



**West Midlands
Combined Authority**

Transport Delivery Committee

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| Date | 19 July 2021 |
| Report title | Member Engagement Groups Update |
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Recommendation(s) for decision:

Transport Delivery Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the update in relation to recent meetings of the committee's Member Engagement Groups.

1. Purpose

1.1 To note recent developments and meetings the six Member Engagement Groups.

2. Background

2.1 The Introduction of Lead Member Reference Group occurred in 2017 when it was felt that the meetings of this committee did not allow members to get further into detail of a number of transport-related items. Following a further review of the role and remit of the Lead Member Reference Groups, they have been renamed as Member Engagement Groups (MEGs) to give the rest of the WMCA a clearer sense of their purpose, allowing members the opportunity to focus on specific aspects of the work of Transport for West Midlands in the delivery of policies.

2.2 In total there are currently six MEGs:

- Air Quality, Congestion & Environmental Impact
- Finance & Performance
- Putting Passengers First
- Rail & Metro
- Safe & Sustainable Travel
- Sprint

2.3 Each of the MEGs have been scheduled to take place before committee and are open to all Transport Delivery Committee members to attend.

2.4 Further work is currently being undertaken to refresh to scope and terms of reference for each of these MEGs and will be shared in due course.

3. Member Engagement Group Updates

3.1 An update from each of the Member Engagement Groups is provided below:

Air Quality, Congestion & Environmental Impact (Councillor Chaman Lal)

The Group agreed its 2021/22 work plan. This is based on monitoring and supporting progress of strategy development and transport measures that improve air quality, reduce congestion and reduce carbon emissions.

Updates on current strategic air quality and environment issues for TfWM, and progress with the many TfWM transport actions to improve air quality were also considered. These included progress with the passage of the Environment Bill through Parliament and an update on TfWM's bids for funding, such as the bid for Department for Transport ZEBRA funding for zero emission buses.

A speaker for a future meeting will discuss the role of hydrogen as a fuel.

Finance & Performance (Councillor Pervez Akhtar)

The group met on 8 July and agreed the importance of ensuring that the group's revised terms of reference were set in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Paula Martyn, Finance Business Partner for Transport Operations, gave an update on the latest impact of COVID-19 on the transport network with particular reference to the bus network. Louise Cowen, Financial Controller, provided an update on the financial impact of COVID-19 in the 2020/21 financial year.

The group's September meeting will focus on deliverability of capital projects following the disruption experienced throughout the pandemic.

Putting Passengers First (Councillor Kath Hartley)

The group met virtually on 7 July and agreed a number of suggested changes to their terms of reference. There was a presentation given on Metro operations, with members keen to be involved in the restart of the Metro Passenger Champions group. Members were talked through detailed analysis of the latest passenger survey and were made aware of work that was ongoing regarding printed timetable information. An update was provided on the latest bus patronage figures and Members made aware of concerns that TfWM had about future bus service funding and the possible impacts this may have to bus service levels.

The group was advised of the decision to close the travel shop at Birmingham New Street station and was given updates on work to transform Coventry Pool Meadow and Dudley bus stations. Concerns were raised about the impact multiple major works in Dudley would have on Dudley town centre. Meetings had now been set up ahead of each meeting of the Transport Delivery Committee, with the next meeting scheduled for 25 August.

Rail & Metro (Councillor Richard Worrall)

The Rail and Metro Member Engagement Group (MEG) met on 12th July. It covered the Metro capital programme, and reviewed the Rail Business Report that is being presented at TDC on 19th July.

On the former, the MEG heard that services on the Hagley Road to Edgbaston extension are due to commence in December 2021. Works at Wolverhampton are also due to conclude that month, although operation may not begin until January 2022. The Brierley Hill scheme has been delayed, although the MMA are hopeful that 6 months can be recovered once the designs are finalised this summer. The MEG was advised of a possible option for a two-stage opening on the line, first to Dudley then to Brierley Hill.

23 new CAF trams are due to be delivered by 2023, with five already having arrived. A bid has been made to the Levelling Up Fund for the expansion of Wednesbury depot to accommodate the new rolling stock.

The MEG received updates on the Digbeth extension and the proposed extension onward to the Airport. and an update on options for connecting Brierley Hill to Stourbridge bus and rail stations were also raised. An update was also provided on the Very Light Rail project at Dudley

On the Rail Business Report, the MEG discussed the progress of the works at University station, and queried the latest status of the Midlands Connect plans to reinstate Platform 4 at Snow Hill, and remodel Kings Norton station. Rail issues in the Coventry area were also raised, namely, Nuneaton - Leamington Spa and the need for doubling of the track between Coventry and Leamington.

TDC members wishing for further more detailed information are welcome to request copies of the notes of the Rail & Metro MEG.

Safe & Sustainable Travel (Councillor Bob Grinsell)

The MEG met for the first time today to review the forward plan for future meetings. It was agreed that both aspects of the portfolio will be covered at each meeting, with Mark Babington delegating to a colleague as appropriate. Each meeting will also have regular updates on the West Midlands Cycle Hire scheme. There was a quick discussion on potential site visits including the CCTV room at Summer Lane and Derby to see the velodrome.

Sprint (Councillor Timothy Huxtable)

The first meeting is scheduled to take place in late July. However, discussions have taken place about the delivery of a Sprint Park & Ride site along the A34 North, since the Sprint update report taken to the informal TDC meeting on the 28 June, which is included as an Appendix to this agenda item.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising out of recommendations contained within the report.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

7. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 7.1 There are no inclusive growth implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

8. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 8.1 There are no geographical implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 There are no further specific implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.

10. Schedule of Background Papers

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Sprint Progress Update Report