



Name of meeting: Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 13 January 2025

Report title: Member Engagement Groups – Progress Report

Responsible Director: Anne Shaw – Executive Director for Transport for West Midlands
Air Quality, Congestion & Environmental Impact - Councillor Ian Ward

Responsible authors/Scrutiny Champions: Finance & Performance - Councillor Pervez Akhtar
Passenger Communications - Councillor John McNicholas
Passenger & Road Safety - Councillor Leslie Kaye
Rail, Metro & Sprint - Councillor Robert Alden
Sustainability & Active Travel - Councillor Carol Hyatt

Key Decision? No

Is the ability for the Combined Authority to make a decision internally reliant on Constituent or Non-Constituent Councils making a formal decision first?

Yes No

Public/private report: Public

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- 1. Decision/s Recommended**
- 1.1 To receive a report back from each Scrutiny Champion in respect of the recent meeting of their Member Engagement Group.
- 1.2 To consider specific recommendations made by the MEGs to this committee, specifically:

Air Quality, Congestion & Environmental Impact MEG
None

Rail, Metro & Sprint MEG
None

Sustainability & Active Travel MEG

- (a) That 1% to 5% of any infrastructure scheme grant is allocated to software and orgware (to fund activation of that specific infrastructure) when considering grant funding for active travel schemes.
- (b) TDOSC should consider asking the newly appointed Active Travel Commissioner to attend the Sustainability and Active Travel MEG, or TDOSC itself, at least once a year.

Finance & Performance MEG

None

Passenger Communications MEG

None

Passenger & Road Safety MEG

- (a) **For the Government to take action to limit speed to 20mph on residential roads.**
- (b) **In addition to the existing telephone and text reporting of incidents, a facility for video capture and reporting of incidents should be provided to passengers. This might be in the form of a video capture enhancement to the TfWM's mobile phone travel Apps.**

2. Voting Requirements

- 2.1 A majority of voting members, in attendance in the meeting room and indicating their preference, are required to vote in favour of any recommendation for it to become a decision of the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Member Engagement Groups provide members of this committee with an opportunity to meet and discuss in more detail transport-related issues that are grouped around broad thematic areas. Although the Member Engagement Groups are not decision making, they provide a forum for members to develop a deeper understanding of those matters that would not otherwise be able to be discussed in such detail at committee meetings.

4. Matters for Consideration

- 4.1 An update from Member Engagement Groups that have met since the last meeting of the committee is set out below:

<p>Air Quality, Congestion & Environmental Impact MEG (Scrutiny Champion - Councillor Ian Ward) Date of Meeting: 27 November 2024</p>
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<p>Highlights & Performance</p>
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<p>The MEG considered a number of items at its 27 November meeting:</p>

Midlands Connect presentations: EV charging infrastructure and alternative fuels for freight.

Key points made in the presentations and questions were:

- need to establish what the infrastructure needs of the freight and logistics sector are for use of alternative fuels, and get a better understanding of the trajectory for increased use
- need to also consider infrastructure needs for mode shift of freight from road to rail
- Midlands Connect has shortlisted six sites for recharging/re-fuelling hubs
- East Midlands Freeport Hub business case being developed – full business case in 2025 and exploring potential for a site at UK Central
- Trying to get a demonstration project up and running, working with the private sector to understand the potential for these hubs to help the transition of the freight and distribution sector to use of alternative fuels
- Rural areas a challenge for greater use of electric vehicles and charging point requirements
- Midlands Connect led on setting up a Midlands (central England) Electric Vehicle Infrastructure consortium. This brings together rural and urban authorities
- The public sector has a role in ensuring an equitable distribution of charging points
- Local authorities working on/have completed Local Energy Plans which will help National Grid plan for future demand

Birmingham City Council presentation: The Birmingham Transport Plan and how supports air quality strategy

Key points made in the presentations and questions were:

- Free air quality monitors now being given to every school in Birmingham
- The revised Brum Breathes Birmingham air quality strategy will be undergoing public consultation soon. It has an increasing focus on fine particulates: PM2.5s
- Birmingham's Transport Plan has four principles: reallocating road space, transforming central Birmingham, active travel in neighbourhoods, managing demand
- Need to improve public transport, cycling and walking as part of a transport approach which also has demand management measures.

West Midlands capital scheme delivery for schemes which support air quality strategy

Key points made in the presentation and questions were:

- Buses have a critical role and need investment

- Importance of investment in rail and rapid transit also highlighted, to enable more trips across a wider conurbation geography to reach jobs, skills and other possibilities
- In the UK most public transport trips are typically by bus, from home to a city or town centre, then returning. Comparable European urban areas have these trips, but also have trips involving interchange onto another public transport service (bus, tram, train) to get to a wider set of destinations using a network of services.
- Investment in public transport in Europe has been significantly higher than the UK for the last 40 years

Areas of work for the MEG for 2024/25

Role of urban transport policy, strategy and measures to support improved air quality, as part of wider urban transport strategy for the West Midlands

Challenges & Risks

Key challenges and risks relate to:

- Supporting initiatives which enable the transition of the freight and logistics sector to use of alternative fuels
- Supporting the roll out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the Midlands
- Continuing to make the case for major investment in an integrated public transport system in the West Midlands, alongside investment in widespread cycling and walking improvements

Recommendations

None

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 29 January 2025

Rail, Metro & Sprint MEG (Scrutiny Champion - Councillor Robert Alden)

Dates of Meetings: 11 November 2024 and 25 November 2024

Highlights & Performance

The MEG met twice in November – once to consider updates on the capital programmes for Rail, Metro and Sprint, and again to deliberate on recent train service performance and rail reform.

Rail Programme

The MEG were provided with updates on the Package 1 (Willenhall and Darlaston), Package 2 (Camp Hill Line), Dudley Port and Aldridge station schemes. On Package 1, members discussed the unsafe building adjacent to the site at Willenhall and it was noted that the project team were working on mitigations and adjusting the design for station delivery activities so as not to impact the station delivery whilst the local authority worked with the adjacent site owner. Members heard that officers had spoken to Walsall MBC, who had also provided support through their Building Control

team. At Darlaston works continue, with the concrete beam installation underway on Platform 2 and piling commenced for canopy and lift foundations.

On Package 2, members heard that highways design discussions continue with BCC at Moseley Village and Pineapple Road, whilst at Kings Heath the foundations for canopies and lifts continue to be constructed. Members were also updated on the latest engagement with Moseley Forum.

Metro Programme

Members were updated on the Wednesbury-Brierley Hill, Eastside, Wolverhampton, and Line 1 enhancement schemes. On Wednesbury-Brierley Hill, members heard that agreement in principle had been reached with DfT on funding for Phase 2 from Dudley to Merry Hill. On Eastside, members heard that MMA traffic management activity had completed on Moor St Queensway with all surfacing and lining complete. The planned engagement to inform residents and businesses in Digbeth area of permanent TRO implementation was also noted.

On Wolverhampton, members were advised that technical work was underway on the highways / tram interface at Bilston St junction to address a concern raised by the City of Wolverhampton Council. Funding was being drawn down to address this. On the Line 1 enhancement project, members heard that on the Buy Before You Board project, platform-based machines had been installed, with power connected to all but three (planned for mid-November).

Sprint/Cross City Bus

The MEG heard that officers had undertaken a long listing exercise for future routes in anticipation of further funding being available in CRSTS 2. It was noted that this had been developed in conjunction with local authority partners, and it was agreed that this would be shared once ready.

Train Service Performance

A detailed presentation on recent train service performance across the region was discussed by the MEG. The group undertook a detailed review of punctuality and reliability on the Snow Hill Line (Worcester/Kidderminster to Stratford-upon-Avon/Dorridge via Birmingham Snow Hill), noting that cancellations had increased. The group discussed traincrew availability and noted that there had been a recent reduction in availability at several train companies. The root causes of this were debated, and it was noted that terms and conditions, training, sickness, annual leave, and appetite for overtime were all contributory factors. The group were advised that West Midlands Trains were developing an action plan to address performance on the Snow Hill and Birmingham to Worcester/Hereford Lines. It was agreed that this would be considered by the MEG once published. Members noted that Chiltern Railways were the strongest performer in the region under most metrics. A discussion took place as to why this might be, with the self-contained nature of the Chiltern network, and its generally stable management-union relations identified as possible causes.

Rail Reform

The MEG were appraised of the status of the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill, which was nearing Royal Assent. The MEG noted that once passed this would permit rail contracts to be transferred to the Government's own operator (known as DoHL). The MEG were advised that a Rail Reform Bill was also expected in 2025, with consultation in the first part of the year. The MEG also heard that the English Devolution Bill (also due in 2025) was expected to offer the potential of greater local accountability over rail. Finally, the MEG were updated on the latest developments with the Great British Railways Transition Team and noted that a new body (Shadow Great British Railways) had recently been established with Laura Shoaf as its Chair. The MEG noted that more clarity on the relationship between GBRTT and SGBR was expected shortly.

Areas of Work for the MEG for 2024/25

Areas identified included:

- Lessons learnt on capital schemes
- Midlands Rail Hub
- Mass Rapid Transit Studies
- Rail fares simplification
- Rail reform
- Seeking examples of best practice from across the UK and overseas

Challenges & Risks

The challenges of delivery of schemes and cost control were identified, as was understanding the lessons learnt from delivered schemes.

Members were concerned by the ongoing delays and RAG rating on the Package 2 (Camp Hill Line) works and are looking at dedicating part of a future MEG meeting to a deeper dive into the ongoing issues, what can be done to speed it up and what lessons can be learnt from this program for the future. This was originally due to be the 25 November meeting, but members were advised it would be more beneficial in the new year.

Recommendations

The Group did not put forward any recommendations to be considered by the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the MEG will be held on 10 February 2025, with the January meeting intended to take the form of a site visit.

Sustainability & Active Travel MEG (Scrutiny Champion - Councillor Carol Hyatt)
Date of Meeting: Wednesday 6 November 2024

Highlights & Performance

The following agenda items were considered:

- No Limits to Health (Sam Henry) - Cycling in Wolverhampton
- 20's Plenty (Anna Semelyen) - How 20mph limits are improving road safety
- Living Streets (Ed Wicks) - the work of charity Living Streets across the West Midlands

The presentations discussed active travel activation and promotion across the region, with the national and European view also discussed.

Challenges & Risks

- Several successful schemes that exist to activate cycling and walking across the region were discussed. It was noted that activities need to be funded alongside the infrastructure itself and that there is a finite budget for this sort of activity.
- The Dutch Cycling Embassy, highly regarded internationally for their work in this space, recommend between 1 and 5 per cent of all infrastructure scheme budget be dedicated to activation. This is referred to as “software” and “orgware.” A recent webinar on this subject was shared with the notes of the MEG.
- There is evidence that reducing the speed limit to 20mph has benefits. According to 20's Plenty data, most people (70%) are in favour of the 20mph limit. The 20's Plenty campaign exists to promote and educate. Anna Semelyen offered to meet/engage with any councillors directly. If you would like to get in touch, please email info@20splenty.org. There is also a specific councillor forum that councillors are invited to be on.
- The Living Streets WOW project, which encourages active travel amongst Primary school aged children, has shown impressive increases in those walking and decreases in car travel. It is noted this is funded directly by Active Travel England and schools take part at no cost. It is hoped that this funding continues past its current window of March 2025.
- Concerns were raised that the Active Travel Commissioner's post had not been consulted for with the Active Travel and Sustainable Transport MEG as stated at the Mayoral Q&A.

Recommendations

That 1% to 5% of any infrastructure scheme grant is allocated to software and orgware (to fund activation of that specific infrastructure) when considering grant funding for active travel schemes.

TDOSC should consider asking the newly appointed Active Travel Commissioner to attend the Sustainability and Active Travel MEG, or TDOSC itself, at least once a year.

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 8 January 2025

Finance & Performance MEG (Scrutiny Champion - Councillor Pervez Akhtar)

Date of Meeting: 19 November 2024

Highlights & Performance

Autumn Budget update

- It was noted that the Autumn Budget confirmed that WMCA alongside GMCA would receive their first Integrated Settlement from 1 April 2025. Several other MCAs were announced as receiving theirs from 2026/28 which reconfirmed the new Government's commitment to devolution and funding simplification.
- Members were informed that it had been confirmed post budget that bus revenue funding, active travel and electric vehicles would be in scope of the Integrated Settlement.
- It was noted that WMCA and other MCAs has been confirmed to receive the same public sector protections for directly employed staff against the rise in national insurance contribution.
- Recommitments to both the HS2 link between West Midlands and London and release of existing funding for WBHE extension subject to business case sign off were made. This did not represent new money for the region, but members welcomed the re-confirmation.
- £1bn of bus funding had been announced for both local areas and operators in 2025/26 which included £712m for MCAs and LTAs. The WMCA allocation of BSIP was later announced as £37m and £11m of BSOG+ for 2025/26.
- A new £3 bus fare cap for the 2025 calendar year. It was noted that the WMCA is working with operators to ensure fares are kept as low as possible.
- It was noted that £500m had been announced for road maintenance but the mechanism for distribution was not yet known.
- The budget also announced additional funds for active travel infrastructure (£100m) and on street electric vehicle charging (£200m).
- Members welcomed the announcements of new funding.

Performance Update

- Recent progress and feedback on the V3 performance dashboard for capital transport portfolio was discussed and TfWM clarified that next steps include further work with local authority and TfWM delivery teams on creating improved transparency about regional performance, with a particular focus on CRSTS 1 programme.
- The integration and maturity of financial information that is legible for the TDOSC audience and included as part of portfolio performance reporting going forward.
- The importance of preparation for integrated settlement and the opportunity to continue to build programme management into the region, to better realise opportunities, improve partner relationships and work smartly to address thematic risks and issues.
- The importance of progressing place-based strategies and transport's role in influencing and improving socio and economic benefits in the region.

Recommendations

None

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 14 January 2025

Passenger Communications MEG (*formerly Passenger First MEG*) (Scrutiny Champion - Councillor John McNicholas)
Date of Meeting: 5 December 2024

Highlights & Performance

Funding and Bus Reform: The first area of discussion was an update on bus funding and bus reform. Members were advised that there will be a briefing for all local councillors along with a full report that summarises the outcome of the audit. Members were advised that the recommendation is a move to public consultation, subject to approval by the WMCA Board in December. Plans underway for the consultation which will begin in January and end in March 2025. The MEG will receive regular updates as the process moves forward.

Fares Strategy: The main area of focus for this meeting was the proposed new fares strategy. The group had a detailed discussion on the content and were asked for feedback as to what their interests are and to consider whether they are aligned to the other priorities. Several suggestions were made around the content of the final document, a copy of which will be brought to the January meeting ahead of full discussion at TDOSC in March 2025.

Marketing and Communications: The meeting then moved on to receive a presentation on current marketing and communications activities. The group appreciated the content of the presentation and asked if all paperwork can be shared for a more in-depth understanding in advance of future meetings. The group also asked if it would be possible to have marketing activity broken down by area as part of future reports.

Ring and Ride: Following the focus item at the last meeting, the group received an update on Ring and Ride. As part of the tendering exercise final bids are expected back in the New Year, with the intention to award contracts in March 2025 with the new services commencing later in 2025. A further update will be brought to this group at the next meeting.

Festive Service Provision: Finally, with the festive season approaching the group received an update on service provision over the holiday period. Members were advised that there will be revised bus services from Monday 23 December to Friday 3 January (inclusive). There will be a core bus service on Boxing Day, which represents the highest level of Boxing Day service outside of London, with a similar service provided on New Year's Day. There will be a winter marketing campaign running, which will be aligned with rail and metro. Members expressed appreciation that we are providing such a good level of service, which is very important for those who rely on bus services so much.

Challenges & Risks

- **Communications:** A Member expressed concern that community radio and Gulshan Radio were still not receiving updates from TfWM and asked again for TfWM to improve communications and to also contact council communication departments to ask them to share messaging. The Chair noted disappointment as this has been raised several times.
- **Fares Strategy:** Members asked to ensure that the customer is the heart of what we do and that it is made clear the customer is at the forefront of this roadmap.
- **Member Enquiries:** Members raised a couple of concerns over the handling of complaints, it was asked for the Customer Services Team to be more proactive when responding to cases that were taking longer to respond to than is seen to be acceptable and to challenge the information provided by third parties if it seems lacking in any way.

Recommendations

None.

Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 6 February 2025

Passenger & Road Safety MEG (Scrutiny Champion - Councillor Leslie Kaye)
Date of Meeting: 5 December 2024

Highlights and Performance

Passenger Safety:

- **Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Headlines:**
- Recorded crime **BUS** is running at 1.4% increase when compared to 23/24 levels
- 62% of crimes occurred on the bus, 22% at the stop and 16% at station
- Main crime type is Violence Against The Person with 137 offences recorded
- Recorded crime **TRAIN** running at a 2.5% decrease
- Anti-Social Behaviour reports are stable year to date at 1598 incidents
- The majority of ASB reports are for rowdy behaviour
- 2.3 crimes occur per 100k passenger journeys.

Road Safety:

- The Regional Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2030 was launched formerly endorsed at WMCA Board on 15 November and launched by The Mayor at the National Road Safety Conference 2024.
- **Action 1: Work towards a new multi-year Operational Agreement for Average Speed Enforcement**

- WMP circulated a draft Joint Working Agreement (JWA) for review to all parties and the aim to have this Agreement signed off and implemented from the 1 April 2025 remains.
- The Chief Constable confirmed that WMP will consume all their operational costs for speed enforcement (estimated £3.8m) and provide a £300,000 contribution to the local authority maintenance costs. This contribution will be allocated based on KSI levels for 2023. The Chief Constable also requested that all local authorities consume their own operational costs to support the sustainability of the scheme.
- **Action 2: Coordinate a consolidated annual reviews of speed limit compliance at location where enforcement is undertaken.**
- Agilysis is currently undertaking a review of legacy compliance at previously used GATSO static camera locations. The aim of this is to assess the need for further enforcement, particularly at locations where high-speed violations exist.
- **Action 4: Continue to deliver Operation Tutelage and Operation Scalis targeting uninsured driving, the use of unroadworthy vehicles and car cruising and street racing.**
- Operation drive insured started week beginning 11 November with West Midlands Police and the Motor Insurance Bureau collaborating. This includes targeted enforcement in the top five post codes in the West Midlands with the highest uninsured driving problem.
- **Action 6: Formulate an industry endorsed 'Take away and food delivery charter'.**
- We have been contacted by a representative of Deliveroo to support progress on this action. A preliminary meeting has been established to discuss aims and objectives.
- **Action 7: Engage with bus and HGV fleet operators to encourage implementation of the Direct Vision Standard (implemented in London).**
- Following Darren Divall's presented to transport and fleet operators at the Invergold HGV conference on the 16 October, Solihull has requested to be part of the work on-going for this action. This will allow us to link directly with fleet operators and test the process for engagement with the industry.
- **Action 8: Continue to deliver evidence-based interventions like Operation Hercules aimed at eliminating dangerous and anti-social driving involving criminality (such as street racing and driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol).**
- The latest data from West Midlands Police (2021-2023) shows that:
 - There were 418 arrests for causing death or serious injury on our roads.
 - 90% of those arrests were males.
 - 18-25- and 26-35-year-olds accounted for the highest proportions of arrests by age.
- The top contributory factor for fatal collisions was speed (31%), with drugs and alcohol use mentioned in 10% of all fatal collisions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Police and Crime Commissioner’s new Police and Crime Plan (2025-2030) is likely to focus heavily on improving road safety through increased enforcement and third-party reporting, tackling organised street racing and clamping down on uninsured vehicles. • Action 14: Utilise new data sources arising from technology, such as AI, as part of a risk-based approach to prioritising road safety interventions, especially for vulnerable road users. • We are working with Coventry City Council to implement the first interventions since the project began by making small, low-cost changes to a junction design. These will be in place by mid-January. • We are also looking at the use of intelligent road studs to warn drivers of the presence of cyclists at T-junctions where a cycle lane exists. We are proud to have received awards from Intelligent Transport Systems UK for ‘Better Safety Through Technology’ and the overall ‘Best UK Project’ for our work with VivaCity identifying near misses for vulnerable road users. • Action 21: Promote and signpost victims of collisions and those bereaved from road traffic collisions to the most appropriate restorative justice and post-collision support services. • The Mayor, Mark Corbin and Darren Divall attended the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims event organised by RoadPeace on the 17 November. • TfWM is producing a new social media campaign promoting the work of RoadPeace and providing an opportunity for people bereaved from road crashes to share their story and humanise the impact of death on our roads.
<p>Challenges & Risks</p> <p>There were no noted challenges and risks this meeting.</p>
<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the Government to take action to limit speed to 20mph on residential roads. • In addition to the existing telephone and text reporting of incidents, a facility for video capture and reporting of incidents should be provided to passengers. This might be in the form of a video capture enhancement to the TfWM’s mobile phone travel Apps.
<p>Date of next meeting Thursday 13 February 2025, 11:00am</p>

What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

Not applicable.

4. Reasons for recommending preferred option

4.1 Not applicable.

5. Implications and Considerations

Priority:	Contribution:
Delivery of Strategic Transport Plan	N/A
Promote inclusive economic growth in every corner of the region	N/A
Ensure everyone has the opportunity to benefit	N/A
Connect our communities by delivering transport and unlocking housing and regeneration schemes	N/A
Reduce carbon emissions to net zero and enhance the environment	N/A
Secure new powers and resources from central government	Whilst a robust and effective overview and scrutiny function impacts on all the WMCA's corporate aims there is direct link to this objective.
Develop our organisation and our role as a good regional partner	Whilst a robust and effective overview and scrutiny function impacts on all the WMCA's corporate aims there is direct link to this objective.

6. Internal Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.1 Not applicable.

7. External Consultation and Scrutiny:

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Financial implications:

8.1 There are no direct finance implications arising out of this report.

9. Legal implications:

9.1 Overview and scrutiny is a statutory function of the WMCA and the activity highlighted within this report contributes towards meeting this responsibility.

10. Single Assurance Framework implications:

10.1 There are no direct implications for the Single Assurance Framework arising out of this report.

11. Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

11.1 There are no direct risk implications arising out of this report.

12. Procurement Implications:

12.1 There are no direct procurement implications arising out of this report.

13. Equality implications:

13.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising out of this report.

14. Inclusive Growth Implications:

14.1 There are no direct inclusive growth implications arising out of this report.

15. Local Authority Impact:

15.1 There are no direct Local Authority impacts arising out of this report.

16. List of appendices referred to:

16.1 Not applicable.

17. Background papers used to compile this report:

17.1 None.

18. List of Other Relevant Documents

18.1 None.