

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY
HELD ON THURSDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2025 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 Jane Scullion	Calderdale Council
Councillor Carole Pattison	Kirklees Council
Councillor James Lewis	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 Martin Love	Bradford Council
Councillor Sue Holdsworth	Calderdale Council
Councillor Alan Lamb	Leeds City Council

In attendance:

Simon Warburton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sarah Eaton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Liz Hunter	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Felix Kumi-Ampofo	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Paul Matthews	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Simon Pope	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Kate Taylor	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Tim Taylor	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Nikki Deol	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Myles Larrington	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Apologies for Absence

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Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Denise Jeffrey (Wakefield Council), Councillor Claire Douglas (City of York Council), and Mandy Ridyard (West Yorkshire Business Board Representative and Mayor's Business Advisor).

Substitute Members

Councillor Matthew Morley attended as substitute for Councillor Denise Jeffrey, Councillor Peter Kilbane for Councillor Claire Douglas, and Asma Iqbal for Mandy Ridyard.

2. **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no declarations of interests given at the meeting.

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

The Chair advised members that **Agenda Item 10 – Bus Franchising Update (Appendix 1)** contained exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Officers had assessed that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosure, as outlined in the report. Members unanimously agreed to proceed accordingly.

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of **Agenda Item 10 – Bus Franchising Update (Appendix 1)**, on the grounds that it was likely that exempt information would be disclosed, and that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

4. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Authority held on 18 September 2025**

RESOLVED: – That the minutes of the meeting of the Combined Authority held on 18 September 2025 were approved as a correct record.

5. **Mayor's Update**

The Chair reported on her participation in the Prime Minister's trade mission to Mumbai, where three West Yorkshire businesses were represented. The Chair promoted regional opportunities at Yash Raj Film Studios and the Global FinTech Fest, and welcomed investment announcements including £2 million by Mastek and £5 million by Algorithms Software in Leeds.

The Chair noted West Yorkshire's £25 million allocation from the Creative Industries Growth Fund and reported attending the launch of the Turner Prize 2025 at Cartwright Hall Art Gallery in Bradford, as part of the City of Culture celebrations.

Member Comments

Members requested an update on the White Rose Rail Station. The Chair acknowledged delays and committed to providing further information at the next meeting.

Members thanked the Chair for support of the Rob Burrow Train event. The Chair reflected on the event's significance, which took place at Castleford Station on 26 September 2025, and praised Northern Trains and Rob Burrow's legacy.

The Chair also highlighted the upcoming Reclaim the Night March on 26 October 2025, a region-wide initiative aimed at raising awareness of violence against women and girls.

6. Project Approvals

(a) Project Approvals - Cross Cutting Approvals - Delivering Benefits to the People of West Yorkshire

The Combined Authority considered a report presenting proposals for the progression of projects across the Investment Priority areas. One scheme was considered for approval under the “Cross Cutting Approvals – Delivering Benefits to the People of West Yorkshire” programme.

Members expressed support for the paper and welcomed efforts to make reports more concise. It was suggested that further detail and performance figures on successful initiatives would be useful outside of the meeting, to help inform future activity and identify areas for expansion.

Mayor’s Cost of Living Emergency Fund

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Approved the change request for the West Yorkshire Mayor’s Cost of Living Emergency Fund programme to increase the Combined Authority’s funding by £750,000, from £3,000,000 to £3,750,000, to increase the scheme outputs as set out in the submitted report and to extend the delivery time frame to April 2027.
2. Approved a delegation to the Combined Authority’s Chief Executive to enter into addendums to the existing funding agreements with the partner councils.
3. Approved that future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway, approval route and tolerances outlined in the submitted report, subject to the scheme remaining within those tolerances.
4. Noted that no programme-level risk or contingency allowance has been established for this scheme.

(b) Project Approvals - Investment Priority 1 - Good Jobs and Resilient Business (Including Entrepreneurialism)

The Combined Authority considered a report presenting proposals for the progression of a scheme under Investment Priority 1 – Good Jobs and Resilient Businesses (including entrepreneurialism), within the West Yorkshire Investment Strategy. The scheme relates to the

deployment of accrued funds from the West Yorkshire and York Broadband programme.

Members stressed the need to prioritise digital infrastructure, with poor connectivity continuing to limit business activity. Improvements were urged to reach all areas. A non-voting member welcomed cross-border collaboration between West Yorkshire and York and offered input to the ongoing review.

West Yorkshire and York Broadband Gainshare

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Approved the delegation of authority to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive to approve the use of funding from the £6,300,000 West Yorkshire and York Broadband accrued fund. The fund is to be utilised only for capital investment related to digital infrastructure.

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

The Combined Authority considered a report presenting proposals for the progression of schemes under Investment Priority 3 – Creating Great Places and Accelerated Infrastructure. One additional scheme was also considered for approval.

A member raised concerns about clerical errors in the agenda pack, including incorrect report links and spelling mistakes. These were noted as issues of accuracy and presentation, though the inadvertent errors did not impact the substance of the recommendations.

Brownfield Housing Fund

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Approved the change to the Brownfield Housing Programme to increase the total programme funding by £21,043,998, from £89,038,292 to £110,082,290.
2. Approved the extension of the Brownfield Housing Programme delivery timescales, for new homes to start on site by 31 March 2029.
3. Noted that business case(s) will be presented to future committee meetings to approve the projects the funding is allocated to and to enter into funding agreements.

Bradford City Village Phase 1

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Approved the change to the Bradford City Village Phase 1 outline business case to include a delegation to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive to be able to amend the entity name for the grant funding agreement if so required and once determined.
2. Noted the continued approval in principle for a potential grant funded contribution of up to £13,166,409 towards Bradford City Village Phase 1, to be drawn from the Brownfield Housing Fund and subject to conditions agreed at the Combined Authority meeting on 3 April 2025.

National Poetry Centre

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Approved that the National Poetry Centre scheme proceeds through decision point 2 (strategic outline case) and work commences on activity 3 (outline business case).
2. Approved development funding of up to £367,436 in order to progress the scheme to decision point 3 (outline business case), taking the total scheme approval to £367,436.
3. Approved that the Combined Authority enters into a funding agreement with the National Poetry Centre for funding of up to £367,436.
4. Approved that future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report, subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined.
5. Noted the Combined Authority's potential funding of £5,000,000. The estimated total scheme cost is £22,643,595, of which £2,484,000 is for risk and contingency allowances and £342,167 for monitoring and evaluation. Forecast development funding for the scheme to reach delivery is £2,046,588.

(d) Project Approvals - Investment Priority 4 - Tackling the Climate Emergency and Environmental Sustainability

The Combined Authority considered a report presenting proposals for the progression of a scheme under Investment Priority 4 – Tackling the Climate Emergency and Environmental Sustainability. One scheme was considered for approval.

A member raised concerns about conflicting policies around battery energy storage facilities, noting that while more capacity is needed, they are often proposed on greenfield sites. The member expressed the opinion that no funding from the Combined Authority should

support solar panels or energy schemes on green belt land. The Assistant Director for Legal, Governance and Compliance noted the complexity of emerging case law and advised that constituent councils would need to develop a local policy position before the Combined Authority could establish its own. The Director for Policing, Environment and Place clarified that the schemes had been brought forward by local authority partners, who were therefore responsible for setting the scheme criteria.

West Yorkshire Mayoral Renewables Fund Grant Scheme

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority, subject to the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero’s approval of funding from the Mayoral Renewables Fund:

1. Approved the change request to the West Yorkshire Mayoral Renewables Fund Grant Scheme to increase the Combined Authority’s funding by up to £1,376,338 to £2,291,176 to deliver more solar and battery storage projects. The total scheme cost is up to £2,531,176.
2. Approved a delegation to the Combined Authority’s Chief Executive to enter into funding agreements / addendums to existing funding agreements with the partner councils.
3. Approved that future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report, subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined.

(e) Project Approvals - Investment Priority 5 - Delivering Sustainable, Intergrated, Inclusive and Affordable Transport

The Combined Authority considered a report presenting proposals for the progression of schemes under Investment Priority 5 – Delivering Sustainable, Integrated, Inclusive and Affordable Transport. Two schemes were considered for approval.

A member questioned rising costs in the Armley Gyrotory scheme and called for more robust reporting. The Transport Capital Programme Director explained the £3.8m increase was due to unforeseen ground contamination and noted that 92% of schemes remain within budget. The A638 Dewsbury to Cleckheaton sustainable travel corridor scheme also required additional funding due to early-stage cost underestimation, with Kirklees Council reducing its scope to manage costs. Lessons are being applied across the wider capital programme, and clawback of unused contingencies at a programme level is under review.

Officers confirmed newer processes now require more rigorous cost assessments. Members were also reassured that future devolution

and longer-term funding will improve planning. The Chair of Scrutiny raised concerns about the lack of a dedicated risk section in reports, and officers agreed to improve transparency in future reporting.

Leeds City Centre Network & Interchange Package: Armley Gyratory

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Approved the change request for the Leeds City Centre Network & Interchange Package: Armley Gyratory scheme to increase the Combined Authority's funding by a further £3,148,000 to complete activity 5 (delivery), taking the total approval to £45,118,000. The total scheme value is £45,118,000.
2. Approved that the Combined Authority enters into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with Leeds City Council for funding of up to £45,118,000. This includes a ring-fenced amount of £341,000 for Monitoring and Evaluation, release of which is delegated to the Combined Authority Director.
3. Approved that future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report, subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined.

A638 Dewsbury Cleckheaton Sustainable Travel Corridor

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Approved the change request for the A638 Dewsbury Cleckheaton Sustainable Travel Corridor scheme to descope Phase 3 of the scheme and increase the Combined Authority's funding by a further £1,760,282 to complete activity 5 (delivery), taking the total approval to £17,560,259. The total scheme value is £17,560,259.
2. Approved that the Combined Authority enters into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with Kirklees Council for funding of up to £17,560,259. This includes a ring-fenced amount of £100,000 for Monitoring and Evaluation, release of which is delegated to the Combined Authority Director.
3. Approved that future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report, subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined.

4. Noted that £2,892,165 is assigned for risk and contingency allowances.

7. Portfolio Summary

The Combined Authority considered a report on the impact on available funding of the latest project approvals being sought, as well as those granted through delegated decisions since the September meeting of the Combined Authority.

Members welcomed the Portfolio Summary but noted it was difficult to navigate, especially for the public. Officers acknowledged the feedback and are working to improve presentation. Questions were raised about overprogramming and tracking unused funds; officers confirmed that overprogramming had been used as an agreed mechanism approved by Board to maximise use of funding devolved to the region and progression of schemes was part of programme management. The Chair of Scrutiny called for clearer risk reporting to improve public understanding, and officers agreed to enhance transparency.

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Noted the portfolio summary information outlined in the submitted report.

8. Devolution and Integrated Settlement Update

The Combined Authority considered a report updating progress on the Devolution and Integrated Settlement Programme, including preparations for receipt of the Integrated Settlement from April 2026 and a proposed delegation for Outcome Framework submissions.

Members received an update on the Devolution and Integrated Settlement Programme. The Chair welcomed the pace of work and highlighted the importance of achieving Established Strategic Authority status. A member expressed frustration with Treasury delays and queried the status of funding allocations. The Director of Strategy advised that indicative figures were expected shortly to support the Outcomes Framework, and officers noted that similar challenges had been faced in other areas, such as Greater Manchester.

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Noted the progress made to prepare for implementation of measures set out in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, through the Devolution and Integrated Settlement Programme, and the Programme Plan attached at Appendix 1.
2. Noted the detailed activity underway in relation to receipt and delivery of the Integrated Settlement from April 2026, including anticipated next steps and the work required to receive the Settlement.

3. Delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor and the Director of Strategy, as Senior Responsible Officer, to submit iterative drafts and the final Outcome Framework submissions to Government, in line with the timetable set out at paragraph 3.25 of the submitted report.

9. Recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee for consideration

The Combined Authority considered a report presenting recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee on governance and procedural improvements. These arose from recent committee sessions, including the Call-In of the School Travel Policy decision, which was released for implementation.

It was noted that the Monitoring Officer would return a further report on implementation of these recommendations at a later date.

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Accepted the recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee, as set out in the submitted report and accompanying appendix.

10. Bus Franchising Update

The Combined Authority considered a report providing an update on the Bus Franchising transition programme in relation to fleet provision. The report sought approval of an Outline Business Case for new bus procurement, delegated authority to undertake public consultation, and funding to progress delivery of Round 1 fleet.

Members highlighted the need for public involvement in designing the new bus fleet and called for greater flexibility to meet local needs. Boston Spa was cited as an area facing infrequent services and accessibility challenges, with suggestions for increased frequency and adaptable seating.

One member raised concerns about rising costs, noting that revised government funding for electric buses had increased unit costs, and enquired about potential sources of additional funding or the need for service adjustments.

The Chair acknowledged these points and confirmed that funding integration work was ongoing, reiterating the shared commitment to delivering improved bus services for West Yorkshire.

Before discussing Appendix 1 to Agenda Item 10, the Chair, in accordance with the resolution at Agenda Item 3 (referencing paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972), requested that the public leave the room and the livestream be suspended. The meeting then continued in private session. Following this, the Combined Authority returned to public session to consider the report resolutions.

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Noted the updates provided in the submitted report.
2. Delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Mayor, to commence a public consultation exercise to help inform the final specification of new buses.
3. Approved that the Bus Reform Fleet Provision scheme proceeds through decision point 3 (Outline Business Case) and work commences on activity 4 (Full Business Case).
4. Approved development funding of £85,007 to progress the fleet provision scheme to decision point 4 (Full Business Case), taking the total development funding approval to £1,206,514.
5. Approved release of £29,972,556 to progress delivery of the bus fleet provision for Round 1, taking total scheme approval to £31,179,070.
6. Approved that future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report, subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined.
7. Noted the Combined Authority's potential funding of up to £100,000,000 for Round 1 fleet provision.

11. Minutes for Information and Summaries of Committee Meetings

RESOLVED: – That the Combined Authority:

1. Noted the minutes, notes, and agendas of committee meetings published on its website, along with the matters deliberated within the committees, as summarised in the submitted report since the previous Combined Authority meeting.

12. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Combined Authority was scheduled to take place on Thursday 4 December 2025.

13. Decision Log

The Decision Log is appended below.