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Report to: West Yorkshire Combined Authority

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Subject: A Clearer West Yorkshire Combined Authority Brand Identity

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<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

- 1.1 To set out for the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's (WYCA) discussion, options for a clearer, more compelling brand identity for the organisation and wider region that would better enable it to achieve its communications and profile-raising objectives.
- 1.2 To set out what a potential implementation plan for an organisational rebrand could look like, detailing the changes needed to be made to both communications channels and assets and non-communications activities such as processes, systems and organisational culture.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) was formed in April 2014 by bringing together the teams that formerly supported the Passenger Transport Executive (Metro), the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Regional Economic and Intelligence Unit of Leeds City Council, and the inward investment function of Leeds and Partners. Each of these teams previously operated under its own, independent identity.
- 2.2 The existing WYCA logo (and its associated communications channels) was developed as a temporary identity with the sole purpose of meeting legislative requirements around the creation of the WYCA. Now that the organisation's remit is more established, this identity is no longer fit for purpose in terms of communicating the scale of WYCA's work and investments to local people, partners and government, or able to represent and project the region effectively in a competitive national and international investment context.

- 2.3 Following substantial engagement, stakeholders have commented that WYCA has a confused, fragmented identity. This fragmentation is a barrier to achieving WYCA's communications objectives as well as to realising the full benefits of internal culture change. Moreover, it does not represent good value to the taxpayer with several recent projects/ campaigns having developed separate brands and channels at extra cost due to the absence of an effective, flexible corporate identity.
- 2.4 Developing a more strategic, coherent WYCA brand identity has therefore been identified as a key element of WYCA's One Organisation change programme. The primary objectives of this piece of work are to:
- 1) **improve external perceptions of the organisation and region** among local, national and international audiences in terms of: attracting a greater share of business investment to the region, strengthening its reputation among government and partner organisations, and enhancing local people's understanding of councils' partnership working via the WYCA.
 - 2) **contribute significantly to the successful realisation of the One Organisation programme** by developing a clear, consistent understanding of the organisation's purpose and activities among employees and partners, and acting as a catalyst for internal culture change.
 - 3) **achieve cost savings** and greater communications impact through fewer brands.
- 2.5 The scope of this piece of work is to achieve the above objectives. It does not imply any changes to political or corporate governance, which is being explored as part of a separate workstream.

3. Project progress to date

- 3.1 At the initial phase of this project, comprehensive research was carried out – including benchmarking the WYCA against other combined authorities nationally and internationally, an audit of existing communications activity by the organisation, and substantial engagement with audiences including elected members, local authority Chief Executives, private sector business leaders, central government officials, partner organisations and WYCA employees.
- 3.2 **Summary outcomes of research and stakeholder engagement:** the research and stakeholder engagement phase highlighted the following issues/ opportunities:
- The current WYCA logo and its associated communications channels **do not benchmark well against other combined authority identities** nationally or internationally – particularly authorities with a core city of comparable size to Leeds.
 - Current **communications and marketing activity is highly fragmented** – with at least 30 different brands, sub-brands and campaign identities across the

organisation which make it confusing for customers, partners and other audiences to understand what the WYCA does and how it represents value for money.

- Stakeholders highlighted that **the following issues** in particular could be clearer:
 - The respective roles of the WYCA and LEP
 - The different geographies represented by the WYCA
 - What the WYCA is and does (and does not do) - WYCA is too often considered to be just a transport body
 - Relationships between its constituent parts
 - At a national and international level the West Yorkshire brand is not considered to be strong enough

- Businesses cited **good levels of awareness of the LEP among the private sector** in Leeds City Region and the need for a consistent and independent body to champion the needs of local firms

- Equally, audience research highlighted **high levels of recognition of the Metro brand among the travelling public**. Even if the full scope of the WYCA's remit in relation to transport is not completely understood, evidence strongly supports the view that customers clearly identify the "M" logo with the public transport network.

3.3 In response to this research, a **new brand platform** for the organisation – including new vision and mission statements, values and behaviours – was developed to set out a clear view of what the organisation is and stands for. This is enclosed at **Appendix 1**.

3.4 Another aspect of the WYCA's identity that has been considered as part of the project – largely due to the concerns highlighted through stakeholder engagement around geography and national/ international impact – is its **name**.

3.5 A number of naming options have been explored, including a Yorkshire-based identity (along the lines of Yorkshire Forward) and a neutral identity that does not reference geography. These two options have not been taken forward following stakeholder testing: it was felt that the former was too reminiscent of previous structures, while the latter gave no indication to the remit of the organisation and would therefore be difficult and costly to implement. The two options considered to be feasible are: 1) maintaining the name West Yorkshire Combined Authority or 2) changing the name of the organisation to Leeds City Region Combined Authority. Other naming options were considered at an earlier stage of the project but testing ruled them out in terms of recognition and suitability.

3.6 Undertaking a rebrand of the organisation under the existing name would have the main benefit of making such an exercise simpler and quicker to deliver, however it does not address some of the sources of audience confusion highlighted through the

engagement exercise – notably due to different geographies and the lack of clarity this creates around products/ services that operate across the City Region. The following benefits of a name change to Leeds City Region Combined Authority have been identified:

- **Leeds City Region has been the basis for inward investment and place marketing since 2011** and during this time, significant improvements in inward investment performance have been identified. In 2011 West Yorkshire ranked **15th in the country for FDI behind the likes of Manchester, Newcastle, Birmingham and Tees Valley** (source: fDi Intelligence). In May 2017 it was announced that the region had recorded the best results for foreign direct investment (FDI) for 20 years, and that Leeds City Region now ranks third in England – ahead of any other northern region (source: EY).
- Following substantial engagement with key regional businesses, **Leeds is considered by those businesses to have stronger recognition and brand perception nationally and internationally**. Adding “City Region” enables the WYCA, as it does at present, to leverage the strengths of the core city brand while also making clear the significant scale, opportunities and assets of the wider region, including the USPs and distinct characteristics of Bradford, Wakefield, Calderdale, Kirklees, York and the wider region. West Yorkshire meanwhile is felt to have more limited recognition and brand perception outside of the region.
- **Leeds City Region better reflects the area in which the WYCA operates and offers its services**. It reflects the functional economic geography, the SEP geography, the LEP area, the Growth Deal and Transport Fund geography, the ESIF geography, the area covered by current Economic Services products and the geography that the WYCA markets nationally and internationally to attract inward investment. West Yorkshire meanwhile, only reflects the former Metro footprint for transport services.
- **The city region identity is the one used by comparator/ competitor regions** nationally (such as Greater Manchester, Sheffield City Region and Liverpool City Region) and internationally. It is the geographic area that typically forms the basis of successful place marketing globally (for example Copenhagen, Amsterdam and Helsinki).
- Reaching a timely agreement to present the organisation and wider partnership under a Leeds City Region identity would **send a clear and confident message to the marketplace (notably the private sector) about the clarity of vision and strength of partnership working** in the City Region and what this is achieving building on 13 years of collaborative working.
- It provides a clear, consistent identity for all parts of the organisation to unite under, helping to **fulfil the objectives of the One Organisation programme** and drive internal culture change.

- 3.7 Any **name change would not suppose any change to CA governance structures/ membership**, nor to politicians' continued negotiations around devolution. These would continue to be progressed under existing, separate arrangements.
- 3.8 **Links with other brands:** Regardless of which naming approach may be agreed, it is proposed that the LEP and Metro brands would be maintained under a wider Combined Authority umbrella brand, acknowledging their unique roles and high levels of recognition among their respective audiences. Some minor modifications to these existing brands would be made as part of a "brand family" approach as and when the time was right. Other sub-branded projects/ campaigns would be reviewed with the aim of reducing the number of these substantially to achieve cost savings. The relevant council brand would continue to be the main identity for local residents and businesses, with a clear WYCA identity acting as a focal point for communications about City Region partnership working. **The diagram in Appendix 2 illustrates the proposed relationships between brands.**
- 3.9 Example visuals of what a Leeds City Region Combined Authority could look like are enclosed at **Appendix 3** for WYCA's consideration.
- 3.10 The proposed visuals are based on a font that would be unique to the WYCA. This approach is expected to realise the following benefits:
- **cost effectiveness in terms of implementation** – a font-based approach could be rolled out across the WYCA's various channels using largely internal resources with more limited design input required
 - **longer-term cost savings** by creating a consistent campaign style that could be applied to campaigns targeting various audiences and, again, largely delivered in-house. The font-based approach is expected to save the WYCA at least £20,000 per year once rolled out on the basis of issuing four fewer campaign briefs to external design agencies per year
 - **flexibility to accommodate the changing needs of the organisation** – including potential further changes in remit and/ or governance. The font could be applied regardless of whether a name change is agreed or if West Yorkshire Combined Authority remains the organisation's name.
 - **enhanced profile** for the organisation and its partners through use of a consistent, bespoke font across all WYCA communications that would, over time, promote brand recognition among target audiences.
- 3.11 It is proposed that roll-out of the any new brand identity would be done through a phased approach to minimise costs. An illustrative roll-out plan is enclosed at **Appendix 4**. Roll-out activities would not only cover communications-related activity such as changes to websites, social media and other channels/ assets but activities to promote culture change such as new training and appraisal processes incorporating new brand values and behaviours, changes to processes and systems including email signatures, and improvements to office accommodation, front of house and facilities.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 All costs associated with the development of any brand identity and its rollout – regardless of whether a name change is pursued or the organisation remains West Yorkshire Combined Authority – would be **met from within existing, business-as-usual budgets**.
- 4.2 Once rolled out, a brand identity developed in line with the principles set out in section 3 above would be expected to achieve **cost savings** by reducing radically the number of sub-branded campaigns and services within the organisation, and enabling a greater number of campaigns to be delivered using internal staff resource with existing designs and collateral
- 4.3 A conservative savings estimate on the basis of issuing four fewer campaign briefs per year to external communications agencies is that £20,000 would be saved annually. It is expected therefore that investment in a new identity in line with the principles in section 3 above would **pay back within the first year following implementation**.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 If the WYCA wishes to pursue a name change, consideration would need to be given as to whether this would be a full legal name change or a communications-based rebrand only. Under the latter model, the legal name of the organisation would remain West Yorkshire Combined Authority for the purpose of contracts, financial transactions and other statutory requirements.
- 5.2 Changing the legal name of the organisation would require WYCA to hold a special meeting to resolve to re-name the WYCA as Leeds City Region Combined Authority, and notification to be sent to the Secretary of State.
- 5.3 A phased approach to a legal name change could also be considered – in other words, a communications-based rebrand could be implemented first with a legal name change to follow at a later date.

6. Staffing Implications

- 6.1 Resource from within the WYCA will be required. The resource required will be a project manager, project team members and project board members. Resource will be primarily drawn from the Communications and Marketing team but will also require input from colleagues in the Legal and Governance Services, Finance, HR, ICT Services, Office Facilities, Delivery and other teams.
- 6.2 The project is much more than a change of logo. In order for the rebrand to realise its full potential benefits as set out in section 3 above, new ways of working would need to be embedded through ongoing culture change. This would involve embedding the agreed values and behaviours through recruitment and performance

management processes, training and development for staff to ensure employees embody brand values in their daily work and changes to processes and systems to ensure these are in line with the agreed brand values.

- 6.3 As noted, a legal name change would require additional input from staff – particularly from the Legal and Governance Services and Finance teams – however it is not expected to result in significant additional costs. As noted in section four above, all costs associated with any rebrand would be met from within existing budgets.

7. External Consultees

- 7.1 Substantial partner and stakeholder engagement was carried out during the initial phase of this project, targeting key audience groups including:

- Elected members and senior officers from City Region councils
- LEP Board members
- Business leaders from within the City Region, including recent inward investors
- Central government representatives
- Partner organisations including universities, colleges, bus and rail operators and business representative bodies
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority employees
- Representatives of customer interests

- 7.2 A **substantial programme of member engagement** – including meetings with political groups across each of the City Region’s local authorities plus an event for all City Region elected members – is proposed over the summer. WYCA members are asked to provide guidance on what shape this should take, for example what Overview and Scrutiny arrangements it would wish to put in place around this piece of work.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 That WYCA considers and approves the rebranding of itself as Leeds City Region Combine Authority, noting the benefits outlined in section 3 above – particularly around the opportunities for cost savings, achieving greater communications impact through fewer brands, and acting as a catalyst for organisational culture change.
- 8.2 That WYCA authorises officers to begin work on implementing the rebrand, in line with the high-level phased implementation plan enclosed at **Appendix 4**.
- 8.3 That WYCA notes and offers comments on the visuals enclosed at **Appendix 3** illustrating what a flexible, font-based approach to visual brand identity could look like.

8.4 That WYCA notes the proposal to undertake a programme of member engagement over the summer and advises on what shape this should take – particularly in terms of Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.

9. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – WYCA Brand Platform
- Appendix 2 – Proposed hierarchy of brands
- Appendix 3 - Leeds City Region Combined Authority brand identity – example visuals
- Appendix 4 – Brand rollout project plan

10. Background Documents

10.1 None.