



Report to:	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Date:	7 December 2023
Subject:	Transport Overview
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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 This report provides an overview for the Combined Authority of the West Yorkshire transport programme and policy context.

2. Information

West Yorkshire Transport Mission and Priorities

- 2.1 The West Yorkshire Plan sets out the mission (Mission 3) for a “Well-connected West Yorkshire – a strong transport system” whereby by 2040 we will have:
- A sustainable, accessible transport system;
 - Reliable and affordable buses, trains, and mass transit; and
 - A region with healthy people where active travel is the easiest choice for short journeys, car usage is reduced, and the first choice for travel is public transport.
- 2.2 In setting out this mission, the Combined Authority is clear that these transport outcomes will be fundamental to the achievement of the parallel missions for prosperity, community, environment and public safety that have been set through the Plan.

2.3 In recent years, West Yorkshire has been successful in establishing a clear basis for our work to achieve this mission, including:

- Securing a series of substantial capital funding programmes, including in particular the West Yorkshire plus Transport Fund, the Transforming Cities Fund and the City Region Sustainable Transport Fund to support investment in transport infrastructure across the region;
- Establishing a clear priority for integrated public transport, supported in particular through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (including the introduction of the Mayor's Fare £2 fare system), the statutory review of the case for bus reform and the development of the future mass transit system;
- Progressing a West Yorkshire-wide programme of active travel promotion and network;
- Progressing the West Yorkshire Rail Strategy; and
- The continued support for the core public transport services provided under the established "Metro" system of bus stations, stops and information services.

Progress against our Priorities

2.4 Over the past year, significant progress has been against our priorities. In addition, the case for our priorities has been given support by Government through the Spring Budget Statement and more recently in its *Network North* policy document. In addition, our vision for integrated and sustainable transport investment was highlighted as a national urban transport priority by the National Infrastructure Commission in its second National Infrastructure Assessment advice to Government, published in October 2023.

Capital Programme

2.5 Across the three core transport funding programmes set out above, West Yorkshire has secured an investment capability of over £2 billion to deliver the first step-change in transport infrastructure and to prepare the future pipeline for investment in future Government spending rounds. 2023 has seen a significant maturing of the programme, supported by robust assurance framework and strong working between the Combined Authority, the West Yorkshire Councils and transport delivery partners. In particular, our programme has supported:

- Highways maintenance and network management programme across all five local authority areas
- Bus priority and active travel measures in Leeds city centre, completing in early 2024, including Thirsk Row / King Street Bus Gate and adjacent footway/cycle track; East Parade Bus Gate and Calverley Street traffic scheme; City Square Plus measures across City Square, Boar Lane, King Street, Wellington Street, Aire Street, Quebec Street, East Parade and Thirsk Row.
- Bradford Interchange resurfacing,
- Improved integrated ticketing, payment and information services

- A629 Halifax Town Centre access, bus, cycling and walking infrastructure improvements
- Armley Gyratory (Leeds) Phase 1
- A62 Smart Corridor measures in Kirklees from Huddersfield Ring Road to Old Fieldhouse Lane
- Fink Hill highway enhancements to the A6120 Outer Ring Road corridor
- Great Horton Road / Horton Grange A6177 Bradford Outer Ring Road efficiency improvements
- Steeton & Silsden Station Park & Ride scheme
- Normanton Station Park & Ride scheme
- A650 Newton Bar, Wakefield improvements
- White Rose new station, completing early 2024
- Halifax new Bus Station, fully opening January 2024

Active Travel Programme

2.6 The active travel programme in West Yorkshire has been progressed through both the core transport investment programmes and the national Active Travel Fund. In March 2023, Active Travel England published the first local authority active travel capability ratings, which identified West Yorkshire Combined Authority as one of only four authorities operating at level 3 capability (on a scale of 0-4 with no authorities assessed at level 4). This rating classed the West Yorkshire partnership as having “Very strong local leadership, comprehensive plans, and a significant network in place with a growing number of people choosing to walk, wheel and cycle”. In support of this status, 2023 has been a strong year for delivery and development of active travel initiatives, including:

- Cottingley Mercure to Bingley (School Access) Pop-Up Cycle Lane (Bradford):
- Friendly Active Travel Neighbourhood (Calderdale)
- 22 school streets
- Pedestrian improvements across various sites in Bradford (including Silsden School footpath, Pitty Beck improvements, and Scotchman Road)
- A660 Otley Road (Leeds) segregated unidirectional cycle track, completing in early 2024

Mass Transit Programme

2.7 At its meeting on 12 October 2023, the Combined Authority formally adopted its updated Vision for Mass Transit. A substantial programme of development for the early priority corridors within this Vision is well underway and the Strategic Outline Case for these options will be brought to the Combined Authority in early 2024, seeking authority to submit to Government. At the same meeting, important supporting principles for place-making and scheme design were agreed, which will ensure that the options under review will be brought forward in a manner that fully supports the wider objectives of the West Yorkshire Plan and the communities that the future system will serve. The Government’s *Network North* policy document, published in October, reconfirmed the Mass Transit

Programme as a national priority for future local transport investment through the City Regional Sustainable Transport Fund.

Bus Reform

- 2.8 At its meeting on 28 September 2023, the Combined Authority considered an audited Assessment of the Case for Bus Reform in West Yorkshire, prepared under the provisions of the 2017 Bus Services Act, and agreed that the findings of the Assessment be taken to formal consultation. This consultation was launched on 10 October and will be open until 7 January. Significant activity is underway at present to promote the consultation to both statutory consultees and the public, so as to ensure that the widest possible views on the options for reforming the bus system can be taken into account. In dependent analysis of the consultation will be prepared to inform a decision by the Mayor on the options set out in the Assessment on 14 March 2024.

West Yorkshire Rail Strategy

- 2.9 The Combined Authority oversaw consultation on the renewal of the West Yorkshire Rail Strategy in summer 2023, the outcome of which will be reported to Members shortly. The Rail Strategy sets out very clear priorities against delivering capacity for growth; improving station facilities and train services; decarbonisation; and freight. Work with rail industry partners has continued through the year against these priorities, overseen by the Transport Committee and through the Rail North Partnership. In particular:
- Performance and reliability of the rail network has been of particular concern to Members in 2023. The decision of the Secretary of State in May to bring Transpennine Express into the Operator of Last Resort operation has been regarded as an opportunity by northern partners for closer working with Government on the service improvements needed. We are working closely with the Rail North Partnership to secure this but do not have clarity on the model at this stage;
 - The risk of closure of many rail ticket offices in West Yorkshire was a major concern following announcements made by the industry in July. The northern mayors and Combined Authorities worked closely to highlight this risk through a consultation launched and we welcomed the response, which has reversed this proposal; and
 - The Government's *Network North* policy document in October highlighted a number of West Yorkshire priorities as national priorities for progression. In particular, we have welcomed the strong recognition of the priority case for a new Northern Powerhouse Rail station at Bradford and are working intensively with Bradford Council and DfT to bring forward a preferred option for early delivery; and we welcome the restated case for Leeds-Hull electrification. However, with the further contraction of remaining Eastern Leg connections on the former HS2 plan,



we are concerned to understand the national plan for services to Sheffield and further south from Leeds, and we are pressing DfT for urgent work on the Leeds-Sheffield corridor. We are also working closely with Leeds Council and DfT to set out the implications of *Network North* for the remaining case for an enhanced Leeds Station and the former HS2 land provisions in the city.

Maintaining Our Services

- 2.10 Maintenance of core public transport services has remained a high priority for the Combined Authority. Significant work has been undertaken throughout the year with bus operating companies to support a network that can return to the level of travel that was seen pre-pandemic. A number of operators have brought forward proposed changes to their commercial services offer through the year and officers have worked to mitigate the impact on the travelling public through use of delegated funds with the oversight of the Transport Committee. In addition to this, we have continued to introduce elements of the Bus Service Improvement Plan service enhancement programme. This will complement the operation of the Mayor's Fare regime, which has demonstrated impact in both attracting travel on corridors with longer-distance/higher fare journeys and in supporting the cost of travel for those, often lower-income, communities who most depend on bus travel.

Looking Ahead to 2024

- 2.11 The successful programme of work achieved in 2023 provides a good foundation for the step-change in transport delivery and policy development that is planned for 2024. In particular, the completion of the Strategic Outline Case for the mass transit programme in February 2024 and progression into Outline Business Case and consultation stages, alongside the conclusion of the bus reform assessment process in March 2024, will signal a scaling-up of mobilisation work. In addition, the volume of the capital programme delivery work will expand with around £450 million of delivery and development work in 2024/5; and the Combined Authority will be progressing the development of a new Local Transport Plan.
- 2.12 This step-change has been anticipated in our forward planning. In December 2022, the Combined Authority agreed a new senior officer structure with the creation of two new Executive Director posts - Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director for Transport – to support the Chief Executive in readying the organisation to progress the mass transit and bus reform programmes as part of an integrated transport body. Following appointment to and uptake of these roles in early summer, work has progressed significantly to review the capacity and shape of the organisation. In particular, a renewed governance model for the mass transit programme will be rolled out in 2024, reflecting the increased volume of work that will follow. Options for mobilisation against the bus reform options, as set out in the Assessment currently in consultation, are also in development.

2.13 Work is also underway to prepare for the increased capital programme activity in 2024. A light-touch review of the programme gateway and assurance processes has been undertaken to ensure that the rigour of the approach can be matched by efficiency to support timely delivery of priorities. Discussions have also progressed between Combined Authority and local authority teams to identify shared responsibilities and where close-working can aid delivery. The progress of the programme will be monitored closely by the Combined Authority Leadership Team to ensure that these aims are met in practice.

2.14 The meeting of the Transport Committee on 16 November considered the case for the development of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP). The current LTP was adopted in 2017, since when we have seen significant change, including the Covid pandemic and new travel patterns; the development of the case for bus reform and mass transit; the development of the Combined Authority model and the West Yorkshire Plan; introduction of new funding streams around the core City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement; and the impact of the Integrated Rail Plan and Network North policy frameworks. The Committee agreed that a new LTP would be needed to reflect the contemporary and future policy environment, and to set out a future pipeline of investment to maintain our momentum from the current programmes. The work on the LTP will complete in mid 2025, following stages on consultation and engagement through 2024. It will be co-developed closely with officers from all five authorities, so as to ensure that one Plan results to reflect the strong unity of purpose in West Yorkshire and to act as the transport basis for wider Local Plan development work. The process will be regularly supervised by the Committee.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 There are no immediate climate emergency implications directly arising from this report.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 There are no immediate inclusive growth implications directly arising from this report.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 There are no immediate equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no immediate legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no immediate staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the Combined Authority notes and welcomes the progression achieved in 2023 against its transport priorities.

10.2 That the Combined Authority notes and comments on the priorities and approaches set out here to deliver a step-change in output in 2024.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

None.