

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY
HELD ON THURSDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2025 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS**

Present:

Mayor Tracy Brabin (Chair)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Councillor Imran Khan (Reserve)	Bradford Council
Councillor Martin Love	Bradford Council
Councillor Sue Holdsworth	Calderdale Council
Councillor Scott Patient (Reserve)	Calderdale Council
Councillor Alan Lamb	Leeds City Council
Councillor Jonathan Pryor (Reserve)	Leeds City Council
Councillor Matthew Morley (Reserve)	Wakefield Council
Councillor Claire Douglas	City of York Council
Mandy Ridyard	West Yorkshire Business Board

In attendance:

Councillor Barry Anderson	Chair of Scrutiny Committee
Simon Warburton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sarah Eaton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Liz Hunter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Damon Lawrenson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Simon Pope	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Tim Taylor	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sarah Bowes	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Michelle Burton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Myles Larrington	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and noting the absence of the Chief Executive, Ben Still, who had been on a trade mission to India. The Executive Director for Transport, Simon Warburton, was in attendance at the head of the table in his place. The Chair acknowledged and thanked the substitute members present for attending and representing their respective district authorities before proceeding with business.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Susan Hinchcliffe (Bradford),

Jane Scullion (Calderdale), Carole Pattison (Kirklees), James Lewis (Leeds), and Denise Jeffrey (Wakefield). Cllrs Imran Khan, Scott Patient, Jonathan Pryor, and Matthew Morley attended as substitutes for Cllrs Hinchcliffe, Scullion, Lewis, and Jeffrey, respectively.

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 30 January 2025

The Chair updated members on the 2023/24 financial accounts, noting that, as mentioned in the minutes of the previous meeting, a discussion during the budget item had highlighted a £853 million group accounts reconciliation variance, flagged by External Audit. This variance had been due to an inadvertent data duplication when consolidating the Combined Authority's and Police and Crime Commissioner accounts.

The Chair reassured members that the issue had had no impact on the approved budget or the financial position, and there were no concerns with the accounting procedures. It was also confirmed that lessons had been learned, and resources had been strengthened to prevent recurrence.

The Governance and Audit Committee had met the previous week and approved the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts, ensuring transparency and accountability in managing public funds. With the accounts approved, the Combined Authority could move forward with confidence.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Combined Authority held on 30 January 2025 were approved as a correct record.

6. Mayor's Update

The Chair provided an update on several recent government announcements. These included confirmation of Levelling Up Funding for two major projects in Leeds: £10 million for the British Library North at Temple Works and £5 million for the National Poetry Centres. The Chair also highlighted nearly £500,000 for Bankfield Museum in Halifax and £30 million from Homes England for Bradford City Village regeneration, thanking all partners involved.

7. Mass Transit Update

The Combined Authority discussed the progress of the Mass Transit programme, which continued to receive strong community and business support. The programme remained on track, with further consultation planned

for early 2026 and construction scheduled to begin by 2028.

The Executive Director for Transport, Simon Warburton, clarified that while the essence of the data in paragraph 3.21 was correct, there had been an inaccuracy in transposing the figures. The corrected data showed that 2,838 responses (71%) were from Leeds, 727 responses (18%) from Bradford, 427 responses (11%) from other areas, and 765 responses lacked a postcode. The inaccuracy did not impact the overall recommendation of the report.

Members acknowledged the positive consultation response but emphasised the need for increased engagement, particularly in Bradford. Members also stressed the importance of strong cross-party collaboration and promoting the long-term benefits of the project. The Chair welcomed the commitment towards more collaboration and the narrative of growth through transport. The Chair of Scrutiny, Cllr Anderson, highlighted the need for integrated efforts to avoid duplication between the Transport Committee and scrutiny functions, urging officers to ensure coordination between these efforts.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Noted the consultation responses and the strong level of overall support for Phase One of Mass Transit.
- (ii) Approved the governance structure set out in paragraphs 3.5 – 3.54 of the report, including but not limited to arrangements for government liaison.
- (iii) Agreed the update to the schedule, acknowledging that Phase One of Mass Transit remained on course to have spades in the ground by 2028.
- (iv) Agreed the recommendation to formally address Government ahead of the Spring Budget Review to emphasise the case for Mass Transit and the region's commitment to advancing Mass Transit.

8. Local Growth Plan Update

The Combined Authority considered a report providing an update on the delivery of West Yorkshire's Local Growth Plan and seeking approval for proposed shared priorities for working with Government. The report outlined key barriers to growth and strategic priorities, including transport improvements, investment in thriving places, and transforming skills to boost the regional economy.

Officers introduced the report, highlighting ongoing work such as sector plans, stakeholder engagement, and initiatives in transport, investment, and workforce development. The Combined Authority agreed to submit shared priorities to Government ahead of the Spending Review, ensuring alignment with national policy and securing support for long-term economic growth in West Yorkshire.

The Chair highlighted the importance of business clustering. Concerns were

raised about transport issues, particularly the need for improved regional connections. The decline in business startups was also discussed, with plans for continued monitoring. The Business Board's newly launched dashboard was noted as an important tool for tracking key metrics. Members suggested implementing a systematic reporting mechanism and conducting risk analysis for future initiatives.

The discussion also focused on addressing the productivity gap, with an emphasis on transport and skills initiatives to attract investment, all supported by robust evidence. The Chair of the West Yorkshire Business Board, Mandy Ridyard, stressed the importance of having a forward-looking business plan, backed by data, evidence, and a risk register, to effectively guide the work ahead and gain support from stakeholders.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Noted the update provided on work underway to deliver the Local Growth Plan.
- (ii) Approved the proposed shared priorities for working with Government to deliver the Local Growth Plan.

9. New Business Support Infrastructure

The Combined Authority considered a report on proposals for a new Business Support infrastructure to drive regional growth. The report outlined the need to simplify the complex support landscape for SMEs and micro businesses.

Officers introduced the report, highlighting a new federated model. A phased transition was proposed, with full implementation by March 2026.

The discussion focused on improving business support through a more streamlined, unified approach. The Chair emphasised the importance of offering businesses clear and accessible services. Members highlighted the value of tools like finance and skills access to address underemployment and connect regional growth efforts. Cllr Anderson, the Chair of Scrutiny, raised the need for baseline success indicators to monitor progress and ensure proper funding. The Chair of the West Yorkshire Business Board, Mandy Ridyard, confirmed that the business dashboard was in place to track key metrics in real time. The Chair thanked colleagues for their hard work in fostering closer business collaboration with the Combined Authority, anticipating significant positive changes.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority approved the recommendations set out to enable the transition and implementation to begin.

10. Work and Health - Support into Employment

The Combined Authority considered a report on its expanding role in work and health policy, outlining governance arrangements and seeking approval for the Region's Work, Health and Skills Plan.

Officers introduced the report, summarising key recommendations to reduce economic inactivity, improve workplace health, and align local employment and health systems, with strengthened governance and partnership working.

The Chair commented on the report, emphasising its focus on empowering individuals through meaningful work and tackling economic inactivity. Shaped by over 300 voices, the plan supported small businesses and the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise sector. The Chair highlighted the creation of the Strategic Joint Work and Health Board with the Integrated Care Board and expressed hope that the creative health investments in Huddersfield and mental health interventions would help meet the region's employment and health-related targets.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Noted the progress and endorsed the current and proposed approaches of work, skills, and health programmes.
- (ii) Approved the development of joint partnership working and governance arrangements.
- (iii) Approved and adopted the Work, Health and Skills Plan.
- (iv) Approved £200,000 of development and capacity-building funding to develop a programme business case for work and health programmes.

11. Investment Priorities

The Combined Authority considered a report on investment priorities for non-transport revenue funding until March 2028 in preparation for the Integrated Settlement. The report outlined plans to explore new investment models and sought approval for £25 million in gainshare funding and a framework for reporting against investment priority delivery.

Officers introduced the report, highlighting key priorities, including transport, economic growth, housing, and skills. The Combined Authority considered the proposed investment priorities, the exploration of alternative funding models, and the adoption of a community growth approach. It also reviewed the proposed increase in gainshare funding and amendments to funding agreements with partner councils.

The Chair acknowledged the £228 million capacity funding available until 2028, emphasising its potential to unlock private investment and partnerships, with the possibility of increasing it to £450 million. Cllr Anderson, the Chair of Scrutiny, asked about the progress of the Independent GainShare Report and its lessons for improvement. The Director for Strategy, Communications and Intelligence, Sarah Eaton, confirmed that the report was under government review and would be shared once feedback was received, highlighting the importance of evaluating the impact of spending. The Chair of the West Yorkshire Business Board, Mandy Ridyard, suggested emphasising the positive impact of festivals, particularly Bradford City of Culture 2025, on the hospitality economy and businesses reliant on such events.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Approved the Investment Priorities detailed in sections 3.12 and 3.34 of the report.
- (ii) Noted the intention to progress a Community Growth and Development approach, with a further update to be provided to the Combined Authority in April.
- (iii) Noted that the Combined Authority would explore new investment models, with further details on opportunities, implications, and risks to be provided as the work developed.
- (iv) Approved the change request for the Gainshare Capacity Funding scheme, increasing funding by £25,000,000 from £26,400,000 to £51,400,000, with the following allocations, and extended the programme by two years to 31 March 2028:
 - Bradford Council by £5,810,000 to £11,186,000.
 - Calderdale Council by £2,183,411 to £5,391,911.
 - Kirklees Council by £4,600,000 to £9,254,500.
 - Leeds Council by £8,646,589 to £15,714,589.
 - Wakefield Council by £3,760,000 to £7,903,000.
 - West Yorkshire Combined Authority remained at £1,950,000.
- (v) Approved that the Combined Authority entered into an amendment of the existing Funding Agreements with each of the partner councils for the additional funding as detailed below:
 - Bradford Council: £5,810,000.
 - Calderdale Council: £2,183,411.
 - Kirklees Council: £4,600,000.
 - Leeds Council: £8,646,589.
 - Wakefield Council: £3,760,000.
- (vi) Approved that any changes in allocations or outcomes were delegated to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive.
- (vii) Approved that future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the report.
- (viii) Agreed that reporting against the delivery of the investment priorities would be taken quarterly to the Finance, Resources and Corporate Committee, with an annual report to the Combined Authority.

12. Project Approvals

- (a) **PROJECT APPROVALS – INVESTMENT PRIORITY 1 – GOOD JOBS AND RESILIENT BUSINESSES (INCLUDING ENTREPRENEURIALISM)**

Investment Zones Revenue – Place-based Incubators – Kirklees

Resolved: The Combined Authority, subject to conditions:

- (i) Approved that the Investment Zone Revenue – Place Based Incubators – Kirklees scheme proceeded through decision points 2 to 4 (business justification) and work commenced on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Approved the Combined Authority's funding of £2,000,577, bringing the total scheme cost to £2,000,577.
- (iii) Approved that the Combined Authority entered into a funding agreement with Kirklees Council for funding of up to £2,000,577.
- (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 in this report.
- (v) Noted that £200,057 of the total scheme cost was allocated for risk and contingency allowances.

Investment Zones Revenue – Regional Accelerator

Resolved: The Combined Authority, subject to conditions:

- (i) Approved that the Investment Zone Regional Accelerator scheme proceeded through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commenced on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Approved the Combined Authority's contribution of £4,500,000, bringing the total scheme cost to £4,500,000.
- (iii) Approved that the Combined Authority entered into a funding agreement with Health Innovation Yorkshire and Humber for expenditure of up to £3,996,438.
- (iv) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway, approval route, and tolerances outlined in this report.
- (v) Noted that £492,524 of the total scheme cost was allocated for risk and contingency allowances.

Fair Work Charter

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

- (i) Approved the change request to the West Yorkshire Fair Work Charter scheme.
- (ii) Approved an increase in the Combined Authority's funding by £960,360 to £1,560,360 from £600,000, bringing the total scheme cost to £1,560,360.

- (iii) Approved changes to the scheme's outputs to set a target of signing up 3,060 employers to become registered members of the Fair Work Charter.
- (iv) Approved changes to the scheme's outputs to set a target of engaging 11,500 employers with the Fair Work Charter.
- (v) Approved changes to the scheme's outputs to set a target of successfully registering interest in the Fair Work Charter with 5,100 employers.
- (vi) Approved an extension of the delivery timeframes from March 2025 to March 2028.
- (vii) 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 in this report.

(b) PROJECT APPROVALS – INVESTMENT PRIORITY 3 – CREATING GREAT PLACES AND ACCELERATED INFRASTRUCTURE

Additional Approval - Brownfield Housing Fund

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

- (i) Delegated to the Chief Executive the authority to extend the Brownfield Housing Fund programme timescales and enter into any required legal documentation with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in line with the forthcoming approvals from Government.

(c) PROJECT APPROVALS – INVESTMENT PRIORITY 4 – TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Home Energy West Yorkshire - Area-based Schemes (Bradford)

Resolved: The Combined Authority, subject to conditions:

- (i) Approved that the Home Energy West Yorkshire – Area-based Schemes (Bradford) proceeded through decision points 2 to 4 (business justification) and work commenced on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Approved the Combined Authority's funding of £826,880, bringing the total scheme cost to £1,181,258.
- (iii) Approved that the Combined Authority entered into a funding agreement with Incommunities Ltd for funding of up to £826,880.
- (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 in this report.

- (v) Noted that £280,194 of the total scheme cost was allocated for risk and contingency allowances.

(d) PROJECT APPROVALS – INVESTMENT PRIORITY 5 – DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE, INTERGRATED, INCLUSIVE AND AFFORDABLE TRANSPORT

Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) - A64 Bus Cycle Walking Improvements (Phase 1+)

Resolved: The Combined Authority, subject to conditions:

- (i) Approved that the A64 Bus, Cycle and Walking Improvements scheme proceeded through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commenced on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Approved the Combined Authority's funding of £7,348,000, bringing the total scheme value to £7,348,000.
- (iii) Approved that the Combined Authority entered into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with Leeds City Council for expenditure of up to £7,348,000.
- (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 in this report.

Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Programme

Resolved: The Combined Authority, subject to approval of the Bus Service Improvement Plan Phase 4 delivery plan by the Department for Transport:

- (i) Approved the change request for the Bus Service Improvement Plan programme to accept £34,015,887 of additional funding from Bus Service Improvement Plan Phase 4 (2025/26), increasing the programme funding from £91,097,512 to £125,113,399. The total programme cost was £125,113,399.
- (ii) Approved the addition of the Capacity and Capability scheme to the Bus Service Improvement Plan programme.
- (iii) Approved the change request to allocate the £34,015,887 Bus Service Improvement Plan Phase 4 (2025/26) funding to the Bus Service Improvement Plan schemes and the amended funding approvals as set out in Table 1 of this report.
- (iv) Approved the extension of delivery timeframes for the schemes as set out in Table 2 of this report.

- (v) Approved that the additional funding be provided to bus operators for the Mayor's Fares, Network Enhancements (Tranche 1 & 1.5), the reinstatement of deregistered services, and the Bus Service Improvement Plan+ 'Protection and restoration of bus services' schemes by using existing compensation arrangements.
- (vi) Approved that the bus routes to be supported for the Network Enhancements (Tranche 1 & 1.5), Bus Service Improvement Plan+ 'Protection and restoration of bus services' scheme, and the reinstatement of deregistered services, and the amount of funding allocated to each bus operator within the approved allocations, be delegated to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor and the Chair of the Transport Committee.
- (vii) 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 in this report.

Active Travel Programme

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

- (i) Approved the change request for the Active Travel Fund 5 funding of £4,211,759 to be added to the Combined Authority's Active Travel Programme, increasing the total programme cost from £45,700,237 to £49,911,996.
- (ii) Subject to confirmation by Active Travel England:
 - (a) Approved the Active Travel Fund 5 funding allocations as set out in Table 1 of this report for schemes progressing directly to delivery, along with development-only schemes progressing straight to development (those noted as Development or Delivery in the Next Stage column).
 - (b) Approved the Active Travel Fund 5 funding allocations as set out in Table 1 of this report for schemes progressing to delivery, subject to conditions to be discharged by an Approval to Proceed (those noted as Business Justification Case or Approval to Proceed in the Next Stage column).
 - (c) Approved the release of Active Travel Fund 5 development costs as set out in Table 1 of this report.
- (iii) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into funding agreements with the West Yorkshire partner councils as set out in Table 2 of this report.
- (iv) Approved a delegation to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive to allow the allocated Active Travel Fund 5 funding amounts released as

part of this decision to be amended as required, and for grant funding agreements or addendums to grant funding agreements to be amended accordingly and entered into.

- (v) 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 in this report.

Delegated Decisions

Decisions Delegated to the Chief Executive:

Bradford Interchange Resurfacing Works

- (i) That the change request to the Bradford Interchange Resurfacing Works scheme to increase the Combined Authority's funding by £2,500,000 from £8,501,000 to £11,001,000 and extend the delivery timeframe from December 2023 to May 2025 was assessed in line with the Combined Authority's assurance process and approved through the agreed delegation to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive, in line with the exceptional circumstances.
- (ii) That the total approved funding allocation was £2,500,000.
- (iii) That the estimated total scheme cost was £11,001,000.
- (iv) That the total Combined Authority funding was £11,001,000.

Woodhouse Lane Gateway, Leeds

- (i) That the Woodhouse Lane Gateway 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.
- (ii) That the scheme proceeded through decision point 3 (outline business case) of the Combined Authority's assurance process and commenced activity 4 (full business case).
- (iii) That the total approved funding allocation was £926,000.
- (iv) That the estimated total scheme cost was £21,035,000.
- (v) That the Combined Authority's potential funding was £20,500,000.

(e) PROJECT APPROVALS – INVESTMENT PRIORITY 6 – CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND SPORT

You Can Make It Here Programme

Resolved: The Combined Authority:

- (i) Approved the change request to the You Can Make It Here programme to increase the costs by £106,250 from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Create Growth Fund, taking total scheme costs from £2,335,769 to £2,442,019.
- (ii) Approved that the Combined Authority entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for funding of up to £106,250.
- (iii) Subject to conditions, approved the change request to the You Can Make It Here programme to further increase the costs by the amount awarded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, estimated to be £425,000, less the approval above (£318,750). This took the total scheme costs from £2,442,019 to £2,760,769.
- (iv) Subject to conditions, approved the increase in outputs for the Creative Growth element of the You Can Make It Here programme from 40 businesses supported to up to an estimated 80 businesses.
- (v) Granted delegated authority to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive to:
 - Approve the final funding amount awarded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport from the Create Growth Fund for the financial year 2025/26.
 - Amend the outputs of the Create Growth element of the You Can Make It Here programme in line with the final funding awarded, if required.
 - Enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
- (vi) 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 in this report.

13. Governance and Director Appointments

The Combined Authority considered a report on key appointments and governance changes. It sought approval for the appointments of a Director of Finance and Section 73 Officer, a Director for Mass Transit, and a Director for Bus Franchising. It also proposed changes to the Governance and Audit Committee and the Mayor's Inclusivity Champion's role in thematic committees.

Officers introduced the report, noting that Kate Taylor had been recommended as Director of Finance and Section 73 Officer, and Mike Birch had been selected as Director of Mass Transit. The Assistant Director for Legal, Governance and Compliance, Caroline Norreys, informed the meeting that officers had decided to withdraw the recommendation for the appointment of a Director for Bus Franchising, as the recruitment process was still ongoing, and

more time would be required to make the appointment. The appointment was to be deferred to a future Employment Panel.

Governance changes included co-opting district members to the Governance and Audit Committee and appointing the Inclusivity Champion to key committees.

Resolved: That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Approved the appointment of Kate Taylor as the Combined Authority's Director of Finance and Section 73 Chief Finance Officer.
- (ii) Approved the appointment of Mike Birch as the Director for Mass Transit.
- (iii) Agreed to withdraw the recommendation in the report which referenced the appointment of a Director for Bus Franchising and defer the appointment to a future Employment Panel.
- (iv) Provided in-principle approval to the changes to the composition of the Governance and Audit Committee, as set out in paragraphs 3.8 to 3.12 of the report.
- (v) Approved the convening of the Independent Remuneration Panel to consider appropriate remuneration for local authority members co-opted to the Governance and Audit Committee.
- (vi) Approved the appointment of the Mayor's Inclusivity Champion to the thematic committees of the Combined Authority, as detailed in paragraphs 3.13 to 3.14 of the report.

14. Minutes for Information

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

15. Chair's Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and acknowledged the valuable contributions of the substitute members who had stood in. The Chair emphasised that the shared ambitions to grow the economy and elevate West Yorkshire's standing were clear from the discussions undertaken.

16. Date of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Combined Authority was scheduled to be held on Thursday 3 April 2025.