

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY  
HELD ON THURSDAY, 8 MAY 2025 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1,  
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS**

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**Present:**

Mayor Tracy Brabin (Chair)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Council
Councillor Jane Scullion	Calderdale Council
Councillor Carole Pattison	Kirklees Council
Councillor James Lewis	Leeds City Council
Councillor Martin Love	Bradford Council
Councillor Alan Lamb	Leeds City Council
Councillor Matthew Morley (Substitute)	Wakefield Council
Councillor Peter Kilbane (Substitute)	City of York Council
Asma Iqbal (Substitute)	West Yorkshire Business Board
Councillor Stewart Golton (Substitute)	Leeds City Council

**In attendance:**

Councillor Barry Anderson	Chair of Scrutiny Committee
Ben Still	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Damon Lawrenson	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Felix Kumi-Ampofo	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Mike Birch	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sarah Eaton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Simon Warburton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alexander Clarke	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Dave Haskins	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Peter Glover	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Rachel Barnard	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Stacey White	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

**32. Chair's Opening Remarks**

Before formal proceedings commenced, the Chair welcomed attendees and advised that the Combined Authority meeting coincided with the 80th anniversary of VE Day, a day of remembrance for the bravery and sacrifice of those who secured victory in Europe. Attendees had paid respects at various ceremonies across West Yorkshire. A tribute was made to the men and women who played crucial roles during the war, including women from the region who had contributed significantly in roles such as factory workers, nurses and members of the auxiliary services. Soldiers from West Yorkshire

had fought in key battles such as D-Day and the Battle of Britain. Their collective courage and sacrifice were remembered and honoured by the Mayor and members.

### **33. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sue Holdsworth (Calderdale), Denise Jeffery (Wakefield), Claire Douglas (York) and West Yorkshire Business Board representative, Mandy Ridyard.

Councillors Stewart Golton, Matthew Morley, Peter Kilbane and Asma Iqbal attended the meeting as substitutes.

### **34. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no declarations of interests given at the meeting.

### **35. Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Chair advised members that Agenda Item 6 – Bus Franchising (Appendices 1, 2, 3) and Agenda Item 8 – White Rose Rail Station (Appendix 1) had been identified by officers as containing exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and where officers had considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report. The Combined Authority was asked to accept the recommendation in respect of the agenda item listed above, which was unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED** - That in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the public were excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item 6 – Bus Franchising (Appendices 1, 2, 3) and Agenda Item 8 – White Rose Rail Station (Appendix 1) on the grounds that it was 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 outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

### **36. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Authority held on 3 April 2025**

It was noted that although Cllr Anderson had joined the previous meeting, his attendance had not been recorded. It was agreed that the minutes would be amended to reflect this by the Committee Services Officer.

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting of the Combined Authority held on 3 April 2025, subject to the above amendment, were approved as a correct record.

### **37. Mayor's Update**

The Chair referenced the recent crossbow attack in Headingley on 26 April

2025, acknowledging the distress caused to victims and the wider community. Investigations, led by Counter Terrorism and West Yorkshire Police, continued, with officers working to determine whether the incident was terror related. A key suspect had passed away, but inquiries persisted. The Chair's recent discussions with the Home Secretary had addressed plans to tighten crossbow legislation.

Efforts to enhance women's safety were highlighted by the Chair, including a roundtable with MPs, crisis centres and survivors to shape government policy on combating violence against women and girls.

The push for improved transport had gained momentum, with a Westminster event advocating West Yorkshire's Mass Transit Proposals. Meetings with Treasury officials and transport ministers emphasised funding for Bradford and Leeds stations, bus services, and integrated transport networks, influencing departmental submissions ahead of the spending review.

The update concluded by celebrating Leeds United and Bradford City's promotions, recognising their positive impact on community confidence and vitality.

### **38. Bus Franchising**

The Combined Authority considered a report which sought approvals for delivering the Bus Franchising transition, including fleet considerations, and endorsed a new transport network brand name to replace the retired 'Metro' identity with a unified brand.

Officers outlined progress on the West Yorkshire's Bus Franchising programme and included updates on fleet strategy, customer experience and branding. They highlighted key approvals for depots, a new brand identity and strategic goals such as equity, inclusivity, and decarbonisation. Governance structures, financial implications and stakeholder engagement plans were also detailed to support delivery.

Members addressed risks and mitigations regarding bus franchising and fleet operations, given the Government's accelerated timelines for mayoral and combined authorities. Concerns were raised about potential congestion in the bus market, with multiple authorities simultaneously seeking similar procurement, and the capacity of the market to meet demand. Emphasis was placed on exploring domestic production to mitigate issues arising from tariffs and ensure supply chain reliability. In response, it was noted that the Transport Minister had convened a task and finish group, supported by a roundtable involving mayors, to address supply sector challenges in meeting national bus agenda ambitions. Future updates on this collaboration would be shared to reassure members of progress and strategic opportunities.

Discussions highlighted the collective power of mayors to streamline procurement, consolidate order books and identify common designs for electric vehicles, potentially lowering costs and preventing supply bottlenecks. Additionally, governance arrangements were questioned, with updates given on the Shadow Board's engagement with local authority executive members.

Officers confirmed that governance planning continued around the shadow boards, with a view to bringing forward governance plans to the Combined Authority's Annual Meeting.

After the conclusion of public discussions, private discussions on exempt appendices were initiated.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) The Combined Authority approved the contents of the Bus Franchising Fleet Strategy, as detailed in exempt Appendix 1 of the submitted report.
- (ii) The Combined Authority delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Mayor, to:
  - (a) approve proposed option(s) to ensure adequate fleet provision (against a minimum specification) for each franchise contract.
  - (b) undertake all such activities as are appropriate to progress and implement the Fleet Strategy to enable and support the preparation and development of the Full Business Case.
  - (c) conduct market engagement as required in relation to any matters arising from (i) and (ii) above.
- (iii) The Combined Authority approved that the Bus Reform Fleet Provision scheme proceed through decision point 2 (strategic outline case) and work commenced on activity 4 (full business case).
- (iv) The Combined Authority approved development funding of £576,507, to progress the fleet provision scheme to decision point 4 (full business case), taking the total scheme approval to £771,959.
- (v) The Combined Authority approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report. This would be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances as outlined in the submitted report.
- (vi) The Combined Authority approved the transport network name and brand identity, as detailed in the exempt Appendix 3 of the submitted report.

**39. Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework - Joint Committee**

The Combined Authority considered a progress report which outlined formal recommendations for the establishment of governance arrangements to support the preparation of Joint Development Plan Documents (JDPDs) for the West Yorkshire Mass Transit Programme. This would allow Districts to demonstrate alignment through planning policy to the mass transit scheme and support for its transformative outcomes.

Work on West Yorkshire's mass transit system progresses rapidly to align with the Mayor's pledge, using the Transport and Work Act process rather than local planning. Current local plans lack specific references to mass transit, necessitating a Spatial Development Framework (SDF) as a supporting policy document. A Joint Development Plan Document (JDPD) and a temporary Joint Committee were proposed to integrate the SDF into local plans and ensure its weight in securing consent for phase one by early 2027. This planning framework aimed to support long-term regional transport and growth objectives in line with the 2040 mass transit vision.

Concerns were raised about the committee's membership, emphasising the importance of cross-party and district-wide representation for better outcomes and accountability. Suggestions included broader membership and ensuring the quorum reflected fair representation across all districts.

It was noted the committee's role would end once the SDF and necessary frameworks were established. The importance of continued advocacy for mass transit across the region was highlighted, ensuring benefits were communicated beyond immediate corridors. It was agreed to accept the recommendations for preparing the SDF as a joint development plan and to consider representation concerns further.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That the Combined Authority endorsed the approach to preparation of the Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework (MT SDF Part 1 and 2) as Joint Development Plan Documents (JDPD).
- (ii) That the Combined Authority endorsed establishment of a formal Joint Member Committee to steer MT SDF Part 1 within Mass Transit programme timescales.
- (iii) That the Combined Authority requested each Local Authority consider initiating formal resolution processes to agree to prepare MT SDF Part 1 as a JDPD and Joint Member Committee.

**40. White Rose Rail Station**

The Combined Authority considered a progress report on the status of the White Rose rail station and to seek approval for additional funding to close out project legacy issues.

Discussion acknowledged the critical importance of the proposed rail infrastructure project, emphasising its potential to create thousands of jobs and foster significant regional economic growth. Members supported the current proposal as the right approach to regain control and ensure the project's success. It was recognised that the initial private-sector delivery model, while innovative, highlighted challenges in managing large-scale infrastructure projects outside the national rail network.

To improve governance and financial oversight, there was support for the Scrutiny Committee to play an active role in reviewing past lessons and

ensuring future transparency and efficiency. Establishing clear terms of reference for Scrutiny was seen as essential to maintaining focus and respecting areas of commercial confidentiality.

Partnership with Network Rail was highlighted as pivotal for the project's delivery, particularly given its importance to the broader Trans-Pennine route upgrade. Positive engagement with the Department for Transport and assurances from the Rail Minister underscored commitment to a collaborative funding and delivery model.

The importance of meeting critical timelines was emphasised to avoid project delays. The broader context of devolution and its potential to empower local authorities was celebrated, with the next stage of the project seen as a test case for successful collaboration between local and national stakeholders. The discussion concluded with optimism about achieving completion of the station by 2027 and its potential to exemplify effective regional leadership and partnership.

After the conclusion of public discussions, private discussions on the exempt appendix were initiated.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That the Combined Authority gave approval to funding to close out legacy issues to enable the project to move forward towards re-mobilisation, as set out in the exempt Appendix 1 of the submitted report.
- (ii) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Combined Authority, setting out a project plan and funding strategy for scheme completion.

**41. Work and Health**

The Combined Authority considered a progress report on the Work and Health agenda, which outlined next steps and sought approval for the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer Programme Business Case as part of the Work, Health and Skills programme.

The discussion highlighted the urgency and significance of a £20m government-funded initiative aimed at supporting economic activity and workforce retention, with only a year to implement changes. Attendees praised the speed and commitment of the team driving the project whilst acknowledging challenges in measuring the success of interventions, particularly for individuals at risk of leaving the workforce. Concerns were raised about ensuring effective measurement tools, particularly for identifying those at risk of economic inactivity, and leveraging direct employer funding to maximise impact. The importance of setting an example as an organisation was emphasised, with calls for clear targets on hiring individuals returning to work after health-related absences.

The organisation recognised limitations in national data accuracy but highlighted its reliance on robust health sector information to identify at-risk individuals. Collaborations with health services allowed for early intervention through programs designed to address musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, and mental health challenges. Flexibility in approaches, such as supporting entrepreneurship and addressing unique barriers faced by specific groups like women in leadership roles, was deemed critical for long-term success.

Commitment to equitable and inclusive practices was reiterated, with efforts to align internal organisational values with the broader goals of workforce retention and inclusion. It was noted that the Fair Work Charter has gained strong support from local businesses, serving as partners in creating job opportunities for those returning to work.

In supporting the organisation's own workforce, the need for a comprehensive organisational workforce strategy was acknowledged, focusing on recruitment, skill development, and diversity. It was agreed the strategy would be addressed in future meetings to ensure its alignment with organisational and regional goals.

The discussion reflected a collaborative and proactive approach, acknowledging the need to support this with appropriate shared governance, which would be detailed at a future meeting. There was agreement that this would support the optimism about achieving meaningful outcomes within the tight timeframe.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That the Combined Authority approved the acceptance of £1,000,000 from the Integrated Care Board for the delivery of the Employment West Yorkshire scheme.
- (ii) In relation to the Programme Business Case, the Combined Authority:
  - a) Approved that the Work, Health and Skills programme proceeded through decision points 2-4 (programme business case) and work commenced on the activities, as set out in Appendix 1 of the submitted report.
  - b) Approved that the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer schemes, excluding Employment West Yorkshire, proceeded through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commenced on activity 5 (delivery).
  - c) Approval was given to the Combined Authority's contribution of £5,996,688, taking the total Economic Inactivity Trailblazer approval to £6,096,688 (excluding Employment West Yorkshire). The total Trailblazer value was £10,000,000.
  - d) Approved that the Combined Authority entered into a Funding Agreement with DWP for expenditure of up to £9,900,000.

- e) Approved delegation to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive to enter into funding agreements with local authorities for expenditure of the Trailblazer funding (excluding Employment West Yorkshire).
  - f) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route, as set out in Appendix 1 of the submitted report. This would be subject to each scheme remaining within the tolerances as outlined in Appendix 1 of the submitted report.
- (iii) Approved by the Combined Authority to enter into legal agreements with DWP for the economic inactivity trailblazer (£10m, 1 year), DWP for Connect to Work (up to £81m, 5 years) and the ICB (£1m, 1 year) from the NHS England Health and Growth Accelerator.

#### **42. State of the Region**

The Combined Authority considered a report which outlined key messages from the latest State of the Region Summary Report and plans for enhancing future reporting approaches.

Officers advised that this would be the final report to members in its current format. Discussion emphasised the importance of evidence-based decision-making to guide priorities and investments effectively. A review was conducted to enhance the approach, aiming to develop an outcomes framework aligned with integrated settlement work for 2026 and beyond. The updated strategy would focus on measuring impact, ensuring data-driven decisions that addressed real-time challenges. A new report format would be introduced in future meetings to reflect this shift, marking a significant step toward becoming a data-led organisation. The commitment to robust evidence was affirmed as essential for progress and alignment with strategic goals, fostering confidence in addressing regional needs effectively.

**RESOLVED** - That the Combined Authority noted the contents of the submitted report and approved proposals for future development and reporting arrangements for State of the Region for 2025 onwards.

#### **43. Corporate Plan 2025 - 2028**

The Combined Authority considered a report to approve the content of the Corporate Plan 2025-28 and delivery plan, as well as approve the 'plan on a page' business plans for the organisation for 2025-26.

After approving the 2025/26 budget and priorities in January 2025, work had progressed on the Corporate Plan 2025–28, aligning with West Yorkshire Plan missions and internal goals. The Plan included key performance measures to track progress through 2027/28. The draft Plan and delivery framework were submitted for approval, with final publication planned for June 2025. Updated business plans aligned to these missions were also finalised and presented for approval.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That the Combined Authority approved the content of the Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and associated delivery plan.
- (ii) That the Combined Authority approved the plan on a page business plans for the Combined Authority for 2025-2026.
- (iii) That the Combined Authority authorised the Chief Executive, through Delegated Responsibility, to sign off the final draft of the Corporate Plan for publication.

**44. Project Approvals**

**Project Approvals - Investment Priority 1 (IP1) - Good Jobs and Resilient Businesses (Including Entrepreneurialism)**

**(a) Project Approvals - Investment Priority 1 (IP1) - Good Jobs and Resilient Businesses (Including Entrepreneurialism)**

**RESOLVED** – That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Approved that the Investment Zones Revenue and Capital: Leeds Beckett University Place Based Incubator: Sports Health Technology scheme proceeded through decision point 2 to 4 (business justification) and work commenced on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Approved the Combined Authority's funding of £730,712, £350,000 capital, and £380,712 revenue which was subject to conditions. The total scheme cost was £1,095,880.
- (iii) Approved that the Combined Authority entered into a Funding Agreement with Leeds Beckett University for funding of up to £350,000.
- (iv) Approved that the Combined Authority entered into a Funding Agreement with Leeds Beckett University for additional funding of up to £380,712, subject to conditions.
- (v) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route and tolerances outlined in the submitted report. This would be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.
- (vi) Noted that £50,000 of the total scheme cost was for risk and contingency allowances.

**Project Approvals - Investment Priority 6 (IP6) - Creative Industries, Culture, Heritage and Sport**

**(b) Project Approvals - Investment Priority 6 (IP6) - Creative Industries, Culture, Heritage and Sport**

**RESOLVED** – That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Approved that the Creative Health scheme proceeded through decision point 2 to 4 (business justification) and work commenced on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Approved the Combined Authority's funding of £500,000. The total scheme cost was £500,000.
- (iii) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route and tolerances outlined in the submitted report. This would be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.

#### **45. Governance Arrangements**

The Combined Authority considered a report seeking approval to reconstitute the Governance and Audit Committee with co-opted members from five West Yorkshire councils, reflecting political balance. The Independent Remuneration Panel recommended remuneration for committee roles, to be approved at the Combined Authority's Annual Meeting on 19 June 2025.

Satinder Sahota was appointed interim Monitoring Officer, effective from 15 May 2025, following a thorough selection process.

Progress was also made on recruiting three part-time Non-Executive Directors to advise on governance, infrastructure and the Mass Transit project, with final appointments to be confirmed in a future update. These roles would provide expert oversight and involve approximately 10 days commitment annually.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That the Combined Authority approved the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on remuneration for Governance and Audit Committee members as set out in paragraph 3.2 and in Appendix 1 of the submitted report.
- (ii) That the Combined Authority approved the appointment of Satinder Sahota as interim Monitoring Officer, with effect from 15 May 2025.
- (iii) That the Combined Authority noted Non-Executive Directors recruitment was underway to advise Officer Leadership Boards.

#### **46. Minutes for Information & Summaries of Committee Meetings**

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

#### **47. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Combined Authority was scheduled

to be held on Thursday 19 June 2025.

#### **48. Chair's Closing Remarks**

Before concluding the meeting, the Chair acknowledged Caroline Norreys, Assistant Director of Legal, Governance and Compliance, who was departing the Combined Authority at the end of May after 9 years of service. The Chair noted that this was Ms Norreys' last Combined Authority meeting and expressed gratitude for her service since 2016. It was noted that Ms Norreys had played a key role in creating the Combined Authority in 2014, enabling the devolution agenda, transitioning to a mayoral authority and ensuring good governance throughout her tenure as the senior legal adviser. The Chair and members wished Ms Norreys every success in her future endeavours.