

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY
HELD ON THURSDAY, 25 MAY 2023 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS**

Present:

Mayor Tracy Brabin (Chair)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Council
Councillor Tim Swift MBE (Substitute)	Calderdale Council
Councillor Shabir Pandor	Kirklees Council
Councillor James Lewis	Leeds City Council
Councillor Matthew Morley (Substitute)	Wakefield Council
Councillor Rebecca Poulsen	Bradford Council
Councillor Sam Firth	Leeds City Council
Councillor Sue Holdsworth	Calderdale Council
Mandy Ridyard (Substitute)	LEP Board Representative

In attendance:

Ben Still	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alan Reiss	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Mick Bunting	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Dave Haskins	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Liz Hunter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Dave Pearson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Angela Taylor	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Philip Witcherley	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Javid Daji	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Rebecca Brookes	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ian Parr	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

92. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Denise Jeffery, Cllr Jane Scullion, Cllr Andrew Waller, and Mark Roberts.

The Mayor noted the change of leadership at Calderdale Council, where Cllr Jane Scullion was appointed as Leader of the Council and Cllr Tim Swift was appointed as Deputy Leader. The Mayor expressed thanks to Cllr Swift for his work leading Calderdale Council and for the Combined Authority in securing devolution for West Yorkshire.

93. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

94. Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Mayor noted that appendix 3 to agenda item 6 was identified as exempt from the press and public.

Resolved: That in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix 3 to Agenda Item 6 on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information and for the reasons set out in the report that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

95. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Authority held on 16 March 2023

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 16 March 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair.

96. Bus Service Improvement Plan - programme update

The Combined Authority received a report from the Interim Head of Transport Policy which provided an update on the state of the local bus network and ongoing delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) revenue programme in relation to Enhanced Bus Services and further network improvements, as well as continued delivery of Mayor's Fares.

The Mayor noted that the Bus Service Improvement Plan was important to address the challenges faced by the bus network, such as further service cuts which were anticipated to be made. Members noted there have been recent funding announcements, however there was little long-term planning which would grant more security to operators and potentially reduce the need for service cuts.

Officers noted that the Department for Transport had recently announced £200 million of funding to continue the £2 capped bus fare outside of London until the end of October 2023, and £2.50 from October 2023 to the end of November 2024. The Mayor's Fares scheme was introduced in West Yorkshire prior to the national programme through the BSIP funding, and officers were working on the potential impact of the announcement.

A further £160 million would be provided to local transport authorities, spread over the current and upcoming financial year, with the aim of improving services and infrastructure. Operators were already planning for the reduction of services as the announced funding falls short of their requirements, and more information was expected to follow regarding the effect in West Yorkshire. Work will be conducted with members of the

Transport Committee to identify the needs of the West Yorkshire districts, plan accordingly, and to address issues as appropriate to support passengers.

Members welcomed the announcement of additional funding and questioned if passenger rates were still rising from 85% of pre-pandemic figures, and if more data could be presented to show the comparison between previous quarters. Officers clarified that the rate of passenger growth appeared to have stabilised, and added that much of the data was commercially sensitive and so not available for public enquiry. Further national data was released by the Department for Transport shortly before the meeting which has yet to be analysed, and officers noted that the passenger trends seen in Leeds were reflected across the country.

Members queried how the reported costs were derived and if there would be enough funding to cover network requirements. Officers responded that money was allocated from the overall BSIP funding of £31 million and drawn down in several tranches. The pace of delivery is impacted by the changing needs of the network, but officers expressed confidence that, more detail would be available by June 2023 to make more informed decisions.

Resolved: That the progress being made on the delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan be noted.

97. Bus Reform

The Combined Authority received a report from the Head of Bus Reform, which sought confirmation to proceed with the proposed franchising scheme as suggested in the Bus Reform Assessment and to progress the Bus Reform Assessment to Audit. The report also sought to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to approve final minor amendments to the Assessment document ahead of Audit, and a further approval of the contribution £4,012,000 to the existing contribution.

The Mayor noted that, if approved, the recommendations would be another step towards the creation of a London-style bus network, but that the decisions presented were not final and the decision would be taken in March 2024 subject to audit and public consultation.

Members noted that the current bus network was not delivering at the pace required to meet the needs of passengers. Members stressed there was no simple answer and franchising was not without risks, and required careful consideration.

Members queried the associated costs for available options presented for discussion. The meeting moved into private session to discuss the exempt appendix.

Resolved: That in respect to the Bus Reform Assessment:

i. The conclusions and recommendation included within the Assessment (paras. 2.22 – 2.28) be noted.

ii. The Assessment for Audit, and delegated finalisation of the assessment to the Chief Executive be indicatively approved.

That in respect to the Bus Reform programme (Bus Franchising Needs Assessment) scheme Approvals:

i. The Bus Reform programme (Bus Franchising Needs Assessment) scheme proceed through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commence on activity 5 (delivery).

ii. The Combined Authority's contribution of £4,012,000 be given. The total scheme value is £5,012,000.

iii. Future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.

98. West Yorkshire Plan

The Combined Authority received a report from the Head of Policy and Strategy Coordination which sought the adoption of the West Yorkshire Plan by the Combined Authority, subject to minor changes, and the delegation of final sign-off of the plan to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Mayor.

The Mayor noted the West Yorkshire Plan was produced in partnership with stakeholders across the region, and would set a trajectory up to 2040 with clear targets for the region. The West Yorkshire Plan would sit at the top of a suite of strategies including the Local Transport Plan, Economic Strategy, and the Police and Crime Plan, among others. The West Yorkshire Plan was well-received at the UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiIF) which took place between 16-18 May 2023. The official launch of the West Yorkshire plan was set to take place on 16 June 2023.

Officers added the West Yorkshire Plan was considered by each of the Combined Authority's thematic committees and received valuable feedback, which was reflected in the final version. The 'State of the Region' report documents the progress made against several social, economic, and environmental indicators and would be used to report alongside the West Yorkshire Plan.

Resolved:

That the West Yorkshire Plan be adopted, subject to minor amendments.

That finalisation of the West Yorkshire Plan be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor, to enable any further minor amendments to be taken into account.

99. Director appointments

The Combined Authority received a report from the Chief Executive, which sought endorsement of the new Director appointments within the Combined Authority.

Officers summarised the report, which outlined the changes to directors following the delegation of directorship appointments to the Chief Executive at the 16 March Combined Authority meeting. Officers explained that the Combined Authority had experienced a time of unprecedented change regarding its structure and culture, and the appointments would allow for the more effective delivery of policy for West Yorkshire, especially concerning transport matters. Officers noted the changes had not yet concluded and development would continue to meet the needs of the Combined Authority.

Resolved: That the director appointments as per the body of the report be endorsed.

100. Minutes for information

Resolved: That the minutes and notes of the Combined Authority's committees and panels be noted.

The Mayor thanked Dave Pearson, ahead of his retirement, for his hard work leading on Transport for the West Yorkshire region over many years at the Combined Authority. Members concurred and expressed their own thanks and well-wishes on behalf of their districts.