed as necessary.

Resolved: The Transport Committee note the updates provided on the Passenger Experience in West Yorkshire provided in this report.