



# West Midlands Combined Authority

## Transport Delivery Committee

Monday 7 February 2022 at 1.00 pm

### Minutes

#### Present

Councillor Kath Hartley (Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Timothy Huxtable (Vice-Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Richard Worrall (Vice-Chair)	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Pervez Akhtar	Coventry City Council
Councillor Samiya Akhter	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Adrian Andrew	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Linda Bigham	Coventry City Council
Councillor Christopher Burden	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Robert Grinsell	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Celia Hibbert	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Mohammed Idrees	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Ziaul Islam MBE	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Rizwan Jalil	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Morriam Jan	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Chaman Lal	Birmingham City Council
Councillor David Stanley	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Alan Taylor	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

#### In Attendance

Pete Bond	Transport for West Midlands
Mark Corbin	Transport for West Midlands
Paul Franks	Transport for West Midlands
Chris Gibbens	National Express
Jon Hayes	Transport for West Midlands
Anne Shaw	Transport for West Midlands
Kate Taylor	West Midlands Combined Authority

#### Item Title No.

##### 51. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Robert Alden (Birmingham City Council) and Councillor Mark Parker (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council).

##### 52. Chair's Remarks (if any)

The chair welcome Chris Gibbens, Commercial Director from National Express to the meeting.

The committee voiced their concerns around the future of bus recovery funding from Government following the COVID-19 pandemic which was due to cease at the end of March 2022. They felt that the transport network continued to see lots of changes and felt that funding should continue beyond the end of March to support recovery, it was also recognised that future funding was required to support transport network during the Commonwealth Games. The chair also raised these concerns at the Strategic Transport Board. The Director of Integrated Transport Services informed the committee that the Mayor had been writing to both the Secretary of State for Transport and The Chancellor setting out similar concerns, it was also recognised that lots of discussions and negotiations continued at a local, regional and national level. Funding shortfall is recognised and by the Combined Authority and is identified as a major risk and was being taken into budget planning and other mitigation plans. The Director of Integrated Transport Services highlighted that discussions with National Express and other Bus Operators were being undertaken to identify what the situation would be in the event that no funding arrangements became available from Government. It was also recognised that a response was still awaiting from Government in relation to the Regions Bus Service Improvement Plan proposal.

**53. Minutes - 10 January 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record subject to amendment to the attendance list and minute item 46.

Resolved:

The minutes dates the 10 January 2022 be approved subject to amendments to the attendance list as Councillor Alan Taylor was in attendance and changes to minute item 46 to reflect comments made by Councillor Ziaul Islam and not Councillor Mohammed Idrees.

**54. Matters Arising**

Following Councillor Christopher Burden's request for an update on Tram service the Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands informed the committee that although a briefing was shared with members that service would resume toward the library this was subject to sufficient trams being available to enable a consistent reliable service, but due to other technical issues and general maintenance this has not yet been possible. It was hoped that the service would resume imminently but again was subject to sufficient trams being available.

**55. Forward Plan**

The committee noted the items to be reported to future meetings. The Governance Services Officer informed the committee of a change to the forward plan whereby the Local Transport Plan Consultation would be presented at the next meeting.

Resolved:

That the items to be reported to future meetings be noted, with the addition of the Local Transport Plan Consultation also being presented at the next meeting.

**56. 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.

Councillor Christopher Burden highlighted the reports reflection of the network currently carrying approximately 73% of expected patronage and queried to how this compared to pre-covid and other regions, he also referenced 2.13 of the report whereby it was noted that all stop flags had now been changed to new branding but reported this was inaccurate as a number of stops in Wolverhampton had not been changed. It was also queried as to whether physical copies of passenger information would return to bus station in the future. The Head of Bus highlighted that recovery was actually now ahead of the data provided in the report; 80% patronage which was in line with other city regions. Members of the committee would be provided with a link to access the patronage data outside of this meeting. The Head of Bus also spoke briefly about the encouraging methods being used to encourage and accelerate passenger levels across the network. In regard to the Stop Flag the Head of Bus apologized for the inaccuracies in the report and requested the details of those remaining flags to ensure they were corrected with the new branding. He also noted that physical copies of timetable were currently not being printed and published due to constant changing however physical copies can be sought via the customer services telephone line or TfWM Travel Shops.

Councillor Timothy Huxtable queried as to when the Number 11 bus service would resume a circular service, he also raised concern in relation to Birmingham Cross City Network Package Three, in particular to a bridge along Alcester Road. Councillor Timothy Huxtable raised that although Package Four was not included in the report requested that the development of segregated cycle lanes be complementary. The Commercial Director at National Express indicated that it was too early to comment on the decision being taken in regard to the Number 11 service as monitoring of data was required. However, since the change punctuality was not running at about 95% rather than previously at 75%. The Head of Bus sought to further understand the issues relating to the bridge on Alcester Road. It was also highlighted that all cross city programme would ensure that bus improvements and cycle is considered and incorporated into single schemes.

Councillor David Stanley requested further information on the consultation being undertaken in relation to Burnt Tree Island as he raised concerns from residents of a bus gate at this location. He also commented on the poor service on the Number 1 route Dudley – Tettenhall Wood. The Head of Bus commented that the consultation for Burnt Tree Island related to the preliminary design and would share this with Councillor David Stanley. The Commercial Director at National Express understood the concerns raised by the Councillor but highlighted the changes to the sector required services changes to balance a reliable punctual service, and therefore difficult decision affecting certain service/routes occurred but would look to reintroduce them at the earliest opportunity. He also highlighted the challenges relating to driver shortages and the mitigation plans in place to drive recruitment to address those challenges.

Resolved:

The contents of the report be noted.

#### **57. Network Resilience Update**

The committee received a report updating them on crime and anti-social behaviour, the Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC) and wider network management and road safety. The report also provided detail on the Bus Byelaws.

Councillor Robert Grinsell stressed his concern on the levels of anti-social behaviour and crime being reported and how this reflected on the safety measures being implemented in preparation for the Commonwealth Games. The Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands highlighted that West Midlands Police would be leading on the security measures, in partnership with the Safer Travel Team and the British Transport Police. Work is currently being undertaken to look at deployment, safe and secure measures across the public transport network which in turn would be aligned to the Games Transport Plan. She stressed the importance of the work being done to ensure that not only visitors to the region, but its own residents continued to feel safe and secure whilst using the public transport network.

Councillor Christopher Burden highlighted that the report stated currently that three Transport Safety Officers (TSOs) had been recruited and in post, he felt that three officers was not enough resource to accommodate the levels of anti-social behaviour, crime and the increase of footfall that the Commonwealth Games would bring, he also sought further information on their current patrols and how their visibility could be further advanced. Councillor Christopher Burden also queried the future enforcement of the Bus Byelaws. The Interim Security and Policing Lead agreed that three TSOs was not enough but in regard to visibility at key locations was agreed at a Safer Travel Tasking meeting with included various key stakeholders considering various crime levels. In relation to Bus Byelaws it was highlighted that enforcement related to bus premises only and that further guidance and training would be issued to staff before any enforcement took place. It was also highlighted following a query from Councillor Ziaul Islam that the role of the TSOs did not include revenue protection / enforcement of payment.

It was agreed that future reports would include in-depth data / statics relating to action taken against criminals and crime types/levels across the network.

Resolved:

The contents of the report be noted.

**58. Rail Freight Update**

The committee received a report provided them with an update on Rail Freight, the report recognised that the wider West Midlands region was vitally important for Rail Freight. The report also explored areas for expansion and new Freight Terminals, new express logistics solutions, decarbonisation and supporting rail freight through West Midlands Grand Railway Collaboration.

Councillor Chaman Lal queried the funding available and being sought for future electrification on freight lines. The Strategic Lead for Rail Policy provided detail on National Rails Decarbonisation programme as outlined in their Environmental Sustainability Strategy, which outlined elements of extensive electrification of the network for both passengers and freight lines. He also cost at length amount the high levels of costs included for this to happen and funding was highlighted as a key issue. It was also recognised that the freight market was mainly within the private sector and therefore investment would only to sought if there was a reasonable rate of return for them. He also spoke about the challenges of prices difference between electricity and diesel.

Councillor Timothy Huxtable spoke about the potential benefits HS2 would bring to Rail Freight. The Strategic Lead, for Rail Policy commented that it was evident to see that HS2 were trying to move as many construction materials as possible by rail rather than road, but at such time was difficult to quantify future timetables and capacity.

Resolved:

The contents of the report be noted.

**59. COVID-19 Recovery Update**

The Director of Integrated Transport Services provided a brief overview of the performance across the network relating to Bus, Metro and Rail. It was recognised that the network was now seeing a better increase in passenger numbers across the public transport network. He highted that following the issues with the Metro service patronage recovery was at 85%. There also continued to be improvement in terms of performance of service operated in terms of punctuality across the Rail and Bus network in relation to the previously discussed driver issues. The Director of Integrated Transport Services spoke briefly about the changes relating to the COVID Plan B measures being stepped down, he also noted that the position from Transport for West Midlands on face covering remained the same; recommending that customers continued to wear face covering. It was also noted that work continued with operators across the public transport network to promote the high level of cleanliness across the network.

Resolved:

The update be noted.

**60. Report back from Member Engagement Groups**

The committee noted the recent developments and meetings of the six Member Engagement Groups. Councillor Timothy Huxtable noted that the Sprint Member Engagement Group have arranged to undertake a site visit at Perry Barr / Rail Interchange but was disappointed to be told that the Sprint infrastructure on the interchange would not be completed in time for their visit and would look to arrange another visit once completed.

The Director of Integrated Transport Services also clarified that although the report referenced that a decision had been made to not proceed with a Park and Ride Site along the A34 north, that this was not the case.

Resolved:

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

**61. Date of Next Meeting**

Friday 14 March 2022 at 1.00pm.

The meeting ended at 2.55 pm.