



West Midlands  
Combined Authority

## Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 18 March 2024 at 1.00 pm

### Minutes

#### Present In Person

Councillor John McNicholas (Chair)	Coventry City Council
Councillor Mary Locke (Vice-Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Pervez Akhtar	Coventry City Council
Councillor Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Amo Hussain	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Timothy Huxtable	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Carol Hyatt	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Martin McCarthy	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Barbara McGarrity	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Josh O'Nyons	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Gurmeet Singh Sohal	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor David Stanley	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

#### Present Virtually

Councillor Alan Taylor	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Robert Tromans	Warwickshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Antony Tucker	Coventry City Council

#### In Attendance

Lyndsey Roberts	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Kate Taylor	Head of Finance Business Partners
Darren Divall	Regional Road Safety Manager
Toby Rackliff	Strategic Lead for Rail Policy
Pete Bond	Head of Operational Assets
Anne Shaw	Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands
Jenni MacKenzie	Head of Transport Portfolio

#### Item No. Title

##### 76. Inquorate Meeting

The Chair noted that the meeting was inquorate, and therefore the recommendations arising from the meeting would be required to be approved at the next meeting of the committee.

**77. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Emma Marshall (Worcestershire non-constituent local authorities), Councillor Saddak Miah (Birmingham), Councillor Ian Nellins (Shropshire non-constituent local authorities) and Councillor Ian Ward (Birmingham).

**78. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

**79. Chair's Remarks**

The Chair welcomed the committee and noted that the meeting was an additional one programmed to ensure that all of the work generated by the committee would not carry over into the next municipal year. He highlighted the successes of the committee having established itself, the activities of the scrutiny chairs throughout the year and where resources could be engaged over the next year. He noted that Councillor Richard Worrall, a former chair of this committee was due to retire from Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council shortly, to which the committee wished him luck.

**80. Minutes - 26 February 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2024 were agreed as a correct record, subject to amendments regarding items on ring and ride, and real time information.

**81. Matters Arising**

Councillor Timothy Huxtable reported on a matter arising out of the minutes in terms of items to be raised at a Rail Member Engagement Group meeting. He reported that as per the request of Councillor Robert Tromans, the Rail MEG had a productive discussion around the Elephant and Bear Line. He also shared that real time information regarding railways, trains and Metro and Park and Ride, raised by Councillor Robert Alden was also discussed.

**82. Task & Finish Scrutiny Review - 'The Effectiveness of the WMCA's Member Engagement and Development' - Final Report**

The Chair reported on the Effectiveness of the WMCA's Member Engagement & Development Task & Finish Group review. He thanked the members of the committee who were involved in the task and finish group before he shared the key findings and considerations identified by the report. He closed with the report's recommendations which he added one regarding specific reference to the two overview & scrutiny committees to increase engagement. He also raised the committee's inquoracy and confirmed that the constitutional quoracy could be changed and the recommendations for in-person attendance should also be added to the report.

Recommended:

The conclusions and recommendations of the task & finish group be endorsed for submission and consideration by the WMCA Board on 14 June 2024.

**83. Network North Funding and Midlands Rail Hub**

The Strategic Lead for Rail Policy presented a report on the recent HS2 announcements and the funding of Network North projects. He reported on Government announcements delivered in February and informed the committee on where the approved funding would be distributed. He confirmed that £123m would enable the detailed design work and full business case on all the central Birmingham aspects of the Midland Rail Hub, but also confirmed that it did not include funding for developing anything beyond Worcester out towards Great Malvern and Hereford or the Water Orton corridor.

Councillor Timothy Huxtable noted that the Castle Bromwich station was detailed within the report and highlighted its importance to the people in the East Birmingham and Solihull area.

Recommended:

The report be noted.

**84. Regional Road Safety Annual Review 2023-24**

The Regional Road Safety Manager delivered a presentation on the annual review of regional road safety. He highlighted the strategy presented to the WMCA Board early in the year, originating from the Local Transport Plan. He shared the vision zero aspiration goal along with the 2030 target and safety performance indicators. He also presented validated data on Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) incidents, including insights into areas of deprivation.

He shared with the committee key themes identified from the road safety survey, particularly focusing on speeding and inconsiderate behaviour before providing an update on partnerships and engagement with local authorities, the NHS, and various charitable organisations within the community. He updated the committee on enforcement and addressed moving traffic contraventions and speed enforcements, highlighting speed camera reviews and plans for re-initiating spot speed cameras that had been deactivated since 2013.

He also discussed the relaunch of collaborative campaigns, the introduction of new social media campaigns to enhance road safety awareness, consultation on an action plan and the development of working agreements for new speed cameras and plans for establishing a community champions forum. Finally, he expressed hope that the upcoming national road safety conference would mark the launch of a new road safety plan.

Councillor Robert Tromans queried the expected updates on projects Ivory and Phoebe and it was confirmed that legal considerations regarding joining Project Ivory, despite its seven-year duration, were also raised.

Councillor Timothy Huxtable raised concerns about cross-city bus route safety and provided feedback on moving traffic violations on Livery Street. In addition, Councillor Robert Alden suggested a review of traffic barriers to assess their effectiveness and potential counterproductivity. It was noted that accidents occurring were significantly over speed limits and was suggested that changing speed limits might not have a substantial impact on excessive speeding.

In response to Councillor Pervez Akhtar's comments, the Road Safety Manager highlighted the importance of understanding regional data fully to make informed decisions about the placement of speed cameras. He emphasised the need for strategic placement to resolve road safety problems effectively and confirmed that the ongoing assessment of every location's effectiveness would inform the development of a business case.

Recommended:

The review of road safety activity delivered during 2023 and 2024 be noted.

## **85. Capital Performance Report**

The Head of Transport Portfolio gave a verbal update on the Capital Performance report, containing summary data and an update on the progress of capital schemes across the delivery portfolio. She reported that the majority of capital schemes were performing to baseline across the portfolio and noted several projects that were completing notable milestones in month. She also reported that all projects were either reporting as green, amber or amber/red with no red projects, before reporting on project timelines for capital projects.

Councillor Pervez Akhtar expressed concerns about ticketing procedures during peak times for the metro, noting the challenges faced by passengers in purchasing tickets amidst overcrowding situations. In response, Executive Director for Transport for West Midlands provided clarity on the implementation of the 'buy before you board' scheme. She also addressed concerns regarding the potential impact on current staff, assuring plans for their transition into alternative roles without redundancies.

Councillor Robert Alden and Councillor Timothy Huxtable queried the accuracy of completion dates for various projects. Discrepancies were noted between reported deadlines and actual progress, raising concerns about the need for a more realistic assessment of project timelines. The importance of ensuring accountability and timely delivery was raised and suggestions were proffered to enhance the clarity and detail of future reports with regard to project descriptions and completion statuses.

Councillor Timothy Huxtable provided an update on plans for a site visit. He informed the attendees about the postponement of the visit, but expressed optimism about rescheduling it later in the year. Additionally, requests were made for more comprehensive information on specific rail projects listed in the report. The committee discussed the importance of thorough scrutiny by members, which was enabled by transparency and accuracy in reporting project statuses, underscoring the need for continual improvement in

reporting practices.

Recommended:

(1) The update and progress on key capital delivery schemes progressing in Transport for West Midlands be noted.

(2) The working draft roadmap for capital delivery portfolio be noted.

**86. Member Engagement Groups – Progress Report**

Councillor Timothy Huxtable updated the committee on the Midlands Railway Open Access proposals, acknowledging the approval in principle by the WMCA. He emphasised the importance of the proposed route from Shropshire to Wolverhampton, utilising the reopened Wolverhampton to Walsall line. Additionally, he highlighted the significance of the proposed new stations at Darlaston and Willenhall, with a potential stop at Aldridge. He stressed the importance of providing connectivity between Walsall, Warwickshire, and London. He then shared an update on the discussion, proposed by Councillor Robert Tromans, on the Elephant and Bear Line and highlighted the value of non-constituent members in the overview and scrutiny committee in their contributions.

Councillor Robert Tromans raised concerns about the lack of resilience in driver resource planning within rail operations, urging for more robust plans to accommodate sick leave, vacancies, and other issues.

Councillor Gurmeet Singh Sohal inquired about plans for metro connectivity to Walsall, to which Councillor Timothy Huxtable responded by committing to raise the question in future Member Engagement Group.

Councillor Pervez Akhtar raised representation of the committee on the Midland Metro Alliance and West Midland Metro. Councillor Timothy Huxtable also committed to raising this at the next Member Engagement Group.

Recommended:

The report be noted.

**87. Work Programme**

The work programme was presented by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer for noting. It was reported subject to the inclusion of the request for committee members to have an in-depth look at Road Safety within the region. The committee were also directed to the forward plan and were reminded to come forward if they thought there was an area that the committee should be looking at next year. The Director of Integrated Transport noted that future bus delivery options and ring and ride would be discussed in a specially convened session in May.

The meeting ended at 3.00 pm.