



Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 30 October 2023 at 1.00 pm

Minutes

Present

Councillor John McNicholas (Chair)
Councillor Mary Locke (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Pervez Akhtar
Councillor Robert Alden
Councillor Timothy Huxtable
Councillor Carol Hyatt
Councillor Emma Marshall

Councillor Martin McCarthy
Councillor Barbara McGarrity
Councillor Steve Melia
Councillor David Stanley
Councillor Alan Taylor
Councillor Ian Ward

Coventry City Council
Birmingham City Council
Coventry City Council
Birmingham City Council
Birmingham City Council
City of Wolverhampton Council
Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
City of Wolverhampton Council
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Birmingham City Council

In Attendance

Anne Shaw

Dan Essex
Janna Simpson
Paula Higgins
Councillor Saddak Miah (joined by teams)
Mal Drury-Rose

John Hayes

Peter Sargant

Executive Director for Transport for West Midlands

Governance & Scrutiny Manager
Governance Services Officer
Head of Swift on Rail
Birmingham City Council

Executive Director (WMRE) and Director of Rail (TfWM)

Head of Bus, Integrated Transport Services

The Head of Rail Policy and Strategy

Item No.

31. Inquorate Meeting

This meeting was inquorate and therefore decisions taken at the meeting would be submitted to the WMCA Board on 17 November.

32. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Aqeela Choudhry (Sandwell), Councillor Amo Hussain (Walsall), Councillor Narinder Kaur Kooner (Birmingham), Councillor Josh O'Nyons (Solihull) and Councillor Alan Taylor (Dudley).

33. Minutes - 4 September 2023

The minutes were agreed as a correct record, subject to a minor amendment to minute no. 22 to reflect that Councillor Robert Alden requested that the committee received an update on the Rail Ticket Officers Closure Consultation.

34. Rail Ticket Office Closures

The Executive Director (WMRE) and Director of Rail (TfWM) presented a report to the committee on the status of the rail ticket office closure proposals made by the rail industry.

On 5 July 2023, 13 train companies contracted by the Department for Transport (DfT) launched a consultation on proposed changes to the way that tickets are sold at railway stations. These changes looked to move staff out of traditional booking offices and into the public areas of stations. The Head of Rail Policy and Strategy reported that, TfWM (through the wider regional response submitted by the West Midlands Rail Executive) responded to the consultation. TfWM recognised the need to modernise the way railway stations were managed and staffed, but they could not support the proposed closures due to insufficient information around how passenger needs would be met.

Councillors echoed their support for the WMRE/TfWM consultation response on the proposed rail ticket office closures, while raising their own concerns about the impact of the closures on passenger safety, security, and accessibility. The committee will receive an update on the consultation report from responses.

Recommended:

- (1) The update on rail ticket office closures be noted.
- (2) A report would be submitted to a future meeting providing further details on the on-going process.

35. Member Engagement Group Progress Reports

The committee considered a report from the Scrutiny Lead Members that provided an update on their respective areas.

Members discussed matters in relation to Diamond Bus services and the regional air quality framework. It was proposed that Diamond Bus should be invited to attend a briefing session with members of the committee to discuss performance. The Head of Bus, Integrated Transport Services and the Partnership Coordinator would notify Diamond Bus at the next meeting of the Bus Alliance.

[Councillor Tim Huxtable declared an interest in this item as a member of the Bus Alliance].

Recommended:

(1) The report was noted.

(2) The recommendation of the Air Quality, Congestion & Environmental Impact Member Engagement Group that the WMCA Board considered adopting, as part of development of the Regional Air Quality Framework, stretch targets which were more ambitious in terms of timescales and pollutant concentration targets than the Government's air quality targets, and which were closer to World Health Organisation targets for NO₂ and PM_{2.5} was supported.

36. Work Programme

The work programme was presented by the Governance & Scrutiny Manager. The chair requested that the work programme be aligned with the WMCA forward look in light of the additional items being proposed for the next committee.

Recommended:

The work programme be noted.

37. Exclusion of the Public and Press

Recommended:

In accordance with s100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they were likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of the Act.

38. West Midlands Rail Fares Reform Update

The Head of Rail Policy and Strategy presented a report to the committee on the progress that is being made on rail fares reform in order to simplify the ticketing offer for rail passengers and support the implementation of the Swift on Rail programme.

The report highlighted the need for simplification and consistency in the current fares structure, which would be beneficial for all rail users; and proposed implementation of a PAYG solution on TfWM's Swift card. This would further simplify rail travel by allowing passengers to tap-in, tap-out and automatically be charged the best value fare for their journey. It was acknowledged that the proposed fare changes were complex but was argued that the downsides are outweighed by the benefits of a simplified and consistent fares structure.

Recommended:

- (1) That under the Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal, there was a commitment for the Great British Railways Transition Team, the Department for Transport and the WMCA to agree the scope of a pilot Pay-As-You-Go smart ticketing scheme by the end of 2023, be noted.
- (2) That the current range of rail fares did not provide a simple, consistent passenger offer and was not compatible with the future Pay-As-You-Go scheme, be noted.
- (3) The proposal to implement a two-stage process to reform rail fares with an initial package of rail fare changes planned for implementation next year, to be followed by further packages of changes aligned with the implementation of Pay-As-You-Go, be noted

39. Any Other Business

Councillor Mary Lock submitted a petition for the reinstatement of routes 25 and 600.

40. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 11 December 2023 at 1.00pm.

The meeting ended at 3.00 pm.