

REPORT TITLE: Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework – Development Plan Document

Meeting:	Council
Date:	17th September 2025
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	Cllr Graham Turner/Cllr Moses Crook
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	No No

Purpose of Report:

To seek Council authority to produce a Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document (Joint WY Mass Transit SDF DPD) (“DPD”). The DPD would provide a co-ordinated strategic planning approach for the five West Yorkshire Councils supported by West Yorkshire Combined Authority setting an agreed planning framework and to be used as a tool to support Mass Transit business cases.

It is a Council function to authorise the commencement a development plan document (in this case the Joint WY Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document (recommendation 1) by making an agreement with the other four West Yorkshire Councils to formulate and prepare the DPD. [and to delegate authority to a Joint Member Committee to undertake statutory required development plan consultation (recommendation 2).]

It is a Cabinet function to approve the establishment of the joint member committee to support the preparation of the document.

The approval of the establishment of the joint member committee was approved at Cabinet on 8th July 2025. This is subject to Council approval of this report in relation to Recommendation 1.

Recommendations:
Cabinet recommends to Full Council that it approve :

Recommendation 1 – Authorise the making of an agreement with Leeds City Council , Bradford City Council , Wakefield Council and Calderdale Council to start of the preparation of a Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Part 1 Development Plan Document.(“DPD”)

Recommendation 2 – Council delegates the decision to undertake initial Regulation 18 consultation and Regulation 19 consultation on the draft Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document to the WYCA

Joint Member Committee in so far as it's a council planning function relating to the DPD

Council to delegate authority to authorise initial early engagement and public consultation (Regulation 18) on the draft Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document and to prepare the submission draft and consultation for Regulation 19 to the Joint Member Committee

Reasons for Recommendations:

- Council is recommended to authorise the process of drafting the Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document. The DPD will set out the commitment to the Mass Transit process across the West Yorkshire area, to ensure consistency and set high level policy parameters.
- Council approval is sought for the delegation to the Joint Member Committee to undertake early engagement and consultation on the initial draft Joint West Yorkshire Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document and delegate consultation on the submission version of the document (Regulations 18 and 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012).

Resource Implications:

The drafting of the Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document would be commissioned by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Support for this process will be accommodated within existing staff resources and revenue budget within the Planning Policy team where applicable and additional resourcing has been committed to by WYCA via Terms of Reference for the work moving forwards.

The formulation and preparation of a DPD as opposed to an individual Council approach is an efficient and economical way of enabling statutory planning policies for each of the 5 West Yorkshire Councils .

Date signed off by Executive Director & name

David Shepherd (Executive Director for Place) – 8th September 2025

Date signed off by the Service Director for Finance

Kevin Mulvaney (Service Director – Finance) – 8th September 2025

Date signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)

Samantha Lawton (Service Director – Legal/Governance) - 8th September 2025

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted:

Cllr Graham Turner/Cllr Eric Firth/Cllr Moses Crook:
Joint Transport/Regeneration PHB: 28th November 2024

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Executive Summary

Kirklees Council, West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA), and the wider constituent authorities have collectively identified the need for a coordinated strategic planning approach to guide the integration of Mass Transit across West Yorkshire. A key coordination point was the WYCA meeting on 8 May 2025 where a paper was presented to recommend this approach [WYCA - Modern Gov](#) The approach was fully supported at the meeting.

WYCA is endorsing the preparation of a Mass Transit (MT) system aimed at enhancing connectivity, driving economic growth, and contributing to net zero targets. The Mass Transit programme is targeting Spring 2027 for submission of the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) with spades in the ground in 2028. Given the project timelines, varied status of Local Plans and likely timescales associated with Regional Planning (West Yorkshire Spatial Strategy), a standalone statutory planning document is the best way to secure a clear policy framework to be in place to support the Mass Transit TWAO programme.

2. Information required to take a decision

The Joint West Yorkshire Spatial Development Framework Mass Transit Development Plan Document would contain high level commitment and strategic policies relating to the West Yorkshire Mass Transit system.

Once adopted, this would carry the same weight as the Kirklees Local Plan and become part of this Council's Development Plan. As context, the Development Plan Document (DPD) preparation process broadly includes:

- Early engagement / public consultation on initial draft (Regulation 18 consultation) (Joint Committee)
- Public consultation on a Publication Draft (Regulation 19 consultation) (Joint Committee)
- Submission of the DPD to the Secretary of State for independent examination (Full Council)
- An Examination in Public with potential formal consultation on Main Modifications during the Examination in Public
- Adoption - Council

The proposed Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework will be structured into two strategic planning documents which will be led collectively by Local Planning Authorities and provide a spatial planning framework to align spatial plans with transport priorities and support the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) process. WYCA does not currently have statutory planning powers which is why a joined-up approach across the districts is required to facilitate the timelines for the Mass Transit project.

The Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework will set out a long-term 25-year vision and policy framework for guiding sustainable growth, land use, and development decisions in areas influenced by mass transit investment. It will provide a consistent, evidence-based approach to integrating transport and spatial planning across the region.

It is intended the Joint WYCA Mass Transit SDF policy document once adopted will support Kirklees key overarching strategies and priorities identified in the Council Plan, Inclusive Economic Strategy, Environment Strategy, Joint Health and Well Being Strategy, Inclusive Communities Framework and the Kirklees Transport Strategy by:

- **Supporting economic growth through partnership working**

Driving local economic development by working with WYCA, government bodies, businesses, and communities. Focus on attracting investment, supporting innovation, and creating jobs.

- **Supporting transport network enhancement and strategic Infrastructure**

Improving internal and external connectivity—promoting better links within Kirklees and to surrounding cities. Investing in road, rail, and active travel infrastructure to support growth. Supporting the West Yorkshire Mass Transit programme and the integration of major infrastructure projects like the TransPennine and Penistone Line upgrades. The delivery of core highway transport schemes to keep the district moving.

- **Active travel and sustainable mobility**

Expanding and connecting active travel routes to offer safe alternatives to car use and promote healthier lifestyles. Promoting walking, cycling, and public transport as primary modes for short journeys. Ensuring transport is affordable, reliable, accessible and sustainable for all communities.

- **Housing, economic and transport integration**

- Aligning new housing, town centre regeneration and economic growth opportunities with sustainable transport infrastructure.

Inclusive access

Ensuring equal access through improved transport for all residents in areas of deprivation experiencing high levels of transport related social exclusion - improving accessibility to jobs and education opportunities.

- **Environmental and climate change goals**

Supporting the Councils net zero commitment to carbon reduction and environmental sustainability through modal shift and green infrastructure opportunities.

The Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework will be structured via two Joint Development Plan Documents (JDPDs) as follows:

Part One – West Yorkshire-Wide Strategic Spatial Planning Policy Document (2026-2056):

- Establishes a high-level strategic planning policy framework for Mass Transit, ensuring integration into emerging Local Plans and providing a basis for future planning applications that support sustainable development.
- Provides strategic policies supporting transit-oriented development, economic growth, regeneration, and environmental sustainability.
- Aligns with broader transport and spatial planning objectives to enable coordinated infrastructure investment.

Part Two – Corridor-Specific Policies and Land Use Proposals:

- Focuses on the South Leeds Corridor (potentially extending to Dewsbury) and the Leeds-Bradford Corridor as part of Phase One business case proposals.
- Defines policies and land use proposals to support the delivery of Mass Transit infrastructure and associated economic growth.
- Serves as a template for future corridor-wide planning as subsequent phases of Mass Transit are developed.

It is proposed that the five Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) collectively agree to produce and adopt the SDF Part one as a Joint Development Plan Document (JDPD) which could sit within their wider Local Plans.

It should be noted Part One DPD will not identify specific route corridors or seek to allocate land for development. More detailed route corridor identification will form part of Part Two document production, and this first iteration will be focused on agreed Mass Transit Phase 1 routes Leeds to South Leeds and Leeds to Bradford.

Additional feasibility work will be undertaken as part of the Dewsbury Line Development Project which will run alongside the timescales anticipated for Part One DPD production. It was agreed at Combined Authority meeting in March 2024 to fund the Dewsbury Line Development Project to collaboratively work with Kirklees and Leeds districts to explore future world scenarios where a mass transit route extends from South Leeds to Dewsbury and reflect growth ambitions for both authorities. Should this be taken forward as an option in the future phases work for Mass Transit, a future Part Two DPD may be developed with Kirklees which would provide the planning framework for this route corridor and associated development.

In terms of the timescales to produce Mass Transit Part One DPD – work is anticipated to start on the document in October 2025 with the intention of all five districts adopting the document in March 2027.

Collaborative Process and Governance

To oversee and input into this work, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) is proposing a Joint Member Committee including a nominated Cabinet Member from each of the West Yorkshire authorities (Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield) to work alongside an officer working group. It is proposed that the Joint Member Committee would also make the decision on initial consultation and on submission draft consultation (Regulations 18 and 19 consultations). A working group of specialist officers would have day to day involvement in the drafting of the document as well as the appointed consultants. WYCA are requesting that each Council approve the initial consultation stages (Regulation 18 and 19) on the draft Joint West Yorkshire Spatial Development Framework Mass Transit Development Plan Document, subject to approval of the content by the Joint Member Committee.

Submission to the Secretary of State is to be independently examined and final adoption of the document would still be taken in accordance with the Council's constitution by Council as appropriate. The eventual adoption of the Development Plan Document would be a decision for Council.

WYCA has secured consultancy support to draft the joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document with a Steering Group (WYCA + Local Authorities Representatives) set up to guide the document production in a collaborative way. This will be composed of officers from WYCA and the five local authorities and will:

- facilitate discussions, ensuring strategic alignment, and provides WYCA's technical input into the SDF.
- ensure policy consistency and integration with local plans.

Cabinet gave approval to the establishment of a Joint Committee (Decision-Making Body) legally constituted under the provisions of Sections (101)5, 102(1)(b) and 102(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 at the 8th July Cabinet meeting. This is subject to Council's agreement of the recommendation in this report.

This will be composed of Cabinet Members from all five local authorities. It is also proposed to co-opt the Mayor of West Yorkshire onto this committee as a non-voting member. The need for this joint committee is to expedite the decision-making process for the MT SDF Joint DPD, whilst still retaining political oversight and local authority autonomy of the process. The Joint Committee would be responsible for coordinating and preparing the MT SDF Joint DPD, including approval to consult on the draft and submission draft of the MT SDF Joint DPD.

Approval of submission of the Mass Transit SDF Joint DPD and final adoption will remain a Council responsibility for each authority, involving a formal resolution by each districts Council to incorporate the MT SDF Joint DPD into their Local Plan. This process will follow each LPA's statutory procedures for Development Plan Documents.

The Kirklees district is not affected by the earlier phases of the Mass Transit proposals which initially focus on the route between Leeds and Bradford. Although the Kirklees district is not affected by the earlier phases, it is important that the overarching policy approach is co-ordinated between each Council from the beginning to ensure the Mass Transit project co-ordinates effectively as a whole during the development of the project and syncs with anticipated growth ambitions reflected in associated local plans, regeneration frameworks and regional strategies. The inclusion of all districts at this early phase ensures that districts can shape and input into the spatial planning framework for their own areas at a regional level and ensure that growth ambitions over the longer-term period are effectively considered.

In addition, the intention of the first DPD document is not to identify or safeguard specific route options but to provide high level strategic policy support to the development of the scheme across the region. Such co-ordination through a Development Plan Document provides support for the associated Transport and Works Act Order required to implement mass transit through the first phase which will be submitted to the secretary of state in due course.

The Council has a legal duty to 'prepare and maintain a scheme to be known as their local development scheme' ('LDS'). The LDS lists the existing adopted Planning Policy and Guidance documents as well as details, including the timetable for preparation, of emerging Neighbourhood Plans and planning guidance.

If Council authorises the preparation of a joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Development Plan Document, this will necessitate a revision of the Local Development Scheme, the statutory list of plan proposals that the Council is obliged to keep up to date and published. It is a Cabinet function

to approve a Local Development Scheme. Cabinet 8th July 2025 approved a revised Local Development Scheme including (subject to Council approval to commence the DPD), proposed text and a timeline to produce the Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document.

It is proposed that Council authorise:

- Kirklees officers commencing work to draft the Spatial Development Framework as a Joint DPD (**Recommendation 1**)
- Delegated approval to consult on the early draft (Regulation 18) and submission draft (Regulation 19) to the Joint Member Committee when established (**Recommendation 2**)

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

The development of a planning framework to support opportunities for West Yorkshire Mass Transit supports Council Plan priorities including improved, quality places, encouraging thriving communities, securing economic growth for the district, encouraging inclusivity. It also advocates a positive approach to working with our regional partners to deliver these joint ambitions.

3.2 Financial Implications

The drafting of the joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document would be commissioned by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). Support for this process will be accommodated within existing staff resources and revenue budget within the Planning Policy team where applicable. Additional support is available via WYCA where required.

3.3 Legal Implications

WYCA currently does not have planning powers and so cannot adopt the proposed Spatial Development Framework as a policy that carries the weight of a development plan document. That can only be done by the individual planning authorities or, as here, jointly between authorities.

The terms of reference for the Joint Member Committee formalises the roles and responsibilities of the Joint Member Committee which, legally constituted under the provisions of Sections (101)5, 102(1)(b) and 102(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 is legally recognised and will enable collaborative decision-making while ensuring compliance with statutory requirements. This was approved at Cabinet on 8th July 2025.

Setting up a Joint Member Committee for to prepare a joint DPD

Regulation 4(1)(c) and Schedule 3 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirms the making of a development plan document (DPD) involves split functions. Reg 4(3) specifies those tasks that are not the responsibility of the executive and are the sole responsibility of each Council's full council as follows:

- i. Responsibility for giving of instructions to the executive to reconsider the draft joint development plan document submitted by the Executive for the authority's consideration.
- ii. The amendment of the draft joint development plan document submitted by the Executive for the full Council's consideration.

- iii. The approval of the joint development plan document for the purposes of submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination.
- iv. The adoption of the joint development plan document.

Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 allows two or more authorities to agree to formulate and prepare a joint local development plan document. In order to streamline executive decision making across West Yorkshire Councils, the Cabinet have subject to full Council's decision to commence work on the DPD, agreed to establish a Joint Member Committee to exercise executive planning functions relating to the preparation of the DPD. Sections 101(5) and 102(1)(b) Local Government Act 1972 permit local authorities to discharge their functions jointly and do so via a joint committee to whom the functions are delegated. Further, section 9EA Local Government Act 2000 and Part 4 of the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 permits a local authority to delegate certain executive functions to a joint committee.

Preparation and Consultation

The process for making the DPD is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012 Regulations)

The proposed Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Part 1 is a local development document as defined in Reg 5 of the 2012 Regulations. Regulations 18 and 19 as referred to in the text above place requirements on authorities proposing to make such a plan to consult and publish proposals before submitting them to the Secretary of State for approval and subsequently adopting them.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

The MT SDF will consider a planning framework and suite of policies that support the Regional Climate Plan and Council's Climate Action Plan as part of the Council's Climate Emergency. It will also consider how planning interventions can contribute towards reducing carbon emissions associated with the progression of the Mass Transit project.

3.5 Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

Human Resources – For the joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document, the drafting of the document would be commissioned by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Support for this process will be accommodated within existing staff resources and revenue budget within the Planning Policy team and Major Projects Team where applicable.

Inclusive Impact Assessment – An IIA assessment has been completed. No equality implications of the recommendations have been identified as these relate to agreeing to prepare a Development Plan Document (rather than agreeing the content) and agreeing to publishing a timetable for the preparation of planning documents. Equality issues will be considered when planning policy or guidance documents are prepared including formal public consultation on emerging documents. [Integrated Impact Assessments | Kirklees Council](#)

4. Consultation

WYCA will facilitate consultation and incorporate the requirements of all districts Statement of Community Involvement on their own website and update when needed, as will the Council as per the regulations set out in 10A(1)(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Respondents will be notified of its consultation events and formal adoption as part of our feedback processes. There will be formal public consultation

on the joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document referred to in the Local Development Scheme.

5. Engagement

See above

6. Options

6.1 Options considered:

Recommendation 1 – Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document preparation

Option 1 – Council authorises the preparation of a joint West Yorkshire Spatial Development Framework Mass Transit Development Plan Document (**recommended**)

Option 2 – Council do not authorise the preparation of a joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document. This option is not recommended as it would mean Kirklees Council were not involved in the preparation of this document which will support the delivery of Mass Transit and ensure consistency across the West Yorkshire area. The exclusion of Kirklees at this early phase would potentially reduce how Kirklees could shape and input into the spatial planning framework at a regional level as it develops and influence longer term growth ambitions for Kirklees.

Recommendation 2 – Delegate the decision to undertake initial Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultation on the draft Joint West Yorkshire-Mass Transit SDF Development Plan Document to the Joint Member Committee in so far as it's a Council planning function relating to the DPD

Option 1 – Council to delegate decision making powers to authorise early engagement and public consultation on the draft Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit SDF Development Plan Document (Regulation 18 and 19 consultation) to the Joint Member Committee (**recommended**) – this would avoid delays seeking a formal decision from each of the five Councils in relation to the early consultation document and submission document. Submission to the Secretary of State to be independently examined and the eventual adoption would be made by each individual Council in accordance with their Constitution.

Option 2 – The alternative option of not delegating decision making powers would mean that the powers to authorise early engagement and public consultation on an initial draft and submission draft would incur delays to the co-ordination of the joint DPD process across the five districts.

6.2 Reasons for recommended options:

Recommendation 1 – Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit SDF Development Plan Document preparation

Council approval to begin the process of drafting a joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit SDF Development Plan Document is important to set out the commitment to the Mass Transit process across the West Yorkshire area, ensure consistency and set high level policy parameters and help shape the spatial planning framework at a regional level. This document would be prepared by consultants appointed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority with proposed input from a Joint Members Committee (consisting of a nominated Cabinet Member from each Council) and an officer working group (see Recommendation 2).

Recommendation 2 – Delegate the decision to undertake initial Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultation on the draft Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit SDF Development Plan Document to the Joint Members Committee in so far as it's a Council planning function relating to the DPD

Approval is sought for the delegation of the decision to undertake early engagement and consult on the initial draft Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit SDF Development Plan Document to the Joint Member Committee and delegation to consult on the submission version of the document (Regulation 18 and 19). This will avoid delays during the drafting of the document and progressing the earlier stages of public consultation. It will still be ensured that the formal decisions to submit the document to the Secretary of State to be independently examined, and the decision to adopt the final DPD would be taken by each Council in accordance with their Constitution.

7. Next steps and timelines

If recommendation in this report today are approved by Council, officers can begin preparatory work on the SDF with immediate effect.

The joint committee, officer working groups, project boards for the SDF are proposed to be set up and in place by October 2025.

8. Contact officer

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9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Kirklees Cabinet meeting 8th July 2025

WYCA CA meeting 8th May 2025- [WYCA - Modern Gov](#)

10. Appendices - None

11. Service Director responsible

David Wildman (Interim – Service Director Skills and Regeneration)

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