



Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Monday 17 January 2022 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Liz Clements (Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Barbara McGarrity (Vice-Chair)	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Gurdev Hayre	Coventry City Council
Councillor Ian Kettle	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Martin McCarthy	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

In Attendance

Carl Beet	Head of Strategy and Intelligence
Pete Bond	Director of Integrated Transport Services
Dan Essex	Governance Services Manager
David Harris	Transport Strategy and Place Manager
Matt Lewis	Head of Swift
Lyndsey Roberts	Scrutiny Officer
Anne Shaw	Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands

Item Title
No.

- 25. Apologies for Absence**
Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Thabiso Mabena (Sandwell).
- 26. Chair's Remarks**
(a) Anne Shaw, Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands
The Chair congratulated Anne Shaw on her appointment as the Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands.
- 27. Minutes - 24 November 2021**
The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record.
- 28. Transport Policy Question Time: Response from the Portfolio Lead Member for Transport to the Recommendations Presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 8 November 2021**
The committee noted the response received from the Portfolio Lead Member for Transport in response to the observations it had identified following the Q&A session on 22 October 2021.

Resolved

The report be noted.

29. Metro Suspension and Operations Update

The sub-committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands that provided an update on the types of cracks on the Urbos 3 second generation tram fleet that operated on the metro system, how these had been managed and the decision to cease service in November 2021. Members also noted the work that had been undertaken to safely restore service as expediently as possible with confidence that ceasing the service would not reoccur.

Earlier this year, cracks were discovered on the trams which resulted in a temporary interruption to services for inspections and repairs. Temporary repairs were carried out to return the fleet to service as soon as possible, but inspections had found that more extensive and permanent repairs were required. A programme of repair to fix the issue was currently underway and it was anticipated that all bogie box repairs to the second-generation tram fleet would be completed by Summer 2022. The Executive Director assured members that good progress was being made on the repair programme and there would be an efficient service in operation leading up to and during the Commonwealth Games.

With regards to the delivery schedule for the Wolverhampton metro extension, Transport for West Midlands continued to have dialogue with Network Rail regarding a pedestrian crossing requirement outside of Wolverhampton railway station. The delivery programme would be updated with a confirmed completion date following confirmation of the design for the crossing. In terms of the delivery programme for the West Midlands metro extensions including Broad Street and Wolverhampton, it was agreed that a report would be provided at the next meeting.

The sub-committee sought assurances that Transport for West Midlands understood and documented the root cause of the cracks on the second-generation tram fleet. Members sought clarity that, within the system and according to the regulator the works had been completed and therefore provided members with the confidence that the action undertaken resulted in the operation of a safe and robust service. The Executive Director explained that there were ongoing works to agree that the root causes were the root causes and agreed to look at ways in which further information could be provided to the sub-committee at the appropriate time.

The Chair enquired as to whether the sub-committee would receive a financial overview of the financial losses incurred during the suspension of the Metro network. The Executive Director agreed to speak to finance colleagues and would share this information with the sub-committee.

Resolved

The report be noted.

30. West Midlands Future Bus Delivery Options

The sub-committee considered a report of the Director of Integrated Transport Services providing an update on future challenges and opportunities in the bus market and outlining a course of action that best enabled the WMCA to continue to support the strong role that buses played in delivering wider WMCA objectives.

The sub-committee sought further information as to whether the Department for Transport was likely to support the bus sector post-March when Covid-related support funding was due to cease. It was reported that this was still to be determined and that all transport authorities were currently in discussions with the Department for Transport regarding this key point.

The opportunities associated with Enhanced Partnerships was noted and the level of commitment and process that it would place on all partners, particularly Transport for West Midlands, local authorities and bus operators was also acknowledged. The sub-committee highlighted their continued support for the assessment of the business case for franchising in line with the Single Assurance Framework and legislation within the Bus Services Act 2017 as a possible mechanism to address the identified challenges should Enhanced Partnerships fail to effectively deliver the WMCA's ambitions.

Resolved

The report be noted.

31. Swift Update

The sub-committee received a presentation from the Head of Swift that provided an update on the progress being made with the Swift Scheme.

Swift was the largest and most comprehensive smart ticketing scheme in the UK outside of London and was used by 250,000 people making more than 60m journeys per annum on buses, trains and the tram. Prior to Covid, Swift accounted for 1 in 4 public transport journeys, which had now grown to 1 in 3. The latest customer satisfaction surveys showed that 88% of customers were either satisfied or very satisfied with Swift. For those aged 16 to 24, the satisfaction score increased to 92%.

The work undertaken to date and the integration of services onto Swift was welcomed together with the benefits to customers including, the ease at which customers were able to cross modes on public transport and locate ticketing information. The Chair enquired about the low take up of mobility credits in Birmingham that was linked to the Clean Air Zone and had asked for consideration to be given as to how the take up of this offer could be improved.

Resolved

The report be noted.

32. West Midlands Local Transport Plan 5: Draft Core Strategy

The sub-committee considered a report of the Transport Strategy & Place Manager on the approach for developing the new West Midlands Local Transport Plan and undertaking public engagement on the draft Core Strategy document.

Members discussed and shared comments on the concepts, principles and approach to developing the new West Midlands Local Transport Plan whilst recognising the challenges that exist, the responses to the 'Reimagining Transport' Local Transport Plan Green Paper engagement. Members emphasised the importance of the continued engagement with members of the public to understand their needs and to ensure that these were reflected within WMCA and Transport for West Midlands policies.

Resolved

The report be noted.

33. City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Submission

The sub-committee considered a report of the Head of Strategy & Intelligence seeking approval of the WMCA Board for the programme level business case of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement as required by Government and to the local approaches to assurance, monitoring and governance.

Members discussed the progress made regarding the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement bid since the original submission was approved by WMCA Board in September 2021, the approach to prioritisation and development of the final programme for submission to Government and timescales.

Resolved

The report be noted.

34. Work Programme

The sub-committee discussed its work programme of business for consideration at its future meetings and at the WMCA Board.

The Chair noted that she would like to invite Adam Tranter, the newly appointed Cycling & Walking Commissioner to the next meeting of the sub-committee.

Resolved:

That the work programme be noted.

35. Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

The public and press be excluded from the meeting in accordance with s100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, for the following items of business as they were likely to the disclosure of exempt information as specified in the paragraphs of the Act.

36. City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Submission - Scheme Schedule

The sub-committee considered a report of the Head of Strategy & Intelligence on the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Submission - Scheme Schedule

Resolved

The report be noted.

37. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the sub-committee would be held on Wednesday 23 February 2022 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 12.00 pm.