

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY
HELD ON THURSDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT COMMITTEE ROOMS
6&7, CIVIC HALL, LEEDS**

Present:

Mayor Tracy Brabin (Chair)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Council
Councillor Stewart Golton (Substitute)	Leeds City Council
Councillor James Lewis	Leeds City Council
Sir Roger Marsh OBE DL	Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership
Councillor Cathy Scott (Substitute)	Kirklees Council
Councillor Rebecca Poulsen	Bradford Council
Councillor Andrew Waller	City of York Council

In attendance:

Ben Still	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Brian Archer	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Melanie Corcoran	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Liz Hunter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Dave Pearson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alan Reiss	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Angela Taylor	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Dominic Martin	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

35. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Lawson and Cllr Pandor, and from Cllr Robinson as well as his substitute.

36. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no pecuniary interests declared by Members during the meeting.

37. Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: That in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix 5 to Agenda Item 7 on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of

the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information and for the reasons set out in the report that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

38. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Authority held on 29 July 2021

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 29 July 2021 be approved.

39. Economic Recovery

Members agreed to discuss item 6 prior to item 5, to accommodate Sir Roger Marsh having to leave the meeting early.

The Combined Authority received an update on developments around the Covid-19 crisis, and were requested to provide views and comments on the latest draft of the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan.

The refreshed draft Economic Recovery Plan focused on delivering a fair, just, and lasting recovery across the region in response to the effects of the pandemic on the economy. It was noted that this refresh of the Plan marked a transitional moment as the region moved out of lockdown restrictions/furlough and away from a 'rescue' phase into one more focused on rebuilding the economy for all communities in the region, with a central focus on inclusive growth and tackling the climate emergency. The Plan also included new action areas linked to delivery of the Mayor's campaign pledge, as well as a targeted focus on areas for government co-investment opportunities, and linked in to local recovery plans to build a comprehensive picture for West Yorkshire. Officers across the region who had contributed to this were thanked for their hard work.

The uncertainties inherent to this planning were noted, and a clearer picture would be gained after the Comprehensive Spending Review and once further details had been released regarding the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The effects of the Plan would be monitored through existing economic reporting measures, particularly in regard to how the economy developed over the coming months, with factors that could affect the recovery highlighted in forecasting.

The focus on inclusive growth was welcomed by Members, as were the place-based initiatives spread throughout the districts. Members praised the high level of engagement with young members of BAME communities and people with disabilities but questioned why, after engagement, only 59% of the target amount had been successfully supported in moving into employment or education/training, and what could be done to improve this? Officers advised that many of the participants in the programme had been unemployed for more than six months and significant challenges existed in moving them into work and training, but they would examine external benchmarks to determine if approximately 60% was a good outcome for this or if a higher target should be set, and this would be reported on at the next meeting.

Members also questioned how the Combined Authority was supporting the Mayor's pledge for 1000 well-paid jobs internally, whether that be through creating apprenticeships, graduate schemes, or similar programmes. It was noted that there were currently 19 apprenticeships underway with the Combined Authority, with a further six planned. Recruiting efforts were also planned to attract a more diverse workforce, particularly from the BAME community.

It was noted that although £1.4 billion had originally been requested in government funding to support the Plan, no funding had been received for this. The need for government investment was emphasised, particularly in light of the region having been particularly badly impacted by the pandemic in comparison to other regions of the country.

In consideration of the above-mentioned move between phases from recovery to rebuilding, Members suggested renaming the Plan to the Economic Growth Plan, to present a more forward-looking and positive picture. However, it was noted that some sections of society were still struggling to move out of the effects of the pandemic and needed further support to recover, and it was important not to lose sight of this.

Members discussed the [re]boot programme, noting that there had been little traction in Kirklees to date and that a more expanded programme was needed. Officers advised that the programme was being replaced by a gainshare-funded equivalent that would allow greater flexibility of the qualifications that can be supported and would therefore be able to better meet employer needs. More detail on this could be shared after the meeting.

Members were invited to share any further comments on the revised draft of the Plan after the meeting.

Cllr Golton joined the meeting, and Sir Roger Marsh had to leave due to a schedule conflict.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority:

- a) Notes the update on COVID-19 support in West Yorkshire.
- b) Comments on the refreshed draft of the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan and commits to review further at future meetings as the economy develops.

40. Business Productivity and Resilience Plan

The Combined Authority received an update on the work being done to develop a Business Productivity and Resilience Plan.

The importance of the Business Productivity and Resilience Plan for the region was highlighted. For the economic recovery from the pandemic to be lasting, the widening gap of inequality would need to be addressed through the creation of skilled jobs with investment and supporting infrastructure.

Building on the development of the Economic Recovery Plan as well as work done in 2018-19 as part of the development of a regional industrial strategy, the Plan noted that businesses would be put at the heart of any recovery.

Increasing the region's productivity would be a top priority, as a strong link existed between productivity and better homes and living standards, as well as more innovation and technological integration. The potential benefits of this were emphasised, with a potential 15% uplift to the regional economy.

Members welcomed the intention of the Plan to increase levels of jobs in the region meeting the 'Good Work' standard as defined by the Office for National Statistics in response to the Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices; these would be jobs that were not low-paid and left the employee working satisfactory hours and with their desired contractual status. However, they questioned how it would be ensured that the Plan increased the number of people in employment and avoided treating productivity as an end within itself with only a small number of people benefitting. The importance of skilled management in relation to this was discussed, as it had the potential to grow businesses not only for owners but also for employees, and supporting this was a vital aim of the Plan.

The potential to become more innovation-driven was also raised; the region was well-placed for this, having the highest concentration of universities nationally outside of London and the Southeast, and the Combined Authority and LEP had been working with MIT to deliver programmes encouraging and supporting people in innovating existing businesses and scaling up ideas with the potential to become globally significant.

It was hoped that increasing productivity would increase the attractiveness of the region, thereby supporting the creation of high-value jobs and the broadening of the employment base, as this would allow more opportunities for workers to increase their skills and to improve their quality of life.

Members noted the mention within the report of a prioritisation plan to outline implementation of the Plan, and requested that milestones for success be included in this, particularly in regards to funding. It was also cautioned that although the region's economy included a wide variety of productive businesses with many opportunities for expansion and training, it also contained a large number of low-productivity businesses, and it would be important to ensure both these groups benefitted from the Plan rather than one at the expense of the other.

The increasing opportunities for growth and investment in areas such as Central and South America were also discussed, particularly in light of national considerations on acceding to the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership. Some of the economies in these regions were growing extremely quickly and were predicted to potentially surpass the UK within a generation, and the importance of looking forward to longer-term opportunities was noted.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority endorses publication of the priorities and indicative actions of the Business Productivity and Resilience Plan as part

of the region's Strategic Economic Framework.

41. Capital Spending and Project Approvals

The Combined Authority considered a report on proposals for the progression of, and funding for, a number of West Yorkshire Combined Authority supported projects that had been considered at stages 1, 2 and 3 of the Combined Authority's assurance process.

After the changes to committee arrangements approved at the Annual General Meeting, these schemes had come directly to the Combined Authority due to expediency of delivery. These included projects relating to:

- York Northern Outer Ring Road
- Department for Transport Capability Fund (Revenue)
- Enterprise Zone 1 Langthwaite Business Park Extension Phase 1
- Wellington House Accommodation Project

In addition, it was noted that the following decision points and change requests had been assessed and approved through the agreed delegation process:

- Safety, Accessibility and Efficiency Programme
- TCF Kirklees Early Walking and Cycling Gateways – Dewsbury Rail Station Access and Huddersfield Better Connected Stations
- Land Release Fund
- CIP A58-A672 Corridor, Calderdale
- CIP A646-A6033 Corridor, Calderdale
- Integrated Corporate Systems
- LTP-ITB Rail Accessibility Package
- Leeds City Centre Grey to Green

Details of all the schemes were provided in the submitted report. Approval was also requested that after the changes to committee arrangements at the 24 June Combined Authority meeting, future schemes seeking approval be allocated to the appropriate thematic committees.

Members welcomed the York Northern Outer Ring Road, which would provide much-needed improvement for orbital cycle routes and connect communities among the ring road. The need to prioritise removing carbon, as well as the importance of protecting York's heritage sites, was highlighted.

In regards to the Department for Transport Capability Fund (Revenue), Members questioned the criteria for applications for the £1.35 million in funding that had been secured. These could be shared with the committee after the meeting.

Members questioned why the Leeds City Centre Grey to Green scheme appeared to have tripled in cost. It was advised that the overall cost of the package had not increased, but that funds had been moved between the four elements comprising it in order to meet the March 2022 deadline for delivery, as the grant funding was time-limited. This allowed the Combined Authority to maximise the benefit of the funding it had received without an increase in cost.

Members discussed the Wellington House Accommodation project and the exempt appendix of the submitted report, and members of the press and public left the meeting.

Resolved:

- a) That in respect of future approvals, the Combined Authority approves that the schemes in the funding programmes shown in paragraph 4.3 of the submitted report are allocated to the indicated thematic committee also shown in paragraph 4.3 of the submitted report.
- b) That in respect of the York Northern Outer Ring Road, the Combined Authority approves:
 - i) The change request to the York Northern Outer Ring Road project to bring together the roundabout junction upgrade scheme and the dualling scheme and their associated funding allocations, into one combined scheme, with total scheme costs of £65,193,000, and for development costs of £3,438,000 from the West Yorkshire plus Transport Fund to progress the combined scheme to full business case, bringing the total development costs to £9,019,000 from the West Yorkshire plus Transport Fund.
 - ii) That the Combined Authority enters into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with City of York Council for expenditure of up to £9,019,000 from the West Yorkshire + Transport Fund.
 - iii) That future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.
- c) That in respect of the Department for Transport Capability Fund (Revenue), the Combined Authority approves that:
 - i) The Department for Transport Capability Fund (revenue) scheme proceeds through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commences on activity 5 (delivery).
 - ii) Approval of £1,351,341 which will be funded through Department for Transport Capability Fund (revenue).
 - iii) Approval is delegated to the Director of Delivery to enter into small grant agreements with community organisations and businesses for expenditure up to £50,000 from the DfT's Capability Fund, as agreed by the scheme's Programme Board.
 - iv) Future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance

pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.

- d) That in respect of the EZ Langthwaite Extension Phase 1, the Combined Authority approves that, subject to the conditions set by PAT stated in the submitted report:
- i) The Enterprise Zone Langthwaite Business Park Extension Phase 1 scheme proceeds through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commences on activity 5 (delivery).
 - ii) Approval is given to the Combined Authority's contribution of £2,217,000 of which £417,000 is from the Local Growth Fund and £1,800,000 is from the Getting Building Fund.
 - iii) The Combined Authority enters into an addendum to the existing Funding Agreement with Wakefield Council for expenditure up to £1,246,000 from the Getting Building Fund.
 - iv) Future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined.

That in respect of the Wellington House Accommodation Project, the Combined Authority approves the recommendations set out in the exempt appendix 5 of the submitted report.

42. Minutes for Information

The Combined Authority noted the minutes of the committees and panels that have been published on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's website since the last meeting.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Combined Authority's committees and panels be noted.