



Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Monday 22 February 2021 at 10.30 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Cathy Bayton (Chair)	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Philip Bateman MBE	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Liz Clements	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Ken Hawkins	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Gurmeet Singh Sohal	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Jackie Taylor	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

In Attendance

Transport for West Midlands

Item No.

Title

23. Inquorate Meeting

The meeting was inquorate and therefore decisions taken at the meeting would be submitted to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 8 March 2021 for formal approval.

24. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Philip Bateman declared non-prejudicial interests in respect of his involvement in the Canal & River Trust and the receipt of a pension from West Midlands Travel, Councillor Jackie Taylor declared a non-prejudicial interest in respect of her involvement in the board of Midland Connect, and Kashmire Hawker declared a non-prejudicial interest in respect of his involvement in the organising committee for Birmingham 2022.

25. Minutes - 30 November 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

26. Q&A with Chair of Transport Delivery Committee

The Chair welcomed Councillor Kath Hartley, Chair of Transport Delivery Committee, members of the sub-committee and Kashmire Hawker from the Young Combined Authority to the question time.

Councillor Kath Hartley updated the sub-committee on Transport Delivery Committee's roles and responsibilities, the changes to the committee since its establishment in 2012, and the outstanding need to review its terms of reference and to provide a role profile to its members.

Councillor Jackie Taylor questioned Councillor Kath Hartley on both her and the committee members' relationship with elected members within Constituent Authorities, the Mayor and the engagement with district cabinet members for transport. Councillor Kath Hartley noted that Transport Delivery Committee members had previously highlighted gaps in communication with colleagues from Constituent Authorities and highlighted the need for these relationships to be strengthened. She also considered that the relationship between Transport Delivery Committee members and cabinet members for transport should be included within the proposed role profiles.

Kashmire Hawker questioned Councillor Kath Hartley on how the Transport Delivery Committee engaged with other WMCA policies, such as WM2041 and the carbon reduction targets it contained. He also asked to what level of engagement she had with the Mayor and the Portfolio Lead for Transport. Councillor Kath Hartley felt that the co-ordination between the WMCA's boards could be improved upon, and hoped that the work undertaken on the governance review would help achieve this. With regard to her relationship with the Portfolio Lead for Transport, she conceded that this largely operated at an informal level and there was little direct engagement with the Mayor on transport matters.

Councillor Liz Clements thanked Councillor Kath Hartley for the commitment she demonstrated to the role of Chair of Transport Delivery Committee and for ensuring views of both local members and residents were heard in key transport decisions. However, Councillor Liz Clements queried the work undertaken by the Lead Member Reference Groups and how the findings and recommendations of these groups could be given greater visibility. Councillor Kath Hartley reported that the member reference groups were implemented in 2017 and felt that a change to the terms of reference could reflect better engagement from those reference groups.

Councillor Philip Bateman sought to understand better the frustrations she experienced as Chair. Councillor Kath Hartley indicated the need for the committee to have a clearly understood terms of reference, as well as defined role descriptions for the Chair, Vice-Chair and members of the committee. She considered that the committee had much to offer as being the 'voice of passengers' in as part of the WMCA's decision making processes.

Councillor Jackie Taylor questioned how the committee ensured equality issues were at the core of its decisions. Councillor Kath Hartley informed the sub-committee that an equality impact assessment was always completed and felt that equality was a thread that ran throughout the work of the Transport Delivery Committee, although noted that she hoped there would be a better gender balance amongst the committee's membership in future years. Councillor Jackie Taylor also enquired about the role of the committee in terms of the recent Gigafactory proposals that were announced for Coventry and how they would improve connectivity to this employment site and other parts of the region. The Director of Integrated Transport Services reported that work had begun to look into this important issue, also noting that a review of the bus network would be undertaken post COVID-19 and how the pandemic had impacted the network.

The Chair questioned the performance management role the committee undertook in respect of Transport for West Midlands and how its workplan for the year was set. Councillor Kath Hartley explained the work planning process the committee undertook, including a metro operations report focusing on passengers at every other meeting.

Recommended to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee that:

- (1) The terms of reference of the Transport Delivery Committee be reviewed and updated to reflect the changed role of the committee since the establishment of the WMCA and clearly setting out the specific role and responsibilities the WMCA Board wished the committee to undertake, to include a responsibility for a performance monitoring role of Transport for West Midlands.
- (2) Transport Delivery Committee member role profiles be developed as a priority to give clarity as to what was expected of those councillors appointed to the committee.
- (3) The committee's annual work planning process be reviewed to more closely align the responsibilities of the committee with the transport-related deliverables contained within the WMCA's Annual Plan and other strategic policies.
- (4) The role and purpose of the committee's Lead Member Reference Groups be reviewed to improve their accountability and transparency, including to ensure that all members of the committee were fully involved in formal decision making and the discussions and decisions made at these meetings being reported publicly to the Transport Delivery Committee.
- (5) The relationship between the Chair of the committee, the Mayor and the Portfolio Lead for Transport be strengthened and formalised so as to ensure proper engagement and collaboration between transport policy and delivery.

27. Commonwealth Games - Transport Plan

The committee received a presentation from the Director of Network Resilience on the Commonwealth Games Transport Plan. Information shared with the sub-committee related to Transport for West Midlands' role in the Commonwealth Games transport planning and the commitments made by both the WMCA and Transport for West Midlands in terms of transport provisions for the games.

Following Councillor Jackie Taylor's query on ensuring that there were appropriate transport facilities in place, the Director of Network Resilience confirmed that work was being undertaken to ensure that there was a games route network in place to deliver individuals to all spectator locations. Councillor Philip Bateman queried the planning of security arrangements of the transport network for the Commonwealth Games. The Director of Network Resilience informed the sub-committee that responsibility sat with the Chief Constable of West Midlands Police, but confirmed that additional resources would be made available during the course of the games and dedicated funding had been identified for this.

Following Kashmire Hawker's questions on maintaining traffic flows ahead of, during and after the games, the Director of Network Resilience reported that following the establishment of the Regional Transport Co-ordination Centre this would be used to provide a multi-modal, multi-agency oversight of the performance on the transport network and that work had also been undertaken to improve CCTV coverage across the network. The Commonwealth Games Technical Director indicated that as part of the preparatory work to ensure the integrity of the transport network, data regarding traffic patterns and locations from where spectators were travelling from would be gathered.

Councillor Liz Clements queried as to what contingency planning had been discussed in relation to any delays to planning and/or the delay of games themselves, as well as the consideration of social distancing arising from COVID-19 travel restrictions. The Director of Network Resilience commented that transport planning was continuing on the basis of the games running to full capacity, whilst working closely with partner agencies and the Government in respect of any COVID-19 restrictions that might be in force at the time.

The Chair noted Dudley's comparative lack of transport connectivity and queried as to how Transport for West Midlands was working with local tourist attractions and hospitality to ensure the maximum knock-on commercial impact for the region. The Director of Network Resilience reported that the Organising Committee continued to work closely with local authorities to ensure the region's key tourist attractions were showcased and that a trade and tourism programme was being established to help promote these attractions.

Recommended to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee that:

- (1) The importance of capitalising on the whole-region offer of the Commonwealth Games be supported, along with the need for strong working relationships with all delivery partners, specifically in respect of the tourism offer of the region and Transport for West Midlands' ability to help enable towns who were not hosting sporting events to be able to capitalise on the economic benefits hosting the Commonwealth Games provided.

- (2) The sub-committee seek to further understand the transport-related benefits communities across the region would derive from the hosting of the Commonwealth Games at a future meeting, particularly how the legacy effects of the intention for the games to be environmentally sustainable could be used to support the region's wide carbon reduction strategies in subsequent years.
- (3) The firm commitment that the Commonwealth Games would commence as planned in July 2022 be welcomed, but the need for a strong contingency plan for circumstances where this turned out not to be possible (eg. a continuation of COVID-19 restrictions) be supported.
- (4) The sub-committee to be provided with a copy of the Commonwealth Games Legacy Plan when it was published in March.

28. Forward Plan

The sub-committee noted its workplan of items of potential business for consideration at future meetings, along with items being considered at future meetings of the WMCA Board.

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm.