

West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Update 03/07/2023

Public papers available here:

<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=240&MId=873>

Recording of meeting can be watched here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uniOvxEcVI>

Update:

As this was the first meeting of this committee the first agenda item was to elect a chair, Cllr John McNicholas from Coventry City Council was duly elected.

The meeting contained 4 verbal reports. The committee requested not to have verbal reports in the future to give time for the members to digest the information.

Agenda item 5, members were informed that there will be several training programmes available for all members throughout the course of the year.

Agenda item 6, Thanks to recent successful bids, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) has been able to have a complete review within the department. The funding has enabled the department to investigate long term projects with a 10-year programme. After holding a review on capitol delivery including consulting with residents, the department has moved away from working in silos to a more integrated delivery model. As of the 3rd of July, the department moved into the new ways of working with the new structures in place. This new 1 team will be responsible for all travel under one portfolio office. The department are now looking at succession planning, recruitment, graduate positions, and apprenticeships to ensure staffing rates are maintained. A written outlining this will follow.

Agenda item 8, the financial monitoring report demonstrates a favourable variance on revenue of £0.6m due mainly to under patronage of concessions and staff vacancies. Capital budget has a minor over spend against budget of £0.8m however the overall project costs remain within the overall budget allocation.

Agenda item 9 was a verbal update on bus travel. Bus tickets have increased in areas where the cap is not in place. It was felt by members of the committee that not enough had been done to advertise the increase to passengers in advance of the raise.

TfWM successfully bid for the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and was awarded £88m one of the highest awards in the country. This has enabled the WMCA to maintain 90% of bus services so far. TfWM are looking now at how to best utilise the funding with the aim of maintaining 88% of bus services going forward accepting that they will not be able to maintain all the services.

It was discussed that bus services needs to be more reliable to attract passengers and that one of the issues bus companies are facing is lack of drivers.

Demand Responsive Transport (DFT) was discussed as Solihull recently held a DFT trial in Balsall Common and Berkeswell. TfWM are working with Warwickshire County Council who also held a trial to share learnings. I will be putting officers in touch with Worcestershire County Council to be included in these conversations as we also held our own DFT trial in Bromsgrove with further trials being launched in Malvern.

It was discussed how the increase in bus tickets are not profit driven but due to the increase in labour and fuel. One member felt the enhanced bus partnership is not working and felt the authority didn't have control over cost, route, or frequency. The chair felt this could be raised at the West Midlands Bus Alliance.

Agenda item 10, the road safety strategy has been refreshed and will be launched in September 23. This strategy is 2 years in the making and looks to reduce incidents of serious injury or death on the road by 50% by 2030 based on 2015 levels. The new strategy also looks to adopt Vision Zero as the long-term mission to eliminate all fatal and serious injuries on the roads. The strategy looks to include safety performance indicators, opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

Not only is reducing accidents the right moral way forward, but there is also a reduction in societal cost incurred. On average a fatal road collision costs the taxpayer around £2m and serious injury costs around £246k for each incident.

There has been a recent spike in road incidents including children, bikes, elderly and hit and run accidents. TfWM are working closely with the police, fire, resident's groups and health authority, and local charities on this issue. So far, they have seen a reduction of 16%,

The public engagement on the strategy evidenced 88% agreement. After the launch of the Strategy in September officers will develop a delivery plan to be delivered in 2024.

Next meeting – Monday 14th September 1pm