

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY
HELD ON THURSDAY, 25 JULY 2024 AT MEETING ROOM 1 -
WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS**

Present:

Mayor Tracy Brabin (Chair)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Council
Councillor Scott Patient (Substitute)	Calderdale Council
Councillor Cathy Scott	Kirklees Council
Councillor James Lewis	Leeds City Council
Councillor Matthew Morley (Substitute)	Wakefield Council
Councillor Sue Holdsworth	Calderdale Council
Councillor Carole Pattison	Kirklees Council
Councillor Alan Lamb	Leeds City Council
Councillor Claire Douglas	City of York Council
Asma Iqbal (Substitute)	West Yorkshire Business Board
Councillor Barry Anderson	Chair of Scrutiny Committee

In attendance:

Alan Reiss (Chief Operating Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Simon Warburton (Executive Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sarah Eaton (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Liz Hunter (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Felix Kumi-Ampofo (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Angela Taylor (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Rebecca Brookes (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Adam Hunt (Committee Services)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jane Scullion (Calderdale Council), Cathy Scott (Kirklees Council) and Denise Jeffery (Wakefield) and private representative Mandy Ridyard (West Yorkshire Business Board).

Councillors Scott Patient (Calderdale Council) and Matthew Morley (Wakefield) and private representative Asma Iqbal (West Yorkshire Business Board) were in attendance as substitutes.

2. Update on Combined Authority Membership

Members were updated following the recent changes to political leadership at Kirklees Council. The Combined Authority had received notice terminating Councillor Cathy Scott's appointment as the Combined Authority's Constituent Council Member for Kirklees. It was noted that Councillor Pattison had been appointed as the new Kirklees representative following her appointment to Leader, with Councillor Moses Crook as the substitute Member.

Members were informed that the changes would take effect from Friday 26 July 2024 and, therefore, the membership for this meeting remained unaffected.

It was acknowledged that the changes would initially impact on the Combined Authority membership of the Finance, Resources and Corporate Committee, however, these would be formally approved at the September Combined Authority meeting.

It was noted that, in addition to the above, notification had also been received from Kirklees Council confirming changes to local authority co-optee nominations to the Combined Authority's committees. Members were advised that these changes had been approved under delegated authority.

3. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests at the meeting.

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

There were no items present on the agenda which required the exclusion of the press and public.

5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Authority held on 20 June 2024

That the minutes of the meeting of the Combined Authority held on 20 June 2024 were approved as a correct record.

6. Mayor's Update

The Chair reported significant developments since the last formal meeting, emphasising engagement with the newly elected government. The Chair noted that a meeting had occurred only four days post the General Election, reflecting confidence in devolution from the new government. The new Chancellor recently visited Wellington House to discuss economic growth with the Chair and other regional mayors, highlighting the Government's view of mayors as crucial for economic growth.

The Chair mentioned that the Local Growth Plan, discussed later in the agenda, was central to the new relationship with the Government. As Chair of the UK Mayors' Group, the Chair had been tasked with shaping the English Devolution Bill and the new Council of Nations and Regions, placing Mayors and local government at the heart of the new government's plans. The Chair underscored the necessity of delivering economic growth nationally and

improving outcomes for West Yorkshire residents.

The Chair made comment that there had been recent engagements with key government ministers, including the Prime Minister, which had indicated more interactions than in the Chair's first three years as Mayor. The Chair stated that there had been positive early discussions on further devolution and this had highlighted new expectations for delivery.

The Chair also addressed recent public disorder in Harehills, noting a visit with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime to support affected community members. The Chair condemned the criminal behaviour, commended community efforts to restore calm and acknowledged police actions. A special Community Outcomes Meeting in early September 2024 was announced to review the incident with the Chief Constable.

7. Priorities for the New Government

The Combined Authority considered a report which outlined proposals to collaborate with the newly elected government. Officers highlighted plans for economic growth, climate action and social justice, emphasising the need for funding and partnerships to advance West Yorkshire's Local Growth Plan and other key initiatives.

The Chair summarised that key points had been raised with the new government, noting that the report had been prepared before the King's Speech and referred to the Take Back Control Bill, which was now titled the English Devolution Bill. She also highlighted government announcements aligning with local ambitions, such as reintroducing creative subjects in schools, and reiterated the necessity of funding for local authorities to deliver on these priorities.

Members also discussed the breaking down of barriers to opportunity and identified jobs, training and housing security as critical issues. Officers connected devolution proposals to the Local Growth Plan, which aimed to address growth barriers and promote widespread opportunity.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority noted the update provided and the planned next steps.

8. Bus Franchising

The Combined Authority reviewed a report updating on the Bus Franchising Scheme and sought approval for mobilisation plans. Officers presented the report, noting the decision to franchise buses and outlining the steps required for mobilisation. They emphasised the necessary funding and timelines to transition to a fully franchised bus network by 2028.

The Chair stressed the significant work ahead following the decision to pursue bus franchising and mentioned ongoing discussions about cross-boundary opportunities. Members observed that recent government transport announcements on devolution would support the bus franchising efforts.

Members expressed a collective desire for improved bus services, underlining the importance of cross-boundary cooperation and the need for an integrated transport plan. Officers mentioned minimal initial changes to maintain customer familiarity and ongoing discussions with the Department for Transport on funding models.

Members highlighted the interdependence of York and West Yorkshire's economies, advocating for collaboration with York's Mayor to facilitate easier regional movement for customers. Officers confirmed that cross-boundary considerations would be integrated into the franchising system.

Members welcomed the report, particularly the importance of BSIP tranches 2 and 3 in maintaining routes and stressed the need to maintain service quality during the transition, with a focus on supporting local employment.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Combined Authority noted the updates provided in the submitted report.
- (ii) That, subject to funding of £5,389,863 being approved by the Combined Authority at Item 13 of this Combined Authority meeting agenda, the Combined Authority endorsed the approach to mobilisation as set out in the submitted report.

9. West Yorkshire Mass Transit: Progress Update and Further Development Funding Release

The Combined Authority reviewed a report on the Mass Transit Strategic Outline Case (SOC), delegating its submission to the Mayor and Executive Director for Transport and approving stakeholder engagement and public consultation plans. Officers introduced the report and requested development funding for Phase 1 and detailed the progress and planned consultation activities.

The Chair announced that the West Yorkshire Mass Transit programme's consultation for the first phase had launched on 15 July 2024, receiving widespread attention. Members were urged to participate and encourage public responses. The Chair highlighted discussions with new government ministers, emphasising the project's importance for economic growth and regional opportunities.

Members stressed the need for integrated work across West Yorkshire to connect isolated communities and maintain project momentum. They also emphasised the importance of communicating the programme's regional benefits and ensuring it stayed on time and budget. Officers highlighted ongoing efforts to improve connectivity and the need for sensitivity towards residents affected by the development of the system in urban areas.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Noted progress and current position in relation to the West Yorkshire

Mass Transit programme.

- (ii) On the basis that the Department for Transport (DfT) had appraised and noted the continued development of Phase 1, the Combined Authority approved that the Mass Transit Phase 1 scheme proceeded through to Decision Point 2 (Strategic Outline Case) and work commenced on development of the enhanced Strategic Outline Case (SOC+) for Phase 1.
- (iii) Additional development costs of £46,953,355 were approved to develop and submit an enhanced Phase 1 SOC (SOC+) to the DfT and to progress the Phase 1 Outline Business Case (OBC). taking the total scheme approval to £80,890,157.
- (iv) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathways and approval routes outlined in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, subject to remaining within tolerances.
- (v) Noted the launch and details of the public consultation for Phase 1 Mass Transit.

10. Draft Local Growth Plan

The Committee reviewed a report on the draft Local Growth Plan, which outlined its scope, content, and key priorities for West Yorkshire. The Plan was designed to evolve with changing national government expectations, encouraging broad engagement to ensure ownership by all stakeholders.

Officers highlighted that devolution had already led to positive outcomes, including increased skills acquisition, business growth, transport infrastructure investment and higher productivity. The draft framework, initially discussed by members in June, was presented for endorsement. Supported by a 20-year evidence base, the Plan identified barriers such as a lack of skilled workforce, low innovation and inadequate infrastructure. It aimed to address these issues by focusing on businesses, people, transport and places, leveraging regional strengths for innovation and growth. The Chair welcomed the progress toward an inclusive economy with widespread job opportunities.

The Chair emphasised the Plan's significance within the new government's devolution agenda, noting positive discussions with the Prime Minister, Chancellor, and Cabinet members. The Plan was seen as a guide for strategic direction in the Mayor's second term, focusing on shared priorities with member councils. Members expressed support for the Plan, highlighting the need to reduce inequalities and maintain strong business links while noting progress in local plan development across the region by local authorities.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority considered and commented on the progress to date in developing the emerging scope, framework, priorities, commitments and general content in the draft Local Growth Plan, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

11. Project Approvals

(a) Project Approvals - Investment Priority 3 - Creating Great Places and Accelerated Infrastructure

Brownfield Housing Fund (BHF) – Canal 30 (Bradford)

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The change request to the BHF Canal 30 scheme to increase the full approval by an additional £240,000 of Combined Authority funding, taking the total full approval to £1,840,000, was approved, and work continued on activity 5 (delivery). The total scheme cost was £8,144,861.
- (ii) The Combined Authority entered into an addendum to an existing funding agreement with Charles Babbage Ltd for expenditure of up to £1,840,000.
- (iii) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report. This was subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in this report.

Brownfield Housing Fund (BHF) – Wakefield Civic Quarter (Wakefield)

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The BHF Wakefield Civic Quarter scheme proceeded through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commenced on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Full approval was given to the Combined Authority's contribution of £1,600,000. The total scheme cost was £15,457,238.
- (iii) The Combined Authority entered into a funding agreement with Rushbond Developments Ltd for expenditure of up to £1,600,000.
- (iv) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report. This was subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in this report.

Delegated Decisions - BHF Pontefract Fire Station (Wakefield)

Resolved: The Combined Authority noted that, since the 20 June 2024 meeting, the Combined Authority's Director of Policing, Environment and Place approved the BHF Pontefract Fire Station's project closure report on 9 July 2024. The scheme proceeded through decision points 5 and 6, with a total scheme value of £5,069,983 and Combined Authority funding of £419,124.

12. Project Approvals - Investment Priority 5 - Delivering Sustainable, Integrated, Inclusive and Affordable Transport

Active Travel Tranche 4 - Access to Schools, Bradford (Bradford)

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The Bradford Access to School scheme would proceed through decision points 2 to 4 (business justification case) and work would commence on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Full approval was given to the Combined Authority's contribution of £633,325, subject to approval by Active Travel England (ATE). The total scheme value was £633,325.
- (iii) The Combined Authority entered into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council for expenditure of up to £633,325.
- (iv) Future approvals were to be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route and tolerances outlined in that report.

A61 Bus, Cycle & Walking Improvements (Leeds, Wakefield)

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The A61 Bus, Cycle & Walking Improvements scheme would proceed through decision point 3 (outline business case) and work would commence on activity 4 (full business cases) for the first phase of the scheme, including Jumbles Lane (Leeds City Council) and Bus Lanes South of Wakefield (Wakefield Council). The remaining interventions were paused and pipelined until further funding was identified.
- (ii) Indicative approval to the Combined Authority's contribution of £3,640,000 was given. The total value of the first phase was £3,640,000.
- (iii) Additional development costs of £1,160,650 were fully approved in order to progress the first phase of the scheme to decision point 4 (full business case), taking the total scheme full approval to £2,122,000.
- (iv) The Combined Authority entered into a new funding agreement with Leeds City Council for expenditure of up to £450,000, taking the overall funding approval for Leeds to £482,000.
- (v) The Combined Authority entered into a deed of variation with Wakefield Council for additional expenditure of up to £710,650,

taking the total funding approval for Wakefield to £1,640,000.

- (vi) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in that report, subject to remaining within the tolerances.

A639 Bus, Cycle & Walking Improvements (Leeds, Wakefield)

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The A639 Bus, Cycle & Walking Improvements scheme would proceed through decision point 3 (outline business case) and work would commence on activity 4 (full business cases) for the first phase of the scheme, including Thwaite Gate to M1 Junction 44 (Leeds City Council), Rothwell Transport Hub (Leeds City Council), and Bus Lanes on Southgate (Wakefield Council). The remaining interventions were paused and pipelined until further funding was identified.
- (ii) Indicative approval to the Combined Authority's contribution of £9,854,312 was given. The total scheme cost of the first phase was £9,854,312.
- (iii) Development costs of £1,250,000 were fully approved in order to progress the first phase of the scheme to decision point 4 (full business case), taking the total full approval to £2,187,360.
- (iv) The Combined Authority entered into a new funding agreement with Leeds City Council for expenditure of up to £750,000 and a deed of variation with Wakefield Council for expenditure up to £1,437,360.
- (v) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval routes outlined in that report, subject to remaining within tolerances.

A629 Phase 5 Ainley Top into Huddersfield (Kirklees)

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The A629 Phase 5 Ainley Top into Huddersfield scheme would proceed through decision point 4 (full business case) and work would commence on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Full approval for the Combined Authority's contribution of £13,801,870 was given. The total scheme value was £13,876,870.
- (iii) The Combined Authority entered into a funding agreement with Kirklees Council for expenditure of up to £13,801,870.
- (iv) Future approvals were to be made in accordance with the approval

pathway and assurance route outlined in this report. This was subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in this report.

Corridor Improvement Programme – A650 Newton Bar (Wakefield)

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The change request to the CIP Newton Bar A650 scheme to increase the Combined Authority costs was approved and full approval was given to an additional £2,414,000, taking the total Combined Authority full approval to £11,549,000. The total scheme cost was £12,109,000.
- (ii) The Combined Authority entered into an addendum to the funding agreements with Wakefield Council for expenditure of up to £11,549,000.
- (iii) Future approvals were made in accordance with the approval route and assurance pathway set out in this report. This was subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in this report.

Corridor Improvement Programme – Bradford - A6177 Thornton Road (Bradford)

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The A6177 Thornton Road scheme would proceed through decision point 4 (full business case) and work would commence on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Full approval for the Combined Authority funding of £8,327,000 was given. The total scheme value was £8,327,000.
- (iii) The Combined Authority entered into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with Bradford Council for expenditure of up to £8,327,000.
- (iv) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathway, approval route, and tolerances outlined in this report. Where required, any future committee level approvals were delegated to the Transport Committee.

Bus Station Improvements Programme

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The Bus Station Improvements Programme proceeded through decision point 2 (strategic outline case) and work commenced on the development of individual scheme business cases as outlined in this report.

- (ii) An indicative approval was given to the Combined Authority's contribution of £5,913,270, subject to confirmation of funding.
- (iii) Full approval was given to £2,255,222, taking the total full approval to £2,505,222, comprising:
 - £1,790,770 for the Real Time Information Package (bus stations), subject to conditions.
 - £188,342 development costs for the Small Bus Stations Improvements Package.
 - £276,110 development costs for the Staffed Bus Stations Improvements Package.
- (iv) A delegation to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive was approved to allow the allocated scheme funding amounts to be reallocated within this programme as required.
- (v) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathway, approval route, subject to remaining within the tolerances set out in this report.

Bus Stops and Shelters Improvements Programme

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The Bus Stops and Shelters Improvement Programme proceeded through decision point 2 (strategic outline case) and that work commenced on development of individual scheme business cases, as outlined in this report.
- (ii) An indicative approval was given to the Combined Authority contribution of £9,722,000, subject to confirmation of funding.
- (iii) Full approval was given to £7,684,944, taking the total full approval to £7,934,944, comprising:
 - £106,053 development costs for the Bus Stop Accessibility package.
 - £3,069,030 for the Real Time Information Package (stops and shelters), subject to conditions.
 - £4,509,861 for the Replacement of Bus Shelters and Poles Package, subject to conditions.
- (iv) A delegation to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive was approved to allow the allocated scheme funding amounts to be reallocated within this programme as required.
- (v) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report, subject to remaining within tolerances.

Better Places - Leeds City Centre Cycle Links (North and South) (Leeds)

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The Leeds City Centre Cycle Links scheme would proceed through decision point 4 (full business case) to activity 5 (delivery) subject to Approval to Proceed.
- (ii) Full approval for the Combined Authority's contribution of £7,784,705 was given. The total scheme cost was £8,296,193.
- (iii) The Combined Authority entered into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with Leeds City Council for expenditure of up to £7,784,705.
- (iv) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathway, approval route, and tolerances outlined in this report.

TCF Heckmondwike Bus Hub (Kirklees Council)

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The change request to increase the costs of the scheme by £1,800,000, from £8,666,152 to £10,466,152, and that the completion date for the project was extended from 20 December 2024 to 30 June 2025, was fully approved.
- (ii) The Combined Authority entered into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with Kirklees Council for expenditure of up to £10,466,152.
- (iii) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report. This was subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in this report.

Normanton Rail Station Park & Ride (Wakefield)

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The change request for the Normanton Rail Station Park & Ride scheme to increase the Combined Authority funding by £431,806, from £3,268,446 to £3,700,252, and to reduce the scheme outputs from 121 to 91 additional spaces, was fully approved.
- (ii) The Combined Authority entered into a variation to the existing funding agreement with Northern Trains Limited for expenditure of up to an additional £431,806, from £2,802,180 to £3,233,985.
- (iii) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report.

Corridor Improvement Programme – Kirklees - Huddersfield Southern Corridor (Kirklees)

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved:

- (i) The Combined Authority endorsed the scheme and the full business case summary.
- (ii) The Combined Authority granted delegated authority to the Chief Executive to approve:
 - The full business case (to progress the scheme through decision point 4).
 - The total scheme value and Combined Authority contribution.
 - The terms of any funding agreement required to implement the scheme.
 - The future approval pathway and scheme tolerances were also established.

Delegated Decisions

Resolved: That the Combined Authority noted:

- (i) The change request to release an additional £300,000 to fund further design costs and progress the TCF North Halifax Improved Streets for People scheme to activity 4 (full business case), along with funding for early works identified by the scheme. Funding approved: £300,000. Total value of the scheme: £11,488,986. Total value of Combined Authority funding: £11,488,986.
- (ii) The change request to release an additional £200,000 to fund further design costs and progress the TCF West Halifax Improved Streets for People scheme to activity 4 (full business case). Funding approved: £200,000. Total indicative value of the scheme: £9,630,451. Total indicative value of Combined Authority funding: £9,630,451.
- (iii) Approval to the project closure report and for the WYTF Castleford Station Gateway scheme to proceed through decision point 5 (delivery closure) & decision point 6 (financial closure), and work to continue on evaluation. Funding approved: £0. Total value of the scheme: £2,907,732. Total value of Combined Authority funding: £2,907,732.
- (iv) Approval to the change request to increase development costs by £240,496 to £598,624 for the CRSTS: A650 Wakefield Road, Bradford scheme. Funding approved: £240,496. Total indicative value of the scheme: £20,000,000. Total indicative value of Combined Authority funding: £20,000,000.

13. UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Combined Authority considered a progress report of West Yorkshire's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Local Investment Plans, including Core UKSPF, Multiply and the Rural Fund. Officers detailed good progress in fund allocation and challenges in project delivery, alongside recommendations for fund reallocation and operational adjustments.

The Chair thanked all local authority partners for their work on the progress of the UKSPF and congratulated the skills team at the Combined Authority for their progression with the Fund.

Members emphasised the importance of the subsidy for the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, particularly in terms of inclusivity, ensuring that everyone had equal opportunities to access the funding. This access was vital and needed to be carefully focused on equalities to ensure investment reached the areas that were most in need. Officers reported that the Combined Authority had been working diligently to maximise the remaining funds within West Yorkshire.

Resolved:

- (i) The Combined Authority noted the progress made on implementing the West Yorkshire UKSPF Local Investment Plans.
- (ii) The Combined Authority noted the recommendations made by the West Yorkshire UKSPF Local Partnership Group (LPG).
- (iii) The Combined Authority approved the approach and funding allocations, as set out at sections 3.5 to 3.8 in the submitted report, for the remaining uncommitted funds of £847,625.
- (iv) The Combined Authority delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Commercial Services as Senior Responsible Officer, authorisation of any further movement of funds within the Programme – including management of underperformance in projects and any underspend as it became available so that funding could be maximised in the region, over the remaining period.
- (v) The Combined Authority noted the progress on delivering the Rural Fund, as outlined in section 3.18 to 3.21 of the submitted report and approved the changes to the operating model as set out at section 3.22.

14. Digital Blueprint

The Combined Authority considered a report introducing the Digital Blueprint for members' approval. Officers presented a roadmap outlining smart city initiatives, digital skills development and innovation strategies aligned with the Local Growth Plan, aiming to enhance connectivity and economic growth in West Yorkshire by 2030.

Members highlighted the significant impact of digital technology in supporting the economy of West Yorkshire and emphasised that the work in the report

reflected the substantial benefits of digital initiatives in the region. They also emphasised the need for further efforts to ensure equitable access to digital resources throughout West Yorkshire.

Resolved: The Combined Authority approved the Digital Blueprint.

15. Funding Pressures and Revenue Budget Revisions 2024-25

The Combined Authority considered a report on changes needed to the 2024/25 budgets. Officers introduced adjustments to manage emerging pressures, including costs related to bus franchising and the ongoing closure of Bradford Interchange. The revised budget of £863 million aimed to align resources with updated financial challenges and strategic priorities.

Resolved:

- (i) The Combined Authority approved the changes to the revenue budget, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.
- (ii) The Combined Authority approved the movements to reserves to meet funding pressures, as set out in Appendix 2 to the submitted report.

16. Managing Capital

The Combined Authority reviewed a report on managing the capital portfolio and proposed a shift towards a unified funding approach to enhance delivery efficiency and address financial pressures. The plan aimed to streamline project management and funding allocation, aligning with regional priorities and sustainable growth.

The Chair discussed the capital programme pressures and potential changes to ensure a focus on delivery, linking this to the trailblazer partnership with the Government and the need for an accelerated funding and delivery process. She expressed gratitude to partners for their collaborative approach and acknowledged the need for continued close cooperation in future planning. Members welcomed the proposed approach and emphasised the importance of maintaining equality and inclusivity in the delivery focus across the region.

Resolved: The Combined Authority noted the capital funding pressures and the outline proposals to develop improved ways of working.

17. Assurance Framework Review

The Combined Authority reviewed a report on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Assurance Framework and sought approval for proposed changes. Officers presented proposals to streamline governance and decision-making, enhance flexibility and strengthen collaboration with local partners. These changes aimed to improve efficiency and align with the strategic priorities of the West Yorkshire Plan.

The Chair noted that members had requested the review, in line with the English Devolution Accountability Framework, which mandated annual reviews

of Local Assurance Frameworks. Officers explained that the review aimed to ensure the Assurance Framework supported the Combined Authority's ambitions, remained flexible and proportionate and facilitated swift delivery whilst staying effective. The Chair thanked those who had contributed to the review.

Members asked about accelerating decision-making for lower-budget projects under devolution. Officers responded that this would be considered in future evaluations of the Assurance Framework.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Noted the work that had been undertaken to review the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Assurance Framework.
- (ii) Noted the changes already implemented and approved the further proposed changes and authorised the required amendments to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Assurance Framework.
- (iii) Approved delegated authority to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive to approve the amendments to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Assurance Framework and, thereafter, to inform the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) of the amendments.

18. Transport Leadership Structure

The Combined Authority reviewed a report on creating a new Bus Franchising Programme Director role and revising the Director of Transport Operations and Passenger Experience role.

The March meeting of the Combined Authority had led to landmark decisions to accelerate transport functions, with the Mayor's bus franchising decision triggering rapid preparations for the first tendering in late 2025.

It was noted that the Mass Transit program had advanced from SOC to OBC stage, requiring enhanced consultation and government sponsorship. Structural changes were proposed to manage these developments and officers outlined the role profiles and recruitment strategies to support bus franchising and transport services modernisation.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Approved the creation of the role of a new Bus Franchising Programme Director, reporting to the Executive Director for Transport.
- (ii) Approved the revisions to the current Director of Transport Operations and Passenger Experience role to a Transport Services Director role with an amended portfolio of functions.
- (iii) Approved the new role profiles for the Bus Franchising Programme Director and Transport Services Programme Director roles.

- (iv) Endorsed, through the delegation given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Mayor, recruitment to the Bus Franchising Programme Director role.

19. Corporate Plan 2024-25

The Combined Authority reviewed a report to approve the Corporate Plan 2024-2025. Officers emphasised the plan's alignment with the West Yorkshire Plan's missions and priorities, including performance measures to track progress. Approval and finalisation of the Plan were recommended.

Members enquired about the communication strategy with local businesses and stressed the importance of their alignment with the Combined Authority. The Chair mentioned that the Mayor's Council would help engage businesses and officers confirmed that the West Yorkshire Business Board was consulting with businesses on the Corporate Plan.

Resolved:

- (i) The Combined Authority approved the Corporate Plan 2024/2025 for publication in early July 2024.
- (ii) The Combined Authority authorised the Chief Executive delegated responsibility to sign off the final draft of the Corporate Plan for publication.

20. Political Balance Requirements

The Combined Authority considered a report noting the legal requirements for membership and political balance on committees and support for political parties. Officers introduced the report, which outlined the mechanisms to secure political balance on committees and the provision of support to political parties.

Resolved:

- (i) The Combined Authority noted the information contained within the submitted report.
- (ii) The Combined Authority formally adopted the Guidance on Political Balance Requirements, appended to the submitted report, as part of the Constitution.

21. Minutes for Information

The Combined Authority noted a report which provided details of published minutes since the last meeting.

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

22. Date of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Combined Authority was scheduled to be held on Thursday 19 September 2024.