



West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority

Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire

**INFORMAL MINUTES OF THE INQUORATE MEETING OF THE
PLACE, REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY, 31 AUGUST 2023 AT MEETING ROOM 1,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS LS1 2DE**

Present:

Councillor Jane Scullion (Chair)	Calderdale Council
Councillor Masood Ahmed	
Councillor Kayleigh Brooks	Leeds City Council
Ben Aspinall	Private Sector Representative
Lisa Littlefair	Private Sector Representative
Tamsin Hart Jones	Advisory Representative (Homes England)
Richard Butterfield	Advisory Representative (Historic England)

In attendance:

Liz Hunter (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Patrick Bowes (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Patricia Davey (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alison Gillespie (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Rebecca Greenwood (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Myles Larrington (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sophie Law (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Stacey White (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair opened the meeting by noting that she was presiding due to the absence of Councillor Jeffrey. There were a significant number of apologies owing to the school holidays. However, the Chair then proceeded with the business before the Committee.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ben Burton (York), Councillor Michael Graham (Wakefield), Councillor Helen Hayden (Leeds), Councillor Denise Jeffrey (Chair), Councillor Scott Patient (Calderdale), Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw, Councillor Cathy Scott (Kirklees), Private Sector Representative Stephen Moore and Advisory Representatives, Cathy Elliott (West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board) and Helen Lennon (LCR Housing Partnership).

It was noted that, due to the number of apologies, the meeting was inquorate so no decisions could be taken.

Councillor Masood Ahmed (Kirklees) attended as an observer in place of Councillor Scott. Councillor Kayleigh Brooks (Leeds) attended as an observer in place of Councillor Hayden. Councillor Jane Scullion (Calderdale) attended as an observer in place of Councillor Scott Patient. Councillor Scullion chaired the meeting in the absence of Councillor Jeffrey.

With the agreement of the chair, Councillor Ahmed and Councillor Brooks participated in the proceedings.

3. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Lisa Littlefair (Private Sector Member) declared an interest in Item 8 – Mass Transit report. Ms Littlefair noted that she had a role in contributing to the work of the report.

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

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

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2023

It was noted that the meeting of the Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee held on 1 June 2023 was inquorate, therefore, the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2023 required approval.

Due to the inquorate nature of the meeting, approval of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting of the committee.

6. Chair's Update

The Chair gave thanks to Amir Hussain (Private Sector Representative) whose term of office had come to an end. She noted that Mr Hussain had been a very active participant in the Committee agenda for many years. Mr Hussain had also been a great Deputy Chair. The Chair wished him well on behalf of the whole Committee.

The Chair observed that Cathy Elliot, Chair of the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) had joined the Committee as an Advisory Representative. This formed part the Committee's work to strengthen the relationship with the ICB. This also represented the desire of members to ensure that health related outcomes were embedded into future policies and projects. The Chair looked forward to Ms Elliot attending future meetings.

The Chair also welcomed Richard Butterfield (Advisory Representative) who is the Partnerships Lead for the North East & Yorkshire at Historic England.

The Chair noted that, at the meeting of the Combined Authority on 27 July 2023, it had been decided that the following should be approved:

- Employment Accelerator Fund scheme allocating £2m in funds along with the commencement of delivery of pipelines development.
- The purchase of land for the access to the Enterprise Zone at Langthwaite Business Park had been granted authorisation to proceed enabling work to create a development platform unlocking development of the site.

The Chair closed her remarks by thanking members of the Committee for their valuable input on the Employment Accelerator.

7. Governance Arrangements

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Director for Legal, Governance & Compliance which advised members on the governance arrangements that had been approved by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (the Combined Authority) at the Annual Meeting on 22 June 2023 in respect of the committee.

Officers had then presented the report, they explained that:

- The terms of reference for the Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee had been agreed.
- The quorum of the Committee had been agreed as 3 voting members to include 2 Combined Authority members or Local authority co-optees.
- The Combined Authority had appointed Councillor Denise Jeffrey as Chair of the Committee.
- The Deputy Chair position that would be ordinarily held by a LEP Board member remained vacant, subject to a recruitment exercise that had been underway.
- The membership of the Committee had been confirmed by the Combined Authority.
- The Combined Authority had agreed the meeting dates for the Committee as follows:
 - 31 August 2023
 - 26 October 2023
 - 29 February 2024
 - 30 May 2024

Members of the Committee enquired about the process by which a Deputy Chair would be appointed. The Director of Policing, Environment and Place explained that the Deputy Chair is a LEP Board member with voting rights. During the Summer, a process to recruit more private sector LEP Board members had been undertaken. This was now proceeding to a conclusion, following which members of the LEP Board would then have a conversation and nominate someone as Deputy Chair.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee noted the report.

- ii. That the Committee noted the governance arrangements approved by the Combined Authority at the Annual Meeting held on 22 June 2023.

8. Monitoring Indicators

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Operating Officer which provided members with an update on the relevant monitoring indicators on their performance in support of the work of the Committee.

Officers presented the report which outlined the following:

- Data on private sector rents had been updated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) since the Committee last met to cover the period from April to March.
- It had been noted that nationally the median rent is £825 per month, which is higher than all West Yorkshire districts barring Leeds where it is equal.
- It has been confirmed that, between April 2019 and March 2023, median private sector rents across all West Yorkshire districts had increased. Leeds had the largest increase in pound terms (+£125), followed by Kirklees (+£95), Wakefield (+£75), Calderdale (+£55), and Bradford (+£50).
- In percentage terms, it had been confirmed that Kirklees had the largest increase (+19%), Leeds (+18%), Wakefield (+14%), Calderdale (+11%) and Bradford (+10%).
- Officers had set out some of the potential implications of the Renters (Reform) Bill which was progressing through Parliament.
- Members had been informed that The Combined Authority was in the process of developing a West Yorkshire Housing Strategy which will set out the shared ambitions for housing in the region. A paper to discuss the progress of this will be brought to the next Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee in October.
- Officers had referred to some statistics on household energy efficiency within West Yorkshire and set out the actions The Combined Authority was taking to implement positive improvements in this area.

Members made the following observations:

- It was observed that Leeds had a significant increase in rents. This was having a big impact on people's lives, especially restricting the amount of money they could contribute to the local economy. It was noted that this situation arose due to the relatively high housing costs in the city centre as compared to very low land values and margins outside this area.
- Members took the view that another contributing factor to diverging costs was ECP ratings. ECP builds with high ratings often helped to enhance properties but did not necessarily add additional sales value, so developers will often simply go for the lowest rating that complies with the necessary regulations. Members felt that more needed to be done to incentivise developers to opt for high ECP ratings and encourage people to choose to live in these properties.

- Members noted that ECP properties are rated in terms of how compliant they are completed but that these ratings do not take into account the carbon impact of any works during construction.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee noted the report.
- ii. That the Committee noted the evidence, as well as the actions that the Combined Authority are undertaking to try and resolve the challenges they are dealing with in housing and energy efficiency.

9. Mass Transit-Approach to Placemaking and Design Philosophy

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Mass Transit which provided an update to members on the Mass Transit Approach to Placemaking and Design Philosophy.

The report sought members endorsement of the approach ahead of the Transport Committee which was scheduled to take place on 19 September 2023 where a Key Decision would be requested. The Key Decision would seek members endorsement to adopt the Approach to Placemaking and Design Philosophy to support design and route development activity.

Officers had presented the report, which had included the following:

- It had been clarified that The Approach to Placemaking and Design Philosophy had set out how a Mass Transit system would respond to the people and places it connected to as part of an integrated public transport system that placed walking and cycling equal to the Mass Transit system. Officers had indicated this meant that the needs of the car no longer took priority over the needs of over transport users or the value of place.
- Officers had set out the four design principles which helped to shape the West Yorkshire Mass Transit Vision which were: (1) People First, (2) Environmental Responsibility, (3) Better Connected, (4) Celebrating West Yorkshire.
- The Approach to Placemaking principles had been written specifically for the West Yorkshire Mass Transit system. The Approach to Placemaking had emphasised the need to consider the physical environment and the social context. It had been noted that good placemaking should pay particular attention to the cultural and social identifies that define a place, as well as the physical place.
- The Approach to placemaking document had set out the importance of stakeholder engagement in seeking to deliver against the principles and highlighted a commitment to understanding the needs and views of local communities.
- The Design Philosophy had set out how the Mass Transit strategy and vision would be delivered by providing the framework for the development and design for a bold and ambitious Mass Transit system.
- The Design Philosophy approach had required designers to consider a priority order for the transport network which utilised Mass Transit as a

facilitator for a transformational change, ensuring that walking, cycling and the value of a place were given priority over the needs of the car.

Members made the following observations:

- Members commented that the methodology used to determine which places are targeted for enhanced Mass Transit corridors should not be Leeds centric and that the wider West Yorkshire area should benefit from this programme through an equitable distribution of priority areas.
- Members took the view that the Mass Transit Strategy should be future proofed by ensuring that modelling is undertaken to predict and assess future travel demands and that this is framed within the wider regional growth strategy.
- It was strongly expressed by members that the strategy should be clearer about approaches to disability, especially in relation to physical and visual impairments. Members observed that design mechanisms could be used to address these concerns.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee noted the report.
- ii. That the Committee endorsed the Approach to Placemaking and Design Philosophy.
- iii. That the Committee noted the intention to prepare an updated Design Guide which would be recommended for formal adoption prior to the commencement of the next stage of route design (Feasibility Design). This would be presented to the Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee for endorsement in due course.
- iv. That the Committee considered the related transformational opportunities in the places that the Mass Transit system would seek to connect.

10. Housing Update

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Policing, Environment and Place which provided an update to members on the workstreams relating to the Combined Authority's activity to support the housing growth activity across the region.

This included an update on The West Yorkshire / Homes England Strategic Place Partnership (SPP) and a summary of the revenue and capital programmes supporting delivery of housing in the region.

Officers had presented the report, which had included the following:

- The SPP had been formally launched by The UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiIF) on 16 May 2023 by the Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin and the Chief Executive of

Homes England, Peter Denton.

- Since the launch of the SPP, work had been underway to progress the three strategic priorities set out within the SPP which were:
- Strategic Objective 1 – Develop investment ready proposals to unlock and accelerate housing delivery and regeneration across West Yorkshire to support the region’s levelling up, economic growth and inclusivity objectives.
- Strategic Objective 2 – Realise opportunities to create and grow sustainable neighbourhoods to contribute to the region’s net zero carbon ambitions.
- Strategic Objective 3 – Improve the supply of good quality and affordable homes to provide greater choice and opportunity for people to access a home in West Yorkshire that meets their housing needs.
- Officers had updated members on the progress of these objectives.
- Members had also received an update on how the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) had been progressing in addition to the Brownfield Housing Fund.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee noted the report.
- ii. That the Committee provided feedback on the contents of the report.

11. West Yorkshire Digital Infrastructure Programme

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Policing, Environment and Place which provided members with an overview of the West Yorkshire digital and broadband infrastructure landscape and delivery programmes.

Officers had presented the report which had outlined the following:

- A refreshed framework had been introduced called the West Yorkshire Digital Blueprint. This would provide members with an update on how lives were being transformed by digital technological and would include a coherent strategy for delivery and partnership working. The strategy had been framed through three strands – place, people, and businesses.
- Work had been underway to fulfil the mayor’s pledge to ‘support local businesses and be a champion for our regional economy.’ Efforts to support digital infrastructure were a key component of this.
- It has been accepted that delivering fast and reliable broadband was vital to the economic performance of West Yorkshire and supported the Combined Authority’s strategic objective of delivering inclusive growth and removing barriers to education, training, and employment opportunities.
- It had been clarified that 84.73% of West Yorkshire premises have access to gigabit-capable broadband infrastructure, which was just above the national average.
- It was clarified that the Combined Authority had a comprehensive digital infrastructure programme and members had been given an outline of

the work that was ongoing.

Members emphasised that more work needed to be done to provide additional resources to help enhance the rollout of 5G broadband across rural parts of West Yorkshire, especially planning in relation to any future bids.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee noted the report.
- ii. The Committee considered the programme of work highlighted in the paper and agreed for work to continue in the development of a digital infrastructure programme business case.

12. Date of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Place, Regeneration & Housing Committee was scheduled to be held on 26 October 2023.