



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Transport Delivery Committee

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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 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 Air Quality, Congestion and Environmental Impact MEG met on 2 March. The Group considered a four monthly update table of the extensive TfWM actions to improve air quality and an update on 2022 key events related to air quality, such as the forthcoming consultation on new draft UK air quality targets. The Group also received a presentation setting out the key aspects of the health impacts of poor air quality.

Finance & Performance (Councillor Pervez Akhtar)

The group met on Wednesday 27 October 2021 and discussed two items.

An update was given on the latest financial monitoring report to 30 September 2021 with an opportunity for members to ask questions.

A presentation was given on some of the initiatives happening within Future Transport Zone (FTZ) funded by Department for Transport grant. Focussed updates were given on two live schemes; mobility credits and demand responsive transport and one scheme in development; mobility hubs. The programme seeks to better understand the local population and develop new transport services to support modal shift and transport decarbonisation. The importance of this was noted by the group.

Putting Passengers First (Councillor Kath Hartley)

The Putting Passengers First Member Engagement Group (MEG) met virtually on Wednesday 23rd February 2022. Members present were Councillor Kath Hartley, Councillor Rizwan Jalil, Councillor Bob Grinsell, Councillor Mohammed Idrees, Councillor Pervez Akhtar and Councillor David Stanley. Members received an update on Sprint, including an update on tree protests in Walsall. Councillor Kath Hartley asked if there had been any new complaints regarding the new Sprint shelters and were pleased to hear that that had been nothing but positive feedback so far. Members were given an update on the proposals for wider Demand Responsive Transport to serve the Meriden area, replacing the existing service 89 and associated feeder service. Councillor Bob Grinsell recorded that he was not happy about the withdrawal of the service, due to the potential implications for vulnerable people. Councillor Kath Hartley raised the issue of bus routing in Birmingham city centre once the Metro runs to Five Ways and members were advised there are ongoing discussions with Birmingham City Council (BCC) regarding making some of the temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) permanent, National Express are supportive of some services staying on their current routes and there may be an opportunity for cross city BSIP

funding to be used. Members were provided with an update on Bus Recovery Grant funding and advised that a paper has now been shared with Government and Mayors office etc. Paper sets out specific effects to the network depending on various scenarios. It was highlighted that with regards to the BSIP the draft Enhanced Partnership (EP) needs to be agreed through Bus Alliance Board and TDC by the end of April 2022 and due to the tight timescales there may be a need for alternative methods of gaining approval through Governance methods. Cllr David Stanley was particularly concerned about any service losses and asked if there was any clarity on where these service cuts may be, in response members were advised that specific services were not yet known and further updates will be provided as a matter of urgency. Finally members were asked to consider each member picking a CRSTS funded scheme in their area to take a more active interest in and act as a Champion. This was the last meeting scheduled for the year 2021/22.

Rail & Metro (Councillor Richard Worrall)

The rail and Metro Member Engagement Group met on 21st February. Matters discussed included the Metro capital programme, current rail operations, and the rail Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP).

On the Metro programme, members heard that good progress is being made on the Westside extension, with operations expected to commence in May. Much activity has taken place to address concerns raised by the local BID to the TRO, with this work hoped to conclude at the end of February. At Wolverhampton, the Alliance is working at a senior level with Network Rail to ensure that processes around design are navigated effectively. In the west of the region on the Brierley Hill extension, work remains on going to refresh the business case to reflect the changes to predicted future demand as a result of COVID. The Eastside extension is being delivered in five phases, starting with phases 1 and 5 (Bull Street and Digbeth High Street), both of which are expected to be delivered before the Commonwealth Games. Finally, three bids have been submitted to CRSTS; a) to increase the size of Wednesbury tram depot, b) to upgrade the power supply infrastructure, and c) renewal of track and overhead line equipment on the original metro route (Line 1).

Members received a presentation on the Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP). This sets out to; a) enable government to set a clear & unified direction for the railway in support of its wider long-term priorities, and b) set realistic ambitions, measures, and areas of focus over the short, medium and long term whilst acknowledging the trade-offs that may be required in the face of the economic reality. Great British Railways will be responsible for achieving the outcomes within the strategic plan, providing regular updates to Ministers on progress and adapting it to reflect changes in the economy, society and technology. The WISP will be framed and driven by strategic objectives set by government reflecting that the railway must serve the nation and the railway's objectives must align with the nation's. The Strategic Plan will not be a list of projects and investments, but will instead inform decisions on how the railway can improve and contribute to wider benefits over the coming 30 years.

WMRE has submitted a response to the initial WISP consultation, with a focus on the case for WMRE to be closely involved in the strategic planning process on behalf of WMCA and the WMRE Board.

Lastly, members were appraised of the recent performance of the local rail network. Severe weather in the form of three major storms had affected delivery to customers, with parts of the network closed due to trees and the objects coming down on to the tracks. More positively, members heard that timetables were going to be increase from 28th February. The most notable changes include the restoration of an hourly service on the NUCKLE Line,

the reinstatement of the New Street to Birmingham International shuttle, and the re-establishment of the second Avanti train per hour between Euston and the West Midlands.

Safe & Sustainable Travel (Councillor Bob Grinsell)

The Safe and Sustainable Travel MEG met on 28 February. Updated on crime on public transport was provided, with an overview of successes with a multi-agency approach to address crime by younger people. This included engaging with schools that the young people attended to address unacceptable behaviour. Cycling and Walking Programme update was also provided with excellent work being delivered with active travel funding across the region. Adam Tranter, Cycling and Walking Commissioner for the West Midlands also address the group, and provided an update on his engagement with stakeholders and his plans for the region to improve cycling and walking.

Sprint (Councillor Timothy Huxtable)

The Sprint MEG met on the 21 February 2022, members were updated on: Sprint phase 1, local authority briefings, cross-city packages and Sprint phase 2.

Sprint phase 1 interventions include significant sections of bus lane between Walsall and Birmingham (A34), and Birmingham to Solihull (A45). 76 shelters in total will be installed; two thirds have already been installed and those expected to be outstanding after March are included within non-Sprint projects e.g. Digbeth High Street (MMA) and Perry Barr Interchange (Perry Barr). Members asked for a site visit to Perry Barr Interchange and Alexander Stadium, to include Sprint infrastructure along the way, in May.

Solihull Ward Members will be briefed on phase 2 interventions on 23rd March. In Walsall, member engagement on the detail of phase 2 proposals will take place after the local elections. Birmingham's Cabinet Member will be briefed on 14th March, with Ward Members to follow after the local elections. Cllr. Worrall was informed that the new design for Broadway bus lane widening, which incorporates feedback from 2018's consultation, will be provided after the local elections.

There are 6 cross-city bus packages in development. Package 4 (CC4) is Longbridge to Sutton Coldfield; the Cabinet Member briefing will take place in mid March, with stakeholder/local ward member briefings to follow in the summer prior to OBC submission. Construction should commence and complete in 2024. A briefing note from Guy Craddock on A38N P&R is expected at the next Sprint MEG.

The Sprint team is expected to learn the outcome of the £56 million CRSTS allocation (to deliver phase 2) in March. Construction would start in 2023, with the full Sprint offer being delivered in 2024.

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