



**West Midlands
Combined Authority**

Transport Delivery Committee

Date	10 January 2022
Report title	Member Engagement Groups Update
Accountable Chief Executive	Laura Shoaf, West Midlands Combined Authority email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk tel: (0121) 214 7444
Accountable Employee	Tanya Patel, Governance Services Officer email: tanya.patel@wmca.org.uk tel: 07825 356685

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 of the six Member Engagement Groups.

2. Background

- 2.1 Since the last meeting of the committee, the following Member Engagement Groups have met and the following paragraphs summarises the discussions held at these meetings.
- 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 MEG had a technical visit to Tyseley Energy Park (TEG) on 24 November. This was open to all TDC members and attended by eight members. The role of TEG in helping to create high quality jobs which support a net zero carbon in the West Midlands was highlighted.

The MEG has invited all TDC members to a teams meeting with two presentations from University of Birmingham on 26 January. This will be an update on the WM-Air air quality research project and research into hydrogen and battery powered trains.

Finance & Performance (Councillor Pervez Akhtar)

The next Finance & Performance Member Engagement Group is not due to take place until Monday 4 January 2022 and therefore a verbal update will be provided at committee.

Putting Passengers First (Councillor Kath Hartley)

The Putting Passengers First Member Engagement Group (MEG) met virtually on Wednesday 15th December 2021. Members present were Councillor Kath Hartley, Councillor Rizwan Jalil, Councillor Bob Grinsell, Councillor Mohammed Idrees and Councillor David Stanley. Members received an update on the Outline Business Case for Bus Delivery Options, with members advised that further input will be sought prior to it becoming a formal paper for the WMCA Board. Members had previously requested an update on tendered bus services, which was provided along with an update on the current situation with regards to driver shortages and funding, with members asking a number of questions and sharing their concerns and those of their constituents. Members were given an update on the Metro situation and were pleased to hear that following completion of a number of repairs to trams service was reinstated from 15th December. A progress update was given on the Sprint schemes along the A34 and A45 corridors, including details of proposals to include local historical figures on some of the new Sprint shelters, a request was made to ensure that Cllr Ian Ward is kept informed of these proposals and a number of other questions were asked. Finally members had requested an update on the current situation regarding Covid-19. Information on face covering awareness measures, compliance and enforcement was provided.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 19th January 2022, meetings will continue to be held virtually via Microsoft Teams until further notice.

Rail & Metro (Councillor Richard Worrall)

The Rail and Metro Member Engagement Group met on 20th December. The meeting covered two topics in detail – the recently published Integrated Rail Plan and Union Connectivity review, and the Midland Metro capital programme. As part of the latter an update was provided on the cracking that had caused the entire fleet to be removed from service.

The Integrated Rail Plan was published on 18 November 2021, announcing £96bn of rail enhancements in the Midlands and North of England. Of this £42.5bn is already committed to Phases 1 and 2a of HS2 from London to Birmingham and Crewe, whilst the bulk of the remainder is for upgrading the Midlands Main and improving Trans-Pennine connectivity. £55bn available for the IRP proposals across the North and the Midlands. Potentially some of the £1.5bn for smaller schemes could help fund the priority Kings Norton and Snow Hill station capacity enhancements of Midlands Rail Hub.

The group was informed that the Metro westside works have progressed as far as they can until the TRO is approved by BCC. If this is granted in January next year, the earliest services could be running is April 22. On the Wolverhampton extension, a meeting is to be held with Network Rail and the Office of Rail and Road to discuss which standards (rail or metro) ought to be applied. The exact opening date for services will depend on the outcome of this meeting.

Section 1 of the Eastside extension will be completed before the Commonwealth Games. Good progress is also expected to be made on Section 5 (Digbeth), but the need to address some buried services collaboratively with Cadent and BCC means that it is not currently possible to say how much will be finished by July 22. Finally, on Wednesbury-Brierley Hill, the changes to demand caused by the pandemic will necessitate a review of the funding model. This is because hypothecated revenues are to be used to fund the capital investment. This may lead to the project being delivered across phases, with the first being to connect to Dudley.

Safe & Sustainable Travel (Councillor Bob Grinsell)

The Safe and Sustainable Travel MEG received an update on Safer Travel – face covering use is varied along the network, with highest compliance during peak times (AM and PM) however during the day drops to 20% of customers using face coverings. The will be working on messaging and communications to educate, engage and encourage with enforcement only as a last resort. Crime is slightly up on bus, amongst young people (college age) both victim and offenders.

Behaviour change interventions for active travel was also presented to the group, with activities taking place across schools, businesses and engaging diverse groups including women, BAME and disabled people. Social prescribing and Road Safety measures are also being delivered.

Cllr Worrall presented his proposal for a 'Commonwealth Way' off-road cycle route from Walsall to Alexander Stadium. Feasibility currently undertaken by Walsall officers.

Sprint (Councillor Timothy Huxtable)

The Sprint Member Engagement Group (MEG) met on Monday 13 December.

Members of the MEG received an update on Member briefings for both Walsall and Solihull, as part of phase 2 works for the A34 North (Walsall Road) and A45 (Coventry Road).

Members were also updated regarding the search for a suitable Sprint Park & Ride site on the A34 (North), and whether the temporary Park & Ride sites for the Commonwealth Games serving the Sprint routes could be made permanent.

An overview was given of the development of future Sprint routes (A38 South – Bristol Road; A38 North – B'ham to Sutton via Langley; A456 Hagley Road; and Hall Green to HS2 Interchange via Solihull). Officers were asked to specifically speak to the Sutton Walmley & Minworth Ward Councillors about their concerns regarding the outline Sprint route through their Ward.

The MEG also considered future site visit opportunities including Perry Barr interchange in February 2022, to which all TDC and Ward Members would be invited. It was suggested this should coincide with a visit to Perry Barr Railway Station

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 n/a