

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY
HELD ON THURSDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2024 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS**

Present:

Mayor Tracy Brabin (Chair)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Council
Councillor Martin Love	Bradford Council
Councillor Jane Scullion	Calderdale Council
Councillor Carole Pattison	Kirklees Council
Councillor Stewart Golton (Substitute)	Leeds City Council
Councillor Alan Lamb	Leeds City Council
Councillor Jonathan Pryor (Substitute)	Leeds City Council
Councillor Denise Jeffery	Wakefield Council
Councillor Claire Douglas	City of York Council
Mandy Ridyard	West Yorkshire Business Board

In attendance:

Councillor Barry Anderson (Observer)	Chair of Scrutiny Committee
Ben Still (Chief Executive)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
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
Angela Taylor (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Caroline Norreys (Assistant Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Michelle Burton (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Myles Larrington (Committee Services)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Sue Holdsworth (Calderdale Council) and Cllr James Lewis (Leeds Council).

Cllr Stewart Golton attended as the substitute for Cllr Holdsworth and Cllr Jonathan Pryor attended as the substitute for Cllr Lewis.

2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests at the meeting.

3. 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.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Authority held on 31 October 2024

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Combined Authority held on 31 October 2024 were approved as a correct record.

A member enquired about a response from the Transport Commissioner to the Chair's recent correspondence concerning a number of transport and traffic management issues. The Chair confirmed a reply had been received the previous week. The Executive Director for Transport noted the Transport Commissioner had acknowledged receipt and discussions were taking place with the Traffic Commissioner on expediting a number of changes to transport services at short notice. The Chair agreed to circulate a copy of the response to all members.

5. Mayor's Update

The Chair reported on developments since October, noting progress on the Local Growth Plan, the first produced by a Mayoral Combined Authority, to inform the National Industrial Strategy. Following the Chancellor's budget, funding of £36 million for the Bus Service Improvement Plan had been confirmed, enabling affordable fares and support for additional routes. The Get Britain Working White Paper had allocated £20 million for employment initiatives in West Yorkshire. The English Devolution White Paper had been delayed but was expected to outline plans for deeper devolution.

Members requested an update on Bradford Interchange and its communication plan. The Chair confirmed that preparations for the January 2025 opening were ongoing, with the Executive Director for Transport noting efforts to keep members briefed and addressed regarding concerns. Members further suggested that the Combined Authority share knowledge with new Combined Authorities following the devolution paper.

The Chair emphasised collaboration among UK mayors and the need for formal training to be offered to those elected as mayors. The Chief Executive assured members that Combined Authorities were sharing best practices.

Cllr Hinchcliffe highlighted that regular Bradford Interchange updates were being provided to Bradford members. In response to a member query, the Executive Director for Transport confirmed that Leeds councillors had been briefed on the latest updates.

6. Local Growth Plan

The Combined Authority considered a report which presented the final draft of the West Yorkshire Local Growth Plan for approval.

The Chair highlighted the importance of the Local Growth Plan in addressing challenges and seizing opportunities for regional growth. The plan outlined five priorities: boosting key business sectors, supporting Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), improving transport connectivity, enhancing skills and learning and developing thriving places. It aimed to close an £11 billion output gap, creating 33,000 jobs and 18,000 businesses. Engagement with the Government continued to align the plan with the National Industrial Strategy. Progress so far was praised, with further discussions planned with the Chancellor.

Members discussed the Local Growth Plan, highlighting its ambition and the importance of balancing targeted sector growth with inclusivity. Concerns were raised about addressing non-graduate sectors like social care, ensuring collaboration with other Combined Authorities and maintaining flexibility to adapt strategies. Monitoring outcomes and securement of funding were identified as priorities. Debate included sustainability concerns related to the Leeds Bradford Airport expansion, with calls for innovation to mitigate impacts. Members agreed on the need for an implementation plan with measurable indicators to track progress.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved and adopted the draft West Yorkshire Local Growth Plan as outlined in Appendix 1 of the submitted report.

7. Work and Health

The Combined Authority considered a report on employment support, including work and health, seeking authority to address economic inactivity and health-related barriers. Officers highlighted funding opportunities, such as Trailblazer and Accelerator initiatives, and plans for a co-produced Work, Health and Skills Plan to improve regional growth and employment outcomes.

The Chair provided an update on employment support, highlighting the £20 million government funding awarded to tackle health and work challenges. The submitted report outlined plans to address economic inactivity and barriers to employment, emphasising collaboration with health, local authorities and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The Chair thanked the team for their efforts in securing additional funding, noting its importance for the region's growth and ongoing work in addressing these issues.

Members discussed the barriers to employment posed by national apprenticeship requirements, particularly in maths and English. A member highlighted a local case where a young person had struggled to secure an apprenticeship despite being capable, urging action on reducing such barriers. The Chair assured members of ongoing efforts to advocate for more local autonomy in apprenticeships. Members sought clarity on health and social care strategies, with officers outlining ongoing initiatives to address workforce gaps and economic inactivity to support regional growth.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Noted and supported the strategic approach to tackling health-

related barriers to work being undertaken by the Combined Authority and other partners in government.

- (ii) Approved the authority for the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor and the Chair of the Economy Committee, to accept the funds associated with the interventions described in the submitted report and to progress any associated programme design/implementation designed with key partners.

8. Business Planning and Budgets

The Combined Authority considered a report on business planning, emerging budget proposals for 2025/26 and the use of revenue gainshare until 2027/28. Officers introduced the report, highlighting strategic priorities, budget pressures and proposals to address funding issues. Recommendations included fare adjustments, capital payments in advance and multi-year funding programmes.

The Chair outlined the business planning and budget proposals for 2025/26, highlighting progress in aligning priorities and collaboration across sectors. They emphasised the importance of balancing immediate pressures with long-term growth, acknowledged financial challenges and thanked partners for their efforts. The Chair noted the flexibility offered by a future single government settlement and stressed the need for strategic resource allocation to achieve shared ambitions amidst funding uncertainties.

The Chief Operating Officer provided an update on the 2024/25 pay award for staff of the Combined Authority, confirming that an agreement had been reached since the publication of the agenda and papers. He noted that whilst the settlement created slight additional budget pressure, it remained manageable and had been factored into future planning. The Chair thanked colleagues for their measured approach.

Members discussed concerns about bus operator performance, particularly Arriva in Wakefield and the challenges of driver recruitment and service reliability. The Executive Director for Transport provided an update on maintaining network stability and ongoing efforts to attract new operators ahead of 2027 franchising, highlighting increased demand due to fare policies. Members expressed frustration at Arriva's failures and praised the Combined Authority's work in securing alternative operators.

Gainshare funding was debated, with calls for clearer outcomes and alignment with Combined Authority priorities.

The Assistant Director for Legal, Governance and Compliance explained that all Combined Authority members and substitutes had been granted dispensations to vote on matters impacting their host councils. These dispensations applied strictly to members' roles as elected representatives and excluded any pecuniary interests relating to personal financial gain. The process ensured transparency and supported decision-making for regional growth.

Members requested updates on cross-boundary bus fare issues and previous funding outcomes. The Chair emphasised the importance of collaboration, forward planning and delivering benefits for all communities.

The recommendations were approved by a majority of the Combined Authority members. Cllr Lamb abstained and his abstention was noted accordingly at his request.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Noted and considered the draft corporate priorities.
- (ii) Noted and considered the draft budget position.
- (iii) Approved the in-principle use of a total of £30 million of revenue gainshare for partner capacity funding through to the end of 2027/28.
- (iv) Approved a change to the Mayor's Fare (adult single bus fare cap) at £2.50 effective from 30 March 2025 and to run until 31 December 2025.
- (v) Approved a change to the Under 19's fare, with fares being consolidated into two price points at £0.80 and £1.60, effective from 30 March 2025.
- (vi) Endorsed officers working with the West Yorkshire Ticketing Company Limited (WYCTL) to implement a change to the DaySaver ticket price at £6.00, effective from 30 March 2025.
- (vii) Approved the payment in advance of capital project expenditure to local authorities, as set out in the submitted report.

9. Project Approvals

(a) Investment Priority 5 - Delivering Sustainable, Integrated, Inclusive and Affordable Transport

Bradford Bus Hotspots

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

- (i) Approved that the Bradford Bus Hotspots scheme proceed through decision point 2 (strategic outline case) and work commences on activity 4 (full business case).
- (ii) Approved development funding of £400,000 in order to progress the scheme to decision point 4 (full business case), taking the total approval from £300,000 to £700,000.
- (iii) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into a funding agreement with the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council for

expenditure up to £700,000.

(iv) Approved that future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in this report.

(v) Noted the Combined Authority's potential funding remains at £3,500,000. The estimated total scheme cost was £3,500,000. Of this, £441,000 is for risk and contingency allowances.

Corridor Improvement Programme – A6177 Great Horton Road and Horton Grange Road

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

(i) Approved the change request to the Great Horton Road and Horton Grange Road Junction scheme to increase the Combined Authority's funding by £563,000, from £6,257,000 to £6,820,000.

(ii) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into an addendum to the existing Funding Agreement with the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council for expenditure of up to £6,820,000.

(iii) Approved that future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the report.

Transforming Cities Fund – North Halifax Improved Streets for People

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

(i) Approved that the North Halifax Improved Streets for People scheme proceed through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commences on activity 5 (Delivery).

(ii) Approved the Combined Authority's funding of £14,569,597. The total scheme value was £15,069,597.

(iii) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into an addendum to the existing Funding Agreement with Calderdale Council for funding of up to £14,569,597.

(iv) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway, approval route, and tolerances outlined in this report. This was subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in this report.

(v) Noted that £3,016,886 of the total scheme costs was for risk & contingency allowances.

Transforming Cities Fund – Dewsbury Bus Station

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

(i) Approved that the Dewsbury Bus Station scheme proceed through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commences on activity 5 (Delivery).

(ii) Approved the Combined Authority's funding of £23,004,469. The total scheme value was £23,004,469.

(iii) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway, approval route, and tolerances outlined in this report. This was subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in this report.

(iv) Noted that £590,884 of the total scheme cost is for risk and contingency allowances.

A64 Bus Walking and Cycling Phase 2

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

(i) Approved the change request to the A64 Bus Cycling Walking Improvements Phase 2 scheme for development costs of £990,000 to progress the scheme to activity 4 (full business case), taking the total development cost approval to £2,946,400 for phase 1 and 2.

(ii) Approved the Combined Authority to enter into a Deed of Variation to the existing Funding Agreement with Leeds City Council for expenditure up to £2,946,400.

(iii) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in this report.

(iv) Noted the Combined Authorities potential funding remains at £9,900,000 The estimated total scheme cost is £9,900,000.

West Yorkshire Places

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

(i) Approved that the West Yorkshire Places scheme proceed through decision point 2 (outline business case) and work commenced on activity 4 (full business case).

(ii) Approved development funding of £640,000, in order to progress the scheme to decision point 4 (full business case), taking the total scheme approval from £160,000 to £800,000.

(iii) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into a funding agreement or an addendum to an existing funding agreement with Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees & Wakefield for funding of up to £800,000 and delegated approval of each agreement to the Chief Executive.

(iv) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway, approval route, and tolerances outlined in this report subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined.

(v) Noted the Combined Authority's potential funding remained at £5,100,000. The estimated total scheme cost was £5,100,000 and of this, £1,169,380 was for risk and contingency allowances.

Leeds City Bikes

The Chair emphasised the need for a better balance of public and private risk in the Leeds City Bikes Scheme, expressing frustration over the continued reliance on public funding. While committed to the scheme's success and its expansion across the region, the Chair acknowledged delivery challenges and called on the public to support the scheme by using and maintaining the bikes responsibly. The Chair stressed that community cooperation is essential for the scheme's sustainability and to ensure its long-term benefits.

Members discussed the scheme, noting the costs per trip and the need for improved economic viability. A member raised concerns about inclusivity, highlighting limited mobility cycle hire options for disabled users. The Executive Director for Transport confirmed plans to address this through a transport plan refresh and an equality design reference group. Members emphasised the scheme's benefits for accessibility and broader active travel goals.

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

(i) Approved the change request to the Leeds City Bikes scheme to extend the Decision Point 5 (Delivery Closure) date from 31/03/2024 to 31/03/2026.

(ii) Approved the change request to the Leeds City Bikes scheme to increase the Combined Authorities contribution by £1,117,700, from £2,000,000 to £3,117,700.

(iii) The total scheme cost would increase from £2,861,369 to £4,020,700.

(iv) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into an addendum to the existing grant funding agreement with Leeds City Council for expenditure of up to £3,117,700.

(v) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway, approval route, and tolerances outlined in this report subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined.

Additional Approvals

Bradford Interchange Resurfacing Works – delegation of approval of schemes to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

(i) Approved the delegation of authority to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive to approve, in accordance with the Assurance Framework, the change request to the Bradford Interchange Resurfacing scheme.

Delegated Decisions

Decisions Delegated to the Chief Executive:

ATF4 Access to Hospitals – St Luke's Hospital, Bradford

Resolved: The Combined Authority noted the following delegated decision:

(i) That the Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 (ATF4) Access to Hospitals, St Luke's Hospital scheme was assessed in line with the Combined Authority's assurance process and approved through the agreed delegation to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive/Executive Director for Transport.

(ii) That the scheme proceeded through decision points 2 to 4 (business justification) of the Combined Authority's assurance process and commenced activity 5 (delivery), subject to conditions.

(iii) That the total grant allocation was £213,500, representing the total value of the scheme funded through the Combined Authority.

TCF Halifax Bus Station

Resolved: The Combined Authority noted the following delegated decision:

(i) That the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF): Halifax Bus Station scheme was assessed in line with the Combined Authority's assurance

process and approved through the agreed delegation to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive/Executive Director for Transport.

(ii) That the change request for the scheme was approved to increase the Combined Authority contribution by £1,025,000, from £20,500,000 to £21,525,000.

(iii) That the total grant allocation was £21,525,000, representing the total value of the scheme funded through the Combined Authority.

Decisions Delegated to the Executive Director for Transport:

Resolved: The Combined Authority noted the following delegated decision:

(i) That the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF): Dewsbury Town Centre Walking & Cycling Improvements scheme was assessed in line with the Combined Authority's assurance process and approved through the agreed delegation to the Combined Authority's Executive Director for Transport.

(ii) That the change request for the scheme was approved to release further development costs of £622,134, increasing the total approval from £1,609,398 to £2,231,532, to progress to activity 4 (FBC), and to update the forecast completion date from October 2025 to April 2026.

(iii) That the total grant allocation for the scheme was £10,250,000, representing the total value of Combined Authority funding within a total scheme value of £12,038,146.

(b) Investment Priority 3 - Creating Great Places and Accelerated Infrastructure

Investment Zones Programme

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

(i) Approved the change request to the West Yorkshire Investment Zone programme for development funding of £3,000,000 for planning resource, taking the total funding approved to £9,400,000. The total estimated scheme cost was £179,368,000.

(ii) Approved that the Director of Policing, Environment and Place was delegated to allocate development funds (including the Planning Fund) and to enter into funding agreements with partners to progress the development of projects in their areas.

(iii) Approved that future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined.

(iv) Noted that the Combined Authority's potential funding was £80,000,000.

Investment Zones Capital – Bradford University Digitisation Hub

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

(i) Approved that the Bradford University Digitisation Hub scheme proceed through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commences on activity 5 (delivery).

(ii) Approved the Combined Authority's contribution of £900,000 for phase 1. The total scheme cost of phase 1 was £2,788,415.

(iii) Approved that the Combined Authority enters into a funding agreement with University of Bradford for expenditure of up to £900,000.

(iv) Approves that future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined.

Investment Zones Capital – National Health Innovation Campus – Health & Wellbeing Innovation Centre

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

(i) Approved that the National Health Innovation Campus - Health and Wellbeing Innovation Centre scheme proceed through decision point 2-4 (business justification case) and work commences on activity 5 (delivery).

(ii) Approved the Combined Authority contribution of £700,000. The total scheme value was £40,866,500.

(iii) Approved that the Combined Authority enters into a funding agreement with the University of Huddersfield for expenditure of up to £700,000.

(iv) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined.

10. Governance Arrangements

The Combined Authority considered a report seeking approval for an interim Section 73 officer, substitute members for thematic committees and changes to governance arrangements. Officers introduced the report, highlighting the

need for an interim officer, proposed flexibility for substitute members and updates to governance structures to enable more agile decision-making.

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

(i) Approved the appointment of Damon Lawrenson as interim Section 73 Officer with effect from 13 December 2024.

(ii) Approved, in respect of the committees detailed in paragraph 3.7 of the submitted report, the recommendation that the five West Yorkshire constituent councils, and the non-constituent council of York, each nominate a substitute Member to act in place of their substantive Member and authorised any consequential amendments to the Combined Authority's Constitution.

(iii) That the new internal governance arrangements, as outlined in paragraphs 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, and 3.14 of the submitted report, be noted.

11. Minutes for Information

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

12. Chair's Closing Remarks

The Chair expressed gratitude to the Director of Finance and Commercial Services, Angela Taylor, for over twenty years of exceptional service given to the Combined Authority and its predecessors. The Chair highlighted Ms Taylor's role in guiding the organisation through significant transitions, ensuring stability and sound governance. The Chair, joined by all members, thanked Ms Taylor for her dedication and commitment to the region, as she moved onto retirement.

13. Date of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Combined Authority was scheduled to be held on Thursday 30 January 2025.