

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 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 Caffrey	Calderdale Council
Councillor Andy D'Agorne	York Council
Councillor Eric Firth	Kirklees Council
Councillor Colin Hutchinson	Calderdale Council
Councillor Hassan Khan	Bradford Council
Councillor Jane Scullion	Calderdale Council
Councillor Kevin Swift	Wakefield Council
Councillor Eleanor Thomson	Leeds City Council
Councillor Izaak Wilson	Leeds City Council

In attendance:

Tony Baxter	Northern Trains
Pete Myers	Northern Trains
Tom Bridge	First Group
Brandon Jones	First Group
Graham Meiklejohn	TransPennine Express
Kim Purcell	Arriva Yorkshire
Dave Pearson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Melanie Corcoran	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Helen Ellerton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ian Parr	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

32. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Amir Hussain, Cllr Peter Clarke, Cllr Lou Cunningham, Cllr Sinead Engel, Cllr Helen Hayden, Cllr Melanie Jones, Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw, and Cllr Taj Salam.

33. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

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

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

35. Minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee held on 14 October 2022

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee held on 14 October 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair.

36. Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership Update and approvals

Transport Committee members received an update on the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding, the Mayor's Fares, the Bus Network Plan development, and the corresponding Enhanced Partnership scheme. Approval of funding was requested for delivery costs for the Mayor's Fares scheme, and development costs for other schemes within the BSIP portfolio.

Officers confirmed the agreement of the enhanced partnership scheme, which was a requirement to access the BSIP funding. Officers confirmed that the Department for Transport will honour the payment despite recent economic changes, and so the Combined Authority will be able to draw down the funding to deliver the component schemes. Transport Committee members have taken part in workshops to discuss the schemes, and more workshops will take place for future updates.

Officers provided an update regarding the Mayor's Fares scheme. Early indications show that bus patronage has increased among adults compared with the months prior to the introduction of the scheme, though a more detailed analysis will be undertaken using the first three months of data. Customer feedback has been positive, and members were encouraged to share their own or any other feedback. Members requested to see the bus patronage data in a report, officers replied that they are still working with operators to obtain and analyse the data.

Members raised concerns regarding the cost of the Mayor's fares scheme, suggesting other potential network improvements that could be made with the same funding. Officers confirmed that BSIP funding can be used alongside City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding, alongside additional funds such as section 106 for further improvements.

Members raised concerns about the reported figure for marketing costs. Officers confirmed that the marketing covers promotions and also education as a deterrent to antisocial behaviour which has been prevalent around West Yorkshire. Updates can be provided to the committee at a future meeting.

Members questioned the reported value for money of the BSIP scheme. Officers responded the figure is based on the entire BSIP programme,

however the programme will be made up of smaller elements which will be analysed individually and presented separately to the Transport Committee for approval. The initial funding request was for £100 million but the final figure is slightly under £70 million and so this should be considered when assessing the maximum achievable value. The Department for Transport requires annual reporting but since there has been a delay in receiving the funding the reporting dates will need to be set. Officers confirmed Transport Committee members will see the figures to be reported to the DfT before they are sent.

Resolved:

That the updates on the Enhanced Partnership and the implementation of the Bus Service Improvement Plan be noted.

The following be approved subject to the conditions recommended by the Project Appraisal Team and set out in the decision point certificate:

- (i) The Bus Service Improvement Plan proceeds through decision point 2 (strategic outline case) and work commences on development of the relevant business case for each individual scheme.
- (ii) An indicative approval to the Combined Authority Costs of up to £69,974,070 is given. The total programme cost is £69,974,070.
- (iii) Approval to the delivery costs to May 2023 of £11,893,176 for the Mayors Fares scheme are given and work commences on activity 4 (full business case). The total scheme value is £33,974,070.
- (iv) Approval to the delivery costs of £1,000,000 for the Enhanced Safer Travel Partnership scheme (under the Supporting Bus Priority & Safety theme) are given and work commences on activity 5 (delivery)
- (v) Approval to the delivery costs of £1,000,000 for the Business to Customer Sales and Marketing, including behaviour change, (under the Clear and Simple Fares theme) are given and work commences on activity 5 (delivery).
- (vi) Approval to the delivery costs of £500,000 for the Travel Plan Network Team (under the Clear and Simple Fares theme) are given and work commences on activity 5 (delivery).
- (vii) Approval to the development cost of £2,430,000 is given.
- (viii) The Combined Authority provides funding to bus operators for the Mayor's Fares scheme under an adopted Reimbursement Scheme the operation of which is delegated to the Director of Transport & Property Services.

- (ix) Future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report and where required, any change requests are delegated to the Transport Committee. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the Appendix to this report.

37. Bus and Rail Service Performance Update

Officers noted the members' concerns raised at the previous meeting regarding the performance of bus and rail operators in West Yorkshire, and directed members towards the report featuring performance figures along with further input from the operators. Representatives from First Group, Arriva, TransPennine Express, and Northern Trains were in attendance to respond to questions from members.

Bus operators welcomed the BSIP funding and the Enhanced Partnership, and expressed the need for joint working towards service improvement. First Bus raised a variety of factors contributing to lower performance standards, with the largest factor at the time of the meeting being driver shortages. The leisure market remains strong while commuting is still down compared to pre-pandemic levels. Operators continue to invest in new vehicles and in the network, including promoting buses to customers to encourage them to return. Arriva added that additional time is being factored into each journey to keep services operating to the timetable, and any savings made are being reinvested into service improvements.

Members requested to see more data showing which services are the least punctual and most often cancelled, and queried if that data informs which services are cut. Officers responded the data is available but there is a need to work with operators to analyse it at route level. The data may not always show issues where the operator is not at fault, for example road closures or traffic incidents causing backlogs. Operators confirmed that in the case of driver absences, more frequent services are cancelled to provide cover so customers on hourly buses are not inconvenienced. School and hospital routes are prioritised to reduce the impact on those who need it most.

Members asked driver shortages are a matter of higher pay to resolve the issue. Operators responded that pay is an issue and that many drivers were lost to haulage firms during the pandemic. Some of those drivers have since returned to the bus industry, however there is now a reluctance to work unsociable hours. Operators have worked with the unions and introduced part-time contracts and more flexible working arrangements where possible to make the job more attractive. Operators acknowledged that drivers are the face of the business and some routes carry more stress than others, which can affect drivers and cause them to take absence from work. Studies have been undertaken with the NHS to monitor the issue, and programs such as mental health first-aiders have been introduced. Other factors for absences include the health of the drivers, NHS backlogs delaying treatment, and Covid-19 cases, among others.

Concerns were raised about the frequency of full buses which are driving past stops. Operators responded that there are occasions where successive

buses are full, and mitigations are put in place wherever possible however it can be difficult to predict passengers numbers in the short term over the entire network.

Members queried if customers are still entitled to claim compensation in the case the last service of the day is cancelled. Arriva informed the members that the journey guarantee is available and vouchers are provided via the app, which in most cases is more convenient for customers and drivers, but other means of compensation are available.

Members questioned how cuts to services are decided despite operators still receiving the Bus Recovery Grant. Arriva responded the impact of inflation has increased the price of fuel, and higher driver wages mean the recovery grant does not go as far as many would hope. There is eligibility criteria required to receive recovery grant funding which is being met.

Members raised concerns about the impact of road works on buses. Officers responded that joint meetings between the Combined Authority, local authorities, and operators take place to minimise the disruption caused by roadworks. In most cases the disruptions are minimal but larger works can cause more congestion because cars divert through smaller roads. The disruptions are most often short-term and result in more bus priority and alternative routes for drivers.

Members raised that they have received complaints about a lack of staff and information points in some stations. TransPennine expressed an apology for the drop in service levels to the committee members and any affected members of the public. TransPennine noted there are over 500 train drivers which is more than ever before, however there is a backlog of staff training which has been compounded by delays due to the pandemic. There are also ongoing strikes which disrupt services and cause cancellations at relatively short notice, and regular illnesses which cannot always be covered.

Members raised the high frequency of short notice cancellations. Transpennine recognised the need to ensure access to appropriate information in all stations, and noted that there will be timetable changes in December 2022 which will introduce improvements to the schedule and reduce cancellations. The Transpennine route upgrade will begin in 2023 which will reduce the number of cancellations due to network failures. Rail replacement services are provided wherever possible but the supply chain for buses is also experiencing issues. Some smaller stations do not have the infrastructure to make buses accessible, and drivers are not always fully briefed on suitable pick up points, which will be reaffirmed in dialogue with bus suppliers.

Members reiterated their desire to see more detailed rail performance data, including data for Grand Central due to its links to London making it an important route for customers. Members requested that operators review their customer charters to clarify their options in the case of cancellations, and to ensure that customers are informed about how to find the charter.

Members thanked operators for attending the meeting.

Resolved: That the updates on bus and rail service performance provided in this report be noted.

38. Project Approvals

TCF South Bradford Park and Ride and Expressway

Officers informed members that the scheme is will encourage cleaner travel into Bradford city centre by providing bus priority, cycle storage, and electric vehicle infrastructure.

TCF Bradford Interchange Sustainable Access

Officers informed members that the scheme will create access to Bradford interchange from Hall Ings and will redevelop the interchange into an improved transport hub. The existing NCP car park on Hall Ings, will be demolished to create the space needed to make these improvements.

Members questioned if there will be alternative routes for cyclists, officers responded that a segregated cycle lane on Manchester Road had been ruled out due to budget constraints, however an existing route has been identified as an alternative.

Resolved:

With respect to TCF South Bradford Park and Ride and Expressway, the Transport Committee approved that:

- (i) The change request to the TCF South Bradford Park and Ride and Expressway to approve development costs of £2,191,774 to continue business case development, taking the total scheme approval to £3,546,774. Release of funding to be phased with delegation to the Directory of Delivery to approve Phase 2 funding which will be dependent upon an update being presented to the PAT on the funding strategy for the scheme:
 - Phase 1 – £1,866,449
 - Phase 2 - £325,325
- (ii) The Combined Authority enters an addendum to the existing Funding Agreement with Bradford Council for expenditure of up to £3,546,774.
- (iii) Future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in this report.

With respect to TCF Bradford Interchange Station Access, the Transport Committee approved that:

- (i) The change request to the TCF Bradford Interchange Station Access scheme for development costs of £3,367,272, comprising £380,500 to continue business case development and £2,986,772 advance demolition of the NCP car park, taking the total scheme approval to £6,404,722.
- (ii) The Combined Authority enters an addendum to the existing Funding Agreement with Bradford Council for expenditure of up to £6,404,722.
- (iii) Future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in this report.