



West Midlands Combined Authority

Transport Delivery Committee

Monday 13 September 2021 at 1.00 pm

Minutes

Present

Councillor Kath Hartley (Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Pervez Akhtar	Coventry City Council
Councillor Samiya Akhter	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Robert Alden	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Christopher Burden	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Robert Grinsell	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Celia Hibbert	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Timothy Huxtable	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Mohammed Idrees	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Ziaul Islam MBE	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Morriam Jan	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Chaman Lal	Birmingham City Council
Councillor David Stanley	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Richard Worrall	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

In Attendance

Pete Bond	Transport for West Midlands
Jon Hayes	Transport for West Midlands
Kate Taylor	West Midlands Combined Authority
Edmund Salt	Transport for West Midlands
Sandeep Shingadia	Transport for West Midlands

Item Title No.

13. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rizwan Jalil (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Linda Bigham (Coventry City Council), Councillor Mark Parker (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Alan Taylor (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council) and Councillor Adrian Andrew (Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council).

14. Minutes - 19 July 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2021 by approved.

15. Chair's Remarks (if any)

The Chair made the following remarks:

- Both Anne Shaw, Interim Managing Director Transport for West Midlands and Laura Shoaf, Interim Chief Executive, West Midlands Combined Authority have become the UK's first Violence against Women and Girls Transport Champions.
- West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme have launched a new region wide Early Morning Offer from the 6 September 2021 whereby the £1 unlock fee would be waived for users between 6am – 11am. The scheme would also be expanded to cover University of Warwick campus.
- Across the rail network, traincrew availability across the West Midlands was slowly improving.
- Passenger numbers across the tram networks was also increasing, it was also noted that the Corporation Street Track Replacement works were no course for completion by mid-October.
- TfWM had recently launched a new Customer Experience Specialist role, this new team would provide ticketing information and help with journey planning and support with general queries across the bus network.
- Members were reminded that the Commonwealth Games Transport Plan consultation closed imminently, and any responses/feedback are to be provided to Graham Jones.
- Mark Corbin had been appointed as the Interim Director of Network Resilience.

16. Matters Arising

The Chair informed the committee of a recent Walking Tour of the Walthamstow Mini-Holland of which three members of the committee attended. It was requested that all future visits be shared with the whole of Transport Delivery Committee members but also where possible the relevant Ward Councillor and Cabinet member.

Councillor David Stanley asked that his request for an update and future information on the Tettenhall line be followed up as he was yet to receive any information.

17. Forward Plan

The committee noted the items to be reported to future meetings. The Chair noted that the Commonwealth Games Transport Plan consultation outcome/feedback was due in January 2022 and requested that this be added for the forward plan.

Both Councillor Robert Grinsell and Councillor Timothy Huxtable requested that the Park & Ride report due in January 2022 included information on Olton Railway Station and the associated changes made by National Express. Councillor Robert Grinsell suggested that the current space at the station could be better utilised to tackle and elevated some of the current parking issues. The Director of Integrated Transport Services informed the committee that he would follow this and liaise with the relevant individuals on this.

Resolved:

That the items to be reported to future meetings be noted.

18. Financial Monitoring Report

The committee received a report setting out the financial position as at 31 July 2021. The report contents relates to the financial position of the Combined Authority's Transport Delivery Revenue and Capital Budgets.

Councillor Timothy Huxtable requested assurance that when projects are allocated a budget that is it actually spend on transport infrastructure that the West Midlands needs and deserve to fulfil the ambition about model shift onto public transport and not be hit with additional increased budget due to inflation within the construction industry. The Head of Finance Business Partnering confirmed that finance work closely with each of the delivery teams and any risks are quickly flagged to them, she did stress that currently no risks were flagged. The Director of Development & Delivery stated that majority of the projects in delivery phases have set contracts in place and therefore agreed rates are set with contactors and are required to work within the provision set and agreed within the terms and conditions. Any new contracts going through a procurement process would ensure those inflation cost estimates are factored into considerations.

Councillor Robert Alden requested further information on what flexibilities local authorities have on changing the use of the funds being awarded to them in particularly in relation to the Transforming Cities Fund. The Director of Development & Delivery outlined the governance around the Transforming Cities Fund programme and the delegate authority given to the Strategic Transport Officers Group. He also outlined the mechanisms in place to address a change of scope to programmes.

Councillor Richard Worrall requested future details on the Walsall to Wolverhampton Local Enhancements rail project. The Director of Development & Delivery commented that work continued on progressing the land acquisition and the compulsory purchase order for this programme and would follow up with a further update.

Councillor Chaman Lal asked as to whether as on the programme had been affected by the issues relating to HGV and supply of materials. The Director of Development & Delivery highlighted that none of the existing programme were currently seeing any impact, but recognised this issue for future projects and were being reflected within the costings.

Resolved:

- (1) The year to date position as at the end of July 2021 against the TfWM Revenue Budget shows an overall favourable variance of £1.64m, as detailed in Section A be noted.
- (2) The TfWM Capital Programme expenditure as at the end of July 2021 totals £77.6m, which is £22.4m below budget, as detailed in Section B be noted.

19. Capital Programme Delivery Monitoring Report

The committee received a report providing them with the progress monitoring update on the approved TfWM led 2021/22 programme and projects. The Director of Development & Delivery brought the Committee attention to the work progressing at Perry Barr. Committee members requested that a site visit to Perry Barr Station and surrounding Commonwealth Games key transport areas be undertaken. Councillor Timothy Huxtable suggested that an itinerary be pulled together of members key area and include Sprint to ensure there was no duplication.

Councillor Robert Grinsell welcomed the West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme but noted that the docking stations lacked within the North of the Solihull Borough and Shirley area and requested that this be looked at. The Director of Development & Delivery was happy to look at this request and noted that currently work focused on gathering data from the current sites where the docking stations had been implemented.

Councillor Timothy Huxtable requested assurance that both Transport for West Midlands and the Combined Authority were keeping Ward Councillors fully informed of any alterations to programme and timescales changes. Further to Councillor Richard Worrall request for more information on the Walsall Town Centre Interchange Feasibility Study the Director of Development & Delivery shared that work continues with key officers at Walsall MBC to develop and understand the role Transport for West Midland could play in shaping the work going forward.

Resolved:

- (1) The achievements since the June meeting of the Transport Delivery Committee be noted.
- (2) The progress of deliverables and outturn of the 2021/22 Capital Programme be noted.
- (3) Where indicated, any variations from the baseline programme be noted.

20. **Bus Delivery Monitoring Report**

The committee received a report from the Head of Bus outlining the monitoring and delivery of the high-level deliverables and wider performance monitoring of bus services in the West Midlands. The high-level deliverables within the TfWM Business Plan directly relating to the delivery of bus are:

- Delivering our bus vision to support growth, inclusion and reduced car dependency.
- Enhance infrastructure and improve customer experience at TfWM passenger waiting facilities, out bus station and major interchanges
- Creating and maintaining a world class system for accurate and reliable public transport travel information including the requirements set out in the National Bus Strategy and regional Vision for Bus.

Councillor Morriam Jan queried as to whether or not the West Midlands had or in future were willing to offer 'free buses for all at weekends' and were the West Midlands offering the cheapest bus fares. The Head of Bus shared that National Express along with majority of all bus operators heavily reduced their fares as a direct result to try to increase patronage during this recovery period. The recovery within the region is on par or better than majority of the city region and par with London. Free buses within the West Midlands is not something that is being done however date was being sought from other areas such as Herefordshire how have implemented such schemes.

Councillor Robert Grinsell requested confirmation with bus's travelling within Solihull were at a Euro 6 Diesel standard. The Head of Bus stated this was being monitored closely and addressed with bus operators.

Councillor David Stanley highlighted and requested that weekly changes made by National Express would be shared with committee members and sought to ensure this happened. The Head of Bus noted this requested would look to ensure that members of the committee would receive this information going forward, he also noted that the current process is undergoing a review.

Councillor Celia Hibbert recognised that the committee were previously told about driver shortages and that mitigation plans were in place to elevate but have now surfaced again. The Head of Bus highlighted that driver shortages may related to COVID19 and the pandemic and was a national problem and were working with bus operators to address and ensure less impact was seen on the network.

Councillor Morriam Jan noted that residents within her ward had complained about the use and smell of cannabis of bus's and requested information as to what was being done to address this issue. The Head of Bus highlighted that a note from the Safer Travel Team would be shared with Committee.

Resolved:

The contents of the report be noted.

21. West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan

The committee received a presentation from the Bus Development & Partnership Manager who provided detail on the West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan and the key principles it was based on, growing patronage, improve reliability / journey times, better passenger satisfaction and supporting the #WM2021 climate emergency. Information on how delivery of better bus service principles was provided as well as the various proposals and funding suggestions.

Councillor Celia Hibbert queried as to whether any funding allocated to the West Midlands was based on being able to deliver and continue at a high rate level of patronage and if there was any mitigations in place to ensure the network was flowing positively throughout the Commonwealth Games. The Head of Bus assured the committee that representation of issue had been addressed with the Department of Transport and separate funds had already been allocated for the sole purpose of supporting transport elements for the Commonwealth Games.

It was agreed that a briefing to further engagement the committee would take place on Friday 22 October 2021 at 10.30am. The chair also requested that a copy of the Passenger Charter be shared with members.

Resolved:

(1) The update be noted.

(2) The committee to receive a briefing on the Bus Service Improvement Plan on the 22 October 2021.

22. COVID-19 Recovery Update

The Director of Integrated Transport Services provided the board with an update on the commercial recovery to Bus, Rail and Metro. He noted that bus data currently reflected a higher usage over the weekends than weekdays. Driver shortages across the network continued to impact all modes of transportation. The Director of Integrated Transport Services also provided detail on the service changes across the bus network that were implemented from the 29 August 2021. He advised the committee of new funding available to bus operators called Bus Recovery Grant. Information was also shared around the revised cleaning schedules across the transport infrastructure.

Councillor Celia Hibbert requested a further update on branding of bus stops.

Resolved:

(1) The update be noted.

23. WMCA Board Transport Report

The Director of Integrated Transport Services provided the committee with a brief overview of the WMCA Board Transport related report which consisted of: West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan, City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement bid, Zero Emission Bus Regional Area Scheme 2021/22 – Phase 2 Full Business Case and West Midlands Rail Ltd Collaboration Agreement.

In relation to the Zero Emission Bus Regional Area Scheme 2021/22 – Phase 2 Full Business Case report Councillor Christopher Burden requested further information on the current roster of hydrogen vehicles within the West Midlands at the moment. The Director of Integrated Transport Services provided some detail of the various vehicles / fleet within the West Midlands which included 29 electric buses. It was also highlighted that appropriate infrastructure was in place to deal with this modal shift.

Resolved:

That the Transport related reports submitted for information only being considered by the WMCA Board on the 17 September 2021 be noted.

24. Report back from Member Engagement Groups

The committee received a report on the recent developments and meetings of the six Member Engagement Groups.

Resolved:

The update in relation to recent meetings of the committee's Member Engagement Groups be noted.

25. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 15 November 2021 at 2.00pm.

The meeting ended at 4.20 pm.