

West Yorkshire Mass Transit Vision 2040 Consultation

Date: 14th December 2022

Report of: Director of City Development

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority has commenced public consultation on the revised Mass Transit Vision 2040 for West Yorkshire. There is a statutory requirement to consult key stakeholders, which include the five West Yorkshire districts ahead of working towards its adoption as part of the Local Transport Plan for the region.

This report sets out the key points to note and outlines details of the Leeds City Council (LCC) formal response to the statutory consultation which is required by 16 January 2023.

A draft letter of response has been prepared which sets out LCC's support in principle recognising the strategic importance and alignments with the LCC's vision and ambition. The evidence led approach to transport investment priorities including within the context of Mass Transit route alignment and preferred technology is also welcomed. The letter also stresses the need for a clear strategic rationale for each corridor and importantly a recognition of the opportunity Mass Transit will provide with respect to regeneration and redevelopment along the ultimate preferred routes options. The letter includes some specific comments relating to Leeds City Centre, East Leeds, Bradford-Leeds, South Leeds-Dewsbury, North West and North Leeds, e.g. for the South Leeds – Dewsbury corridor: Mass Transit has the potential to radically change access to the City, such as the corridor comprising Elland Road, the football stadium, White Rose Office Park and White Rose Shopping Centre. The potential regeneration benefits that a fast, reliable, high-capacity transport link would provide to such destinations within this quadrant support LCC's preference for an alignment that would best facilitate this opportunity. The need to commence detailed work on depot location for the West Yorkshire network is also highlighted; some routes may not be practical in early phases if a site of suitable scale and location, is not available. Abortive design costs and time delays need to be avoided by starting this work as a matter of urgency.

To enable the project to make timely progress to getting phase 1 on-site this decade, as per the stated ambition, the response asks that the business case approval process through government is streamlined. This will enable the scheme to progress through the important public consultation elements in a timely way and not be unduly delayed by layers of internal approval. In recognition of the importance of this project, the City Council is identifying and allocating significant resource to expedite its support of the design and delivery of a world class system. The letter requests that WYCA ensures that it too, through its own staff and wider supply chain, apply the same priority emphasis to this key project to ensure that the vision is developed at pace with a focus on accelerated delivery reflective of buildability and stakeholder support.

Recommendations

Executive Board is requested to: -

- a. note the contents of this report and to endorse the response as set out in the draft letter to the statutory consultation in **Appendix A**.
- b. note that the Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation) will receive a report on the resource requirements needed to ensure the City Council's vision and ambition is continually embedded in the development and delivery work particularly to fulfil the Council's statutory duties.

What is this report about?

- 1 The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) has commenced public consultation on the revised Mass Transit Vision 2040 for West Yorkshire, see **Appendix B**. As a statutory consultee and strategic partner, Leeds City Council (LCC) as one of the five West Yorkshire districts has been approached for feedback as part of the consultation process
- 2 This report sets out the key points to note and outlines the LCC response to the statutory consultation on the revised vision document, see **Appendix A**. A formal response is required to be submitted before the closing date of 16 January 2023.
- 3 Mass Transit is a large-scale public transport system which will have its own brand and identity, and though for West Yorkshire the Mass Transit technology / vehicle is yet to be determined, it would typically use one or more of the modern high-quality buses, trams, light rail and tram-train vehicles.
- 4 WYCA has set out a bold ambition to make West Yorkshire greener, more inclusive, and better connected. To achieve this, it is recognised an equally bold approach to public transport is needed. That is why building a modern, world-class public transport system, using new forms of advanced Mass Transit is proposed
- 5 WYCA initially consulted on a draft of the Mass Transit Vision early in 2021, as part of the wider West Yorkshire Connectivity Infrastructure Plan, which ran from 27 January 2021 to 4 June 2021. There were 430,000 social media views of the consultation material, and there were 7,800 responses to the surveys, polls, interactive map and other stakeholder feedback. Overall, the support for the Mass Transit Vision was strong, with around 80% respondents said they supported the Vision, either in full or in part.
- 6 Based on the feedback at the time, changes to the Vision have been made, which include:
 - Placing greater emphasis on the role Mass Transit can play in addressing equality, diversity, and inclusivity for communities across West Yorkshire,
 - More clearly identifying Mass Transit's role helping to meet the climate and sustainability ambitions,
 - Reviewing the places to connect Mass Transit, and
 - Refreshing how Mass Transit will be delivered in the context of the Government's 2021 Integrated Rail Plan and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement announcements.

- 7 The revised Mass Transit Vision 2040 states the goal is to create an integrated and seamless transport system that best meets the needs of all different journey types. A network that provides the right connections and right capacity, where it is needed while also providing a clean and low carbon way to travel.
- 8 LCC supports the need to adopt an evidence led approach to transport investment priorities including within the context of Mass Transit route alignment and preferred technology.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 9 Mass Transit is of strategic importance to Leeds and it is recognised that this step change in transport provision will improve connectivity across our city and the wider Leeds City Region, support economic growth, and bring people within easier reach of jobs and opportunities. It will complement and build on the significant works completed in recent years as part of the Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme and the ongoing works to Station Gateway and City Square.
- 10 The four design principles within the Vision document are welcomed by LCC, in that (1) It is people centred with inclusivity and diversity in mind, (2) Environmental responsibility is at its core, (3) Better connected, so integrated with all travel modes, and (4) Celebrating West Yorkshire by adding and enhancing the built and natural environment and supporting regeneration and respecting neighbourhoods.
- 11 The 2040 West Yorkshire Mass Transit Vision includes a summary case for each of the following corridors, East Leeds, Bradford–Leeds, South Leeds–Dewsbury, Bradford–Dewsbury, Huddersfield–Dewsbury, Bradford–Halifax, Wakefield and Five Towns, Bradford and North West Leeds, North Leeds and Leeds City Centre. Each summary case provides more detail on its location, setting and indicative high level route option opportunity for Mass Transit.
- 12 The Vision sets the pipeline for the development of Mass Transit across West Yorkshire. It mentions, as a pipeline, that delivery of the whole network will take time and will be phased. As the most travelled area in West Yorkshire and the main economic hub, Leeds City Centre will be at the heart of the system and will be served by early phases.
- 13 The Vision highlights the following corridors as suggested Phase 1 sections, East Leeds, Bradford-Leeds, South Leeds-Dewsbury, Bradford-Dewsbury, and Leeds City Centre.
- 14 The aims and ambitions of the Mass Transit Vision offer opportunities to further progress LCC aspirations and priorities in the following areas:
 - Support economic growth by unlocking transport constraints in key growth areas and across the city.
 - Alignment with the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy, Our Spaces Strategy, Local Plans Update and Leeds Station Integrated Masterplan.
 - Improve health outcomes especially air quality by reducing transport emissions by offering sustainable public transport provision, and active travel modes.

- Complement and further enhance on the progress made in the City through investment programmes such as Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme, City Connect and the West Yorkshire plus Transport Fund.
- Become a world-class connected city, that allows seamless end to end public transport journeys internationally, nationally, regionally, and locally.
- Be an ambitious city, that attracts and plans for inclusive growth.
- Become a smart city that embraces innovative technology to efficiently use, manage and maintain the transport network.
- Continue to be a people-focused city, with well-connected neighbourhoods and a city centre that's easily accessible for everyone.
- Be a healthy city, that allows more people to walk, cycle and be more active, with reduced traffic and emissions to create cleaner air.

15 A draft letter of response has been prepared which sets out LCC's support in principle recognising the strategic importance and alignments with the LCC's vision and ambition. The evidence led approach to transport investment priorities including within the context of Mass Transit route alignment and preferred technology is also welcomed. The letter also stresses the need for a clear strategic rationale for each corridor and importantly a recognition of the opportunity Mass Transit will provide with respect to regeneration and redevelopment along the ultimate preferred routes options. Then there are some specific comments relating to Leeds City Centre, East Leeds, Bradford-Leeds, South Leeds-Dewsbury, North West and North Leeds made in the letter, for more details see **Appendix A**.

16 The letter urges swift action be taken, within a clearly defined process, to identify the first corridor(s) and depot site(s) and to resource up relevant teams, with the necessary level of experience, at WYCA and within the district councils to ensure momentum is made to facilitate the stated wish to have a start on site later in this decade.

17 To ensure the City Council, as a key stakeholder and strategic partner, is suitably resourced to respond, working in partnership with WYCA to ensure LCC's vision and ambition is continually embedded in the development work both strategically and technically, particularly to fulfil the statutory duties, a resources plan is being prepared. It is highly likely that resources across a number of disciplines will be required e.g. transport planning, civil engineering, planning, regeneration and legal.

18 WYCA is the sole promoter of the Mass Transit scheme, and the role of LCC is a strategic partner, therefore as part of the continuing reviewing process an Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) impact assessment has been completed, see **Appendix C**.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

19 Health and wellbeing

20 The promotion of Mass Transit will add and complement to the existing public transport offer as well as cycling and walking links to provide a fully integrated travel alternative to car travel. Therefore, the system is aimed at supporting healthy, physically active lifestyles whilst encouraging the feeling of safety when using transport infrastructure.

21 Inclusive Growth

22 The Vision sets out the objective to boost productivity by helping businesses to grow and invest in the region and their workforce, to drive economic growth, increase innovation and create jobs. Help people travel to jobs and education in a reliable, efficient, and affordable way. Increase the job and training opportunities people can easily get to.

23 Zero Carbon

24 The Vision recognises the objective of tackling the climate emergency by growing the economy while cutting emissions and improving the environment. It states, 'Help combat climate change, provide climate resilient infrastructure and improve air quality by being low emission and providing an attractive and sustainable alternative to car travel'.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

25 WYCA is the sole promoter of the West Yorkshire Mass Transit scheme and is leading on all the consultation and engagement including with elected members. The need for specific local ward member consultations, at relevant times, has been raised on numerous occasions and WYCA, have confirmed they have written to all elected Ward and Parish Councillors to make them aware of the statutory consultation and offering any further information or a briefing if requested.

What are the resource implications?

26 The Mass Transit scheme is led by WYCA as the sole promoter. WYCA has an allocation of £200m over five years for the development work and initial delivery of the scheme from the £830m City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) fund.

27 A resource plan is being prepared to ensure that LCC can suitably respond to the strategic and technical development work in partnership with WYCA. There will be an arrangement to reclaim staff time incurred from WYCA as the scheme progresses, potentially through a funding agreement.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

28 There are no specific risk implications arising from this report for Executive Board to consider, other than noting LCC will need to respond and work in partnership with WYCA on the development and delivery work, so we need to ensure this is suitably resourced.

What are the legal implications?

29 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report for Executive Board to consider.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

30 The scheme is led by WYCA as the sole promoter.

How will success be measured?

31 This will be led by WYCA as the sole promoter of the scheme

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

32 The Vision document states that for Phase 1 corridors 'Subject to Government funding decisions, we anticipate commencing public engagement on route and technology choices during 2023. We want construction to start during the 2020s. The timing, shape and form of the Mass Transit system will be subject to engineering feasibility, environmental assessment, and public & community engagement, stakeholder support of its business case, and funding availability'.

33 To successfully deliver the system there are a number of key milestones to reach, such as business case approvals, public consultation on route selection, funding approvals, Transport and Works Act Order application submission, public inquiry, obtaining the powers to build and operate the system, vehicle procurement and construction phase. The current programme indicates that Phase 1 routes could potentially be operational at the end of 2031.

Appendices

34 **Appendix A** – Draft Letter, LCC response to WYCA

35 **Appendix B** – Revised West Yorkshire Mass Transit Vision 2040

36 **Appendix C** - Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) impact assessment

Background papers

37 None.