



Transport Delivery Committee

Date	13 March 2023
Report title	Member Engagement Groups Update
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Recommendation(s) for decision:

Transport Delivery Committee is recommended to:

To note the recent activities 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 The introduction of Lead Member Reference Groups occurred in 2017 when it was felt that the formal meetings of this committee did not allow members to get further into detail of a number of transport-related items. Following a subsequent review of the role and remit of the Lead Member Reference Groups, they have been renamed as Member Engagement Groups (MEGs) to give the rest of the WMCA a clearer sense of their purpose, allowing members the opportunity to focus on specific aspects of the work of Transport for West Midlands in the delivery of policies.

2.2 In total there are currently six MEGs:

- Air Quality, Congestion & Environmental Impact
- Finance & Performance
- Putting Passengers First
- Rail & Metro
- Safe & Sustainable Travel
- Sprint

- 2.3 Each of the MEGs normally meet ahead of each meeting of this committee and are open to all Transport Delivery Committee members to attend.

3. Member Engagement Group Updates

- 3.1 An update from Member Engagement Groups is provided below for those groups that met after the last committee.

Putting Passengers First MEG - 22 February (Councillor Mary Locke)

- 3.1.1 Councillor Mary Locke, Councillor Bill Gavan, Councillor Carol Hyatt, Councillor Clare Simm and Councillor David Stanley joined the meeting remotely. Following an update on bus service changes given at the previous meeting, members remained concerned and had meetings with operators. It was noted that since the last meeting, the Government had announced an extension of the £2 fare cap, Members remain disappointed that Diamond Bus did not take part in the initial period and took an action to write collectively to Diamond to ask if the position had changed.

- 3.1.2 Members received a general update on bus funding and expressed concern about the Government continued position on drip feeding bus operators constantly pushing back the cliff edge with little certainty. Members were advised that Transport for West Midlands would be writing to all local MPs and councillors to make them aware of the issues and risks this was creating. An update was provided on the position regarding a number of bus services operated by Diamond Bus that they had publicly announced the intention to withdraw, which had led to confusion and a lot of complaints raised by concerned passengers. Members were advised that on this occasion Diamond had not followed the usual process, which would normally see an operator discuss such potential changes ahead of any information being made public. Transport for West Midlands were in discussions with Diamond about the future of these services and would be writing to all local councillors to brief them on the current situation.

- 3.1.3 Members were then given an update on the Enhanced Partnership (EP), with the latest Variation of the Scheme due to be put to a vote of the EP Reference Group on 28 February. Members also received an update on Real Time Information, capital schemes in development and asset management. The group received details of proposals to close the Passenger Champion Scheme and merge this with the Bus Passenger Satisfaction Steering Group, with the proposals being supported. Members also received an update on the plans to close the Wolverhampton Travel Centre and asked for details of the impact to be monitored and fed back to the group.

- 3.1.4 Members also received an update on Sprint and Metro operations. Finally, all were reminded of the naming ceremony of the Theresa Stewart tram, taking place on 8 March in Victoria Square. This was the final meeting of the current year. Thanks were noted to all members and officers for their attendance and support of the meetings this year and thanks were noted for Councillor Mary Locke for chairing the group.

Rail & Metro MEG - 27 February (Councillor Timothy Huxtable)

- 3.1.5 The group had a presentation from HS2 on the Curzon Street development, discussed the new stations study paper and had a presentation on the Midlands Rail Hub. The discussions planned for reflections on community rail field trip, Metro updates and Rail Scheme Development had been deferred to a follow up meeting on 30 March.

- 3.1.6 The HS2 presentation was very comprehensive and gave a good overview of the project to date to build Birmingham's first new High Speed railway station at Curzon Street. They explained how they had been working with community groups, passengers and the city on the future design of the station, they had spoken to approximately 2,000 people and had been able to feed their comments into the planning process. When fully operational there would be nine trains per hour travelling in each direction. The station would be fully integrated with an extended tram network, with MMA due to start construction on site in 2026. Current forecasted completion dates indicated that the station building would be completed in 2028, with trains going into service from 2030. HS2 confirmed that they would be happy accommodate a field trip to Curzon Street site for all Transport Delivery Committee members.
- 3.1.7 The MEG heard from Peter Sargant who presented a paper on the New Stations Study, which would be taken to the March Transport Delivery Committee meeting. The study looked at 15 potential new station sites within the Transport for West Midlands area. Based on the assessments that were carried out by the consultants, a list had been compiled of all the stations ranking them in order from Strong case to Weak case for doing any further work. Four stations have been identified as having a strong case and these were: Coventry East, Balsall Heath, Foleshill and Castle Bromwich. Transport for West Midlands were now working on the next steps and had commissioned a further piece of work to looker at the wider transport challenges in the areas identified.
- 3.1.8 The following session was Midlands Rail Hub and a presentation was given by Toby Rackliff. Midlands Rail Hub will help to unlock the capacity bottleneck in the heart of the city and provide the only cost effective solution by creating new capacity at Birmingham Moor Street. The Outline Business Case had now been submitted to the Department for Transport for consideration and now formally awaiting a decision to design to proceed onto the Full Business Case. Tom Painter provided at update on the Leadership changes within West Midlands Rail Executive and Transport for West Midlands, explaining that he has been appointed as Interim Executive Director West Midlands Rail Executive / Interim Director of Rail Transport for West Midlands and that Lucy Wootton, Head of GRC will be taking over the role of organising the MEG.

Finance & Performance MEG - 28 February (Councillor Pervez Akhtar)

- 3.1.9 The MEG was attended by all of its members. The meeting was a discussion around capital pressures, giving members an opportunity to understand some of the issues outlined within the December WMCA Board report. This included further detail on some of the external factors such as inflation, supply chain issues around labour materials and the impact that this was having on WMCA projects, both inflight and future pipeline. There were also discussions about the constraints around current transport funding and how that impacted on funding strategy. Questions asked by members led to discussion on Compulsory Purchase Orders and Compensation Events.

Air Quality, Congestion & Environmental Impact MEG - 1 March (Councillor Linda Bigham)

- 3.1.9 The group considered the recent £1m Defra funding award to the WMCA and partner local authorities to improve air quality. The group also considered national, regional and local air quality developments. These included the new Defra 5 Year Environmental Improvement Plan, new Clean Air Zones in Sheffield and Newcastle/Gateshead, public consultation on the draft West Midlands Local Transport Plan strategy chapters and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's 2022 Air Quality Annual Status report.

Safe & Sustainable Travel - Councillor Robert Grinsell

3.1.10 The Safer Travel Partnership (STP) is made up of the Police Team that includes Police Officers, PCSOs and Police Staff from both West Midlands Police and British Transport Police which is unique in the country. The current establishment of that team is 1 Inspector, 2 Sergeants, 14 Police Constables, 16 Police Community Support Officers and 8 Police Staff. This team has a Police Team and an Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team and Paul Franks as the Civil Interventions, and Police Liaison Manager leads the ASB team and is employed by the WMCA.

3.1.11 These Police officers and staff work as part of the STP with numerous partners from the transport world such as train and bus operators and our colleagues in Midland Metro we meet as a partnership every month in a tasking meeting that is chaired by Paul Franks to agree on the key priorities for the next month whilst reflecting on the previous months data.

3.1.12 The Combined authority have also committed to having a visible presence on the transport network in the form of Transport Safety Officers (TSOs) the original team was 3 officers, but the team is now 11 strong (more details on the work of the TSOs is included further down this document)

3.1.13 In terms of performance and the work of the STP I have included the recent crime and ASB figures for this quarter below, However, to add some context to these figures in Q3 there were approx. 50 million bus passenger journeys, 14.3 million train passenger journeys and 1.9 million tram passenger journeys.

Q3 TDC Meg report

	Crime			ASB
	Bus	Train	Tram	
Oct-22	453	184	13	371
Nov-22	504	183	3	348
Dec-22	380	155	6	243

3.1.14 As you will note that the December figures show a downward trend on the previous months overall but in terms of YTD figures crime reports and ASB has increased from the previous year as can be shown in the below table

3.1.15 The Police Team have reported the following work in this quarter

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q3 TOTAL
Tasking Areas Patrolled	628	728	637	1993
Other areas Patrolled	48	61	31	140
Knife arches/weapon sweeps	2	8	9	19
Incidents/Operations	206	218	121	545

3.1.16 The ASB team have reported the following for this quarter.

ASB Data and Civil Interventions

	October	November	December	Q3
Verbal Warning	79	84	331	494
Advisory Letter	6	8	5	19
First Stage warning letter	3	24	0	27
Final warning letter	0	1	7	8
Restorative Justice meetings	3	3	4	10
Other interventions *	1	0	1	2
Partner interventions**	35	2	1	38
Engagements as result of partner intervention	3	17	40	60
See Say Messages	187	163	175	525
No of incidents reported	371	346	243	960
No of Cases created	114	128	69	311

* Includes Criminal Behaviour Orders, Community Protection Warnings and Notices, Acceptable behaviour contracts

** Includes sanctions by Schools, Operators and other partners following work by Safer Travel

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3.1.17 As mentioned above more information about the TSOs is included at this point. The primary role of the TSO's is to provide a visible presence on the Public Transport Network in the West Midlands, providing good Customer Service to Staff and Passengers to tackle low level Anti-Social Behaviour and improve the perception of safety for users of the transport network. The approach to be followed by the TSO's can be summarized as Engagement, Education, and where necessary Enforcement.

3.1.18 The Safer Travel Partnership now has 11 Transport Safety Officers (TSOs) who are patrolling the transport network in the West Midlands. We welcomed an additional 8 on to our team in on the 14th of November 2022 and they were deployed operationally on the 5th of December 2022 after completing training and onboarding. They were funded as part of the WMCA's Bus Service Improvement Bid. Their deployment is driven by issues identified via the Safer Travel Tasking process held monthly and the TSO's have weekly patrol sheets focusing on key routes and locations, but they will have the flexibility to respond to emerging trends identified by partners. This is also adapted and improved by weekly pace-setter meetings. Where key area leads such as the Civil Interventions and Police Liaison Manager Paul Franks, the TSO Manager Michael Sandland and the Safer Travel Co-Ordinator David Payne meet along with any other relevant partners to take stock of the previous week and look at the plan for the week ahead and adjust if need be.

Month	Interactions	Up/Down	Engagements	Up/Down	Verbal Warnings	Up/Down	Hours on patrol	Up/Down
October	5516	N/A	761	N/A	79	N/A	504	N/A
November	4404	-1112	519	-242	84	+5	397*	-107
December	9258	+4854	846	+327	331	+247	1485**	+1088

Target that 80% of the TSOs time is spent out on patrol/visible on the network
*2 and a half weeks of TSO holiday **8 new TSO joined us

3.1.19 As part of the scheme, we now have 2 TSOs who are full GVC and A2CofC trained drone pilots and 5 TSOs trained as drone observers. This is to assist our Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC) and partners by beaming images back into the RTCC for any planned or ad-hoc event.

3.1.20 A scheme is being developed to allow members of the public to go out on patrol with our TSOs so that a much greater understanding of what they do and how they work can be shared so that users of the public transport network feel safer. This scheme is being trialled with Leaders within WMCA at present so the offer is there for any member of this MEG if they wish to go out on patrol with our TSO team then they should contact Michael Sandland the TSO manager (Michael.sandland@tfwm.org.uk) to facilitate this.

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 None.