

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2022 AT COMMITTEE ROOM
1, WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS**

Present:

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe (Chair)	Bradford Council
Councillor Manisha Roma Kaushik (Deputy Chair)	Kirklees Council
Councillor Peter Carlill (Deputy Chair)	Leeds City Council
Councillor Peter Clarke	Bradford Council
Councillor Hassan Khan	Bradford Council
Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw	Bradford Council
Councillor Taj Salam	Bradford Council
Councillor Peter Caffrey	Calderdale Council
Councillor Colin Hutchinson	Calderdale Council
Councillor Jane Scullion	Calderdale Council
Councillor Aafaq Butt	Kirklees Council
Councillor Martyn Bolt	Kirklees Council
Councillor Eric Firth	Kirklees Council
Councillor Matthew McLoughlin	Kirklees Council
Councillor Eleanor Thomson	Leeds City Council
Councillor Izaak Wilson	Leeds City Council
Councillor Melanie Jones	Wakefield Council
Councillor Kevin Swift	Wakefield Council

In attendance:

Dave Pearson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Melanie Corcoran	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Helen Ellerton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Simon Linley	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ian Parr	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

39. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Amir Hussain, Cllr Buckley, Cllr Hayden, and Cllr D'Agorne.

The Chair informed Transport Committee members that the Combined Authority has approved a new Directorate structure which will affect several WYCA transport roles.

- A new post of Executive Director Transport has been created as the senior lead on all transport matters, for which recruitment will take place in 2023.
- Melanie Corcoran has been appointed to the role of Director, Transport Policy & Delivery, but from January will move to the role of Interim Chief Operating Officer. An appointment process is underway for an interim Director of Transport Policy & Delivery.
- Dave Pearson has been appointed into the role of Director, Transport Operations & Passenger Experience.
- Kevin Murray remains Interim Director, Mass Transit pending recruitment into this post in early 2023.
- Alex Clarke has been appointed to a new post, Head of Bus Reform.
- Helen Ellerton, Head of Transport Planning, will shortly be taking maternity leave and Rachel Jones will be covering her role in the interim

40. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

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

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

42. Minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee held on 18 November 2022

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee held on 18 November 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair.

43. West Yorkshire Transport Strategy Monitoring Report

The Transport Committee received a report to provide an update on the annual monitoring of the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy, to provide a breakdown of West Yorkshire transport data, and to set out the development of a new Mayor's Local Transport Plan.

Officers informed members the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy was initially adopted in 2018 and is reported each year. The pandemic has made the data for 2021/2022 difficult to compare against, however it appears to show that passenger numbers are still rising. Given the volatility of the most recent data, it is proposed to create a new transport plan as a new baseline for comparison, though older data will still be available for comparison.

Members questioned the low satisfaction response regarding highways despite the investment put into it, and requested a further breakdown of the

data. Officers responded that there are a variety of reasons for low satisfaction including modes of transport and the demographics of the respondents among others. Officers offered to interrogate the data further and share any further details.

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

That a workshop involving Transport Committee members be arranged to consider the emerging direction of the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan.

44. Passenger Experience Update Report

Members received a report to provide an update on the performance of the transport network and of the Combined Authority's passenger facing activity.

Officers explained the Mayor recently met with the Secretary of State to discuss transport issues and seek resolution. There are still challenges, and industrial action continues to disrupt rail services for passengers. Bus patronage is currently around 84% compared to pre-pandemic levels and the public concerns about Covid-19 is subsiding, however the change to travel patterns appear to have settled which may limit future growth.

Members questioned how bus punctuality and reliability is monitored. Officers clarified that comparison is made between the mileage driven against the published timetable. Operators are required to submit a lost mileage report to the Traffic Commissioner which is used to inform the grants operators receive. The data shows service reliability of just above 90%, which is below the target of 99.5% reliability.

Members raised concerns that the 89% customer satisfaction score portrays a better outlook than reality would suggest. Officers noted that those who responded would likely be satisfied simply because they reached their destination, however the data does not capture those whose journey was cancelled and likely dissatisfied as a result. In such cases it is important to monitor the satisfaction change over time more so than the figure at a particular point.

Members questioned if the Combined Authority receives driver availability data from operators and if the data can be compared against the real-time information system. Officers responded that operators are asked about staffing levels periodically, however it is not a metric that is regularly tracked. There is a database of every bus and bus stop which feeds into the real time information system. The database was recently upgraded and a better reporting tool will arrive in the near future which will help to analyse the data and inform which areas require improvement. Conversations are being held with operators regarding the quality of the data and steps taken to ensure the information screens are as accurate as possible to reduce unreliable information being given to customers.

Members asked why operators have trouble retaining drivers, officers responded the problems are not unique to any operator or to West Yorkshire. Issues include the unsociable nature and hours of the role, the working conditions, and the length of time it takes to train and certify new drivers. The winter months are notorious for additional illnesses and difficulties travelling to work, which compound the existing shortage of drivers.

Members praised the upgrades at Wakefield Kirkgate station and the improvements it will make for passengers. Concerns were raised with the suggested removal of ticket offices within stations and the reduction of staffing which may lead to less safe conditions for all passengers, but especially women and girls. Officers noted there is a role at train stations for the British Transport Police, and that conversations with operators suggest that any former ticket office staff will still be present in altered roles, and so there should be no reduction in staff at stations.

The Transport Committee members agreed to request the Chair writes to the Secretary of State to raise the concerns of the Transport Committee members regarding staff reductions in train stations.

Resolved: That the updates provided on the Passenger Experience in West Yorkshire provided in this report be noted.

45. Budget and Business Planning 2023/24

Members received a report to update the committee on key issues which the Combined Authority will be considering as it prepares a revenue budget and business plans for 2023/24. Officers explained the current challenges around setting budgets due to inflation and other pressures. There is approximately £3 million of extra cost, which can be managed by utilising funds from the concessionary fares budget, which are still high as they are paid to operators at pre-pandemic rates. There are concerns that if the emergency bus grants are ended in March 2023 it may lead to bigger budget gaps than the Combined Authority alone can afford.

Members asked for clarification regarding the concessionary fares budget and the reserve budget. Officers explained a part of the budget had been used towards the Mayor's Fares Scheme in September, which has been restored now the Bus Service Improvement Plan funding is available. Regarding the reserve budget, officers explained there is a standard reserve to be used in limited circumstances, but would require approval by the Finance, Resources, and Corporate Committee before any reserve funds are withdrawn.

Resolved: That the update on matters relating to setting a Business Plan and Revenue Budget for 2023/24 be noted.

46. Inflation: Transport Programmes

Members received a report to provide an update on the inflation review and subsequent approvals by the Combined Authority at their meeting on 08

December 2022. Officers informed members that they are working collaboratively with Local Authorities and providing updates to portfolio holders and leaders. All transport projects have been reviewed against set criteria to identify which are placed on a pipeline for future delivery and which may still proceed as scheduled. As a result savings of approximately £266 million have been identified. Paused schemes will continue to be developed so they are ready to start once funding is available.

Members questioned if elements of some schemes can be continued, such as active travel improvements. Officers confirmed that viable elements of schemes will be continued, though it may also depend on funding restrictions where external funding is involved. The City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement for example is a five-year settlement and so provides longevity to deliver projects further down the line.

Resolved: That the following changes to schemes within the WYTF and TCF programmes be noted:

- (i) The projects to be pipelined and the Revised Full Funding required to reach the pause decision point, as set out in this report (Appendix 1).
- (ii) The new project indicative / full allocations, as set out in this report (Appendix 2).
- (iii) The additional funding requests on projects in WYTF, TCF and CRSTS, as set out in this report.
- (iv) The re-baselined milestone information included in the report (Appendix 3 and 4).

47. Project Approvals

Members received a report to seek approval for the progression of, and funding for projects under Investment Priority 5 – Future Transport. Officers summarised the aim of the Transforming Cities Fund – West Bradford Cycle Superhighway to deliver high quality cycle infrastructure and walking improvements along a 2.5 kilometre route from the city centre and to Cemetery Road. Bradford Council has prioritised the scheme to be delivered ahead of the City of Culture 2025, and will be delivered in phases. Delivery of Phase 2, Cemetery Road to Thornton Village, will be subject to future funding being identified.

Members questioned the reported carbon impact assessment, officers explained there is unavoidable carbon output resulting from the construction of any scheme, however this is accounted for and greener building practices are explored wherever possible. The carbon overall emissions should be offset over time by reduced emissions by higher uptake of active travel.

Members questioned how the scheme will be maintained following completion, officers responded that it will be added to the general maintenance programme as schemes usually are, and most maintenance

issues go unreported by those who encounter them which keeps the issue occurring for longer.

Members asked what the baseline figures are for cyclists on the existing route, and how the conversion of car users to cycle users will be measured. Officers offered to follow up with the baseline data, and suggested that the support schemes included in the active travel schemes to encourage more cycling will be able to provide data about the number of new users.

Members queried if the carbon assessment tool used is the Combined Authority's own or the one use by the Department for Transport. Officers answered that the in-house carbon assessment toolkit is used for every project so they can be compared on similar metrics, but some schemes are also measured by DfT metrics where necessary for funding.

Resolved: The Transport Committee approved that:

- (i) The TCF West Bradford – Cycle Superhighway Extension (Phase 1) scheme proceeds through decision point 3 (outline business case) and work commences on activity 4 (full business case)
- (ii) An indicative approval to the Combined Authority's contribution of £9,191,635. The total scheme value is £9,191,635.
- (iii) Additional development costs of £2,618,000 are approved in order to progress the scheme to decision point 4 (full business case) taking the total scheme approval to £4,082,000.
- (iv) The Combined Authority enters into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with Bradford Council for expenditure of up to £4,082,000.
- (v) 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.