



**Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

**Thursday 16 February 2023 at 10.00 am**

**Minutes**

**Present**

Councillor Cathy Bayton (Chair)	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Chaman Lal (Vice-Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Martin McCarthy	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Barbara McGarrity	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Rupinder Singh	Coventry City Council
Councillor Alan Taylor	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Jackie Taylor	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Vera Waters	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

**In Attendance**

Pete Bond	Director of Integrated Transport Services
Dan Essex	Governance Services Manager
Lyndsey Roberts	Scrutiny Officer
Kate Taylor	Head of Finance Business Partnering and Strategic Planning

**Item Title**  
**No.**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed the Chair of Transport Delivery Committee and members of the sub-committee to the meeting that would focus on transport delivery related matters.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Karen Simms (Sandwell).

**3. Questions to the Chair of the Transport Delivery Committee**

The sub-committee pursued a number of general lines of enquiry with the Chair of the Transport Delivery Committee, including strengthening the relationship between scrutiny and the delivery monitoring functions of the WMCA, the monitoring of capital programme schemes and holding Transport for West Midlands and arm's length companies to account.

The transport governance review would provide clarity and simplification within the transport governance decision-making arrangements. It was envisaged that the outcome of the review would be considered by the WMCA Board in June 2023. Members shared their views on the effectiveness of the

current arrangements and highlighted the need for a structure that was clear, simple and robust enough to hold transport decision makers to account. The Chair sought clarification as to how the formulation of the recommendations would be progressed, the consultation process and timescales.

In addition, it was considered that it would be useful to hold a joint training event with Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Transport Delivery Committee at the start of each municipal year to ensure that there was a clear understanding of their specific roles and responsibilities (including arm's length companies) and on the transport priorities and challenges for the year.

Regarding wider public engagement on transport policy and delivery matters, members stressed the importance of the need to be more creative to connect with members of the public that were representative of the region and, in particular, young people.

The sub-committee enquired about the delivery of the Wolverhampton metro extension and questioned whether the Transport Delivery Committee had visibility of the overspend on the scheme which had resulted in a breach of financial regulations. The Head of Finance Business Partnering & Strategic Planning added that the breach was currently subject to an independent investigation. The Chair of the Transport Delivery Committee explained that he was not aware of the breach prior to it being reported to the WMCA Board in December 2022. Councillor Barbara McGarrity expressed her disappointment at the length of time it was taking to deliver the scheme and on the lack of visibility and transparency.

In response to a question raised concerning the relationship between the Transport Delivery Committee and transport operators, the Chair of the Transport Delivery Committee explained the current ways of working and the committee's ability to influence service delivery matters through a series of partnerships, including the West Midlands Bus Alliance. He also stressed the importance of the continuation of Government funding to enable members of the public to receive a well maintained and developed transport network.

The sub-committee discussed and shared comments on the use of public transport vs car ownership, safety and security on the network, flexibility and connectivity, complaints handling procedures and Transport for West Midlands' oversight and monitoring of passenger complaints.

In relation to the oversight of arm's length companies, the Chair of the Transport Delivery Committee considered that the current delivery arrangements in respect of Midland Metro Ltd needed to be reviewed. The Chair added that the governance and assurance arrangements for arm's length companies had previously been reviewed by the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee and agreed to meet with Mark Smith, Chair of that committee to discuss this matter further.

Recommended:

The following recommendations be shared with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the appropriate officers for consideration and response:

**(1) Transport Governance Review**

The Transport Delivery Committee and Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee to provide joint evidence to the transport governance review in relation to their respective future roles and responsibilities. Clarification was also to be provided as to how the formulation of the recommendations would be progressed, the consultation process and timescales.

**(2) Transport Delivery Committee and Scrutiny Training**

To ensure that there was a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities (including those of arm's length companies) and on the transport priorities and challenges for the forthcoming year, a joint training session with Transport Delivery Committee and Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee to be held at the start of each municipal year.

**(3) Relationships: Transport for West Midlands and the WMCA's Scrutiny function**

Whilst it was recognised that the relationship between the Transport Delivery Committee and Transport for West Midlands had developed, it was considered that improvements needed to be made regarding the relationship between Transport for West Midlands and the WMCA's scrutiny function, which would help to support the formulation of an effective strategic work programme.

**(4) Capital Programme Schemes - Wolverhampton Metro Extension**

The sub-committee stressed the importance of ensuring that appropriate visibility and awareness was provided to the appropriate member meetings to ensure that councillors were sighted on instances where significant project overspend had occurred to ensure that lessons were learnt and appropriate mitigation measures implemented.

**(5) Review & Oversight of Arm's Length Companies**

The sub-committee sought clarification of the accountability and transparency arrangements in place for all arm's length companies.

**4. Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 16 March 2023 at 10:00am

The meeting ended at 5:00pm.