



1 Introduction

This paper has been prepared to provide the Board with an update on the background to the development of Mass Transit programme, the Phase 1 scope for Leeds and Bradford lines, current development work, and an update on consultation and engagement.

In addition to the detail set out below, members are asked to note that further information about the current consultation can be accessed here: <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/improving-transport/mass-transit/>

A map illustrating potential route options for phase one of Mass Transit is also available here: [Mass Transit Hub | Your Voice \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

2 Mass Transit Progress to Date

- 2.1 The Combined Authority in collaboration with partner councils is developing a Mass Transit system which will offer a new public transport option and an attractive alternative to car travel in West Yorkshire.
- 2.2 The first phase of the scheme, explained in more detail below, will provide two Mass Transit lines between Leeds City Centre and White Rose (Leeds Line) Leeds City Centre and Bradford City Centre (Bradford Line). Based on benchmarking exercises of similar schemes, it is estimated the first phase will require an investment of around £2bn.
- 2.3 Mass Transit is essential to help communities thrive and our economy flourish, bringing people and places closer together. By offering a new public transport option, which increases capacity and provides an attractive alternative to car travel, Mass Transit will support and facilitate a low emission, thriving economy with high quality sustainable transport.
- 2.4 Given the need to develop the Mass Transit programme at pace, in order to align with City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement funding allocation timescales and a Mayoral commitment to construction starting in 2028, significant progress has been made since the commencement of the development of the Mass Transit programme. On this basis, the following sections provide an overview of the project history and specifically the decisions taken to establish the Mass Transit programme.

Case for Change – Identifying the “Places to Connect”

- 2.5 In 2018, work to create the evidence base for the strategic outline case began with identifying the “places to connect” and establishing a “case for change”. To determine corridors of greatest economic need across the City Region, an assessment was undertaken, which looked at factors such as: Access to the transport network in deprived areas; Levels of existing travel demand; Opportunities to join up key assets and demand

drivers; Planned housing growth; Large scale planned employment growth; and Rail crowding and road congestion.

- 2.6 Through this process 22 corridors across the City Region were identified as potential candidates for Mass Transit. These corridors were considered by the Transport Committee and the Combined Authority and key stakeholders were consulted. This process, and the outcomes, were endorsed by the Transport Committee in May 2018.

Programme Strategic Outline Business Case (P-SOBC) Development and CRSTS Funding

- 2.7 Following the consideration and identification of the Places to Connect in 2018, the next phase was the production of the Programme Strategic Outline Business Case (P-SOBC). The P-SOBC set out the scale of the strategic economic opportunity for Mass Transit and further developed the evidence base. This stage also gained consensus on a Mass Transit delivery roadmap, taking cognisance of strategic phasing, route development and technology options.
- 2.8 The establishment of the P-SOBC formed the basis for the Mass Transit component of the Combined Authority CRSTS bid to central government. The Combined Authority was successful in securing £200m of funding for the ongoing development and commencing the delivery of Mass Transit Phase 1 in West Yorkshire, and development work on corridors beyond Phase 1.
- 2.9 On the strength of evidence produced for the P-SOBC, in July 2020 the Combined Authority approved the progression of Mass Transit and specifically the development of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for Phase 1 of the programme.

Mass Transit Vision 2040 and Public Consultation

- 2.10 Alongside ongoing business case and route development workstreams, the Mass Transit Vision 2040 was produced, with the primary purpose of outlining plans for Mass Transit in West Yorkshire from which to secure public and stakeholder endorsement for the approach to development. The Vision sets out the strategic case for the programme, while introducing corridor concepts which covered all areas of the proposed West Yorkshire Mass Transit network.
- 2.11 Intended for public and key stakeholder engagement, the Mass Transit Vision 2040 summarised the programme development work to date. It also established a strategic regional rationale for the proposed corridors and set the transformational aspirations for each area of the Mass Transit network. The Vision included the main programme timescales and acknowledged that the Phase 1 option would likely be centred on the Leeds to Bradford, Leeds to Dewsbury and Bradford to Dewsbury corridors.
- 2.12 Endorsement of proposals through public and statutory consultation, which took place in January 2021 and October 2022, respectively, strengthened the case for further

development of the route options and progression of the Phase 1 business case. The Combined Authority was invited to consider the feedback from public consultation, where the Vision was updated to reflect this feedback. The Mass Transit Vision 2040 was endorsed and adopted by the Combined Authority at its October 2023 meeting.

From Programme Strategic Outline Business Case to Strategic Outline Case- Preferred Way Forward for Phase 1

- 2.13 The Mass Transit Strategic Outline Case (SOC) follows on from the P-SOBC which identified a strong strategic case for a West Yorkshire-wide Mass Transit network. The P-SOBC identified that any first phase of West Yorkshire Mass Transit would likely be centred on Leeds city centre, as the largest single centre of economic, social and cultural activity in West Yorkshire. Along with the Mass Transit Vision, the P-SOBC identified the following corridors as potential first phase components, and these formed the basis of the analysis within the development of the Phase 1 SOC:
- East Leeds
 - Bradford to Leeds
 - South Leeds to Dewsbury
 - Bradford to Dewsbury
- 2.14 A significant amount of the initial scheme development funding was assigned to developing potentially deliverable and operable route options within these corridors, building a strong evidence base, analysis of key data sources and sifting of multiple route options before preparing the appraisal and transport demand forecasting to inform the overall case of the eventual West Yorkshire Mass Transit Phase 1 SOC preferred way forward.
- 2.15 Through this analytical work it emerged that some of the candidate corridor options for Phase 1 were deemed less favourable through option sifting (predominantly due to low forecast travel demand) and therefore the focus moved to those candidate corridors that have been identified as having the potential to provide a stronger business case for Mass Transit.
- 2.16 The two corridors identified in the SOC that together are being taken forward as West Yorkshire Mass Transit Phase 1 are:
- The Leeds Line – which will operate between St James’s University Hospital and White Rose via Leeds city centre.
 - The Bradford Line – which will operate between St James’s University Hospital and Bradford via Leeds city centre.



- 2.17 Current timelines for Phase 1 envisage meeting the commitment to “spades in the ground” by 2028 with the planning (TWAO) process commencing in late 2026 or early 2027.
- 2.18 This does not mean that other corridors will not form part of the Mass Transit future network. The Mass Transit Vision 2040 is clear to ensure that no part of West Yorkshire is left behind, development work will continue with district partners to understand the potential demand on all potential transit corridors with possible second and third phases coming online after 2033, taking into account future housing, employment and regeneration opportunities and aspirations within each of the districts.

3 On-going Development

- 3.1 A considerable amount of time and effort has been expended progressing from the P-SOBC to a preferred way forward contained in the SOC.
- 3.2 Over the course of the 2-year period between initial scheme development cost approval and SOC submission, the Mass Transit project team and partners have been developing the technical design, preparing the necessary modelling tools and formulating the scheme appraisal, that facilitated the identification of the preferred way forward as identified in the SOC.
- 3.3 Following submission of the SOC to DfT/HMT in March 2024, initial feedback and liaison has led to an agreed way forward with the business case, and the need for additional material to be prepared to support the SOC (this will be referred to as SOC+) and provide a means of moving into the OBC stage. This intervening period triggers the need for more design development and route refinement in advance of OBC, and the use of the entirely new West Yorkshire Transport Model (WYTM) to forecast the future level and patterns of travel demand within the candidate corridors.
- 3.4 The SOC+ decision point has been agreed by both the Combined Authority and the DfT and has come about from a shared understanding that at this relatively early SOC stage there remain a number of development tasks to undertake. The focus and therefore the outputs for the SOC+ includes the following tasks, as requested by the DfT through IPDC:
- Determination of an emerging preferred route option in terms of an alignment
 - Ensuring the preferred technology represents best value for money when compared against “lower cost alternatives and next best alternatives”¹.

¹ As per: The Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation

- The development of a robust transport modelling and forecasting and appraisal framework to provide a more detailed overall Value for Money (VfM) assessment.
- 3.5 The tasks described above would more commonly be undertaken at OBC stage, but such is the scale and importance of this project not only to West Yorkshire, but also the DfT, that this work has been brought forward to this new SOC+ decision point. However, this SOC+ work will be conducted in parallel with tasks required for OBC and with consideration to a future Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) application, to ensure efficiency within the delivery schedule.
- 3.6 This work will allow the scheme to develop and submit an enhanced Phase 1 SOC (SOC+), progress the Phase 1 OBC, continue design development, undertake consultation activities, undertake environmental assessments, develop a delivery strategy and undertake activities to support land acquisition and some preparatory works/surveys for any legal powers or associated documents that would be needed and/or are associated with implementing Mass Transit.
- 3.7 The current development phase estimate for the West Yorkshire Mass Transit Phase 1 (including development of Phase 2) is £200m.
- 3.8 In terms of the extent and scope of the technical work, it should be noted that to take a Mass Transit scheme of 2 corridors that together are approximately 25km long and have significant interaction with two city centres, to OBC stage requires a hugely significant amount of technical design, survey work, data calculations/analysis and reporting. This in turn necessitates the appointment of a large team of experts from many different companies to undertake this work. This work needs to be thoroughly checked by the Combined Authority staff.
- 3.9 This is because not only is the scheme promoter preparing a business case for funding approval but also is undertaking a body of technical work that will support the TWAO for Phase 1.

4 Mass Transit Public Consultation Update

- 4.1 The consultation commenced on Monday 15 July and will run until Monday 30 September. In this period, views are being sought from members of the public and stakeholders on three elements:
1. Which one of the potential route options from Bradford to Leeds is preferred.
 2. Which one of the potential route options from St James Hospital, via Leeds City Centre to the White Rose Centre is preferred; and
 3. How a Mass Transit network can be delivered whilst balancing the long-term needs of the environment, society, and the economy – i.e. the Sustainability Strategy.

- 4.2 Information about the consultation is provided via a dedicated webpage and consultees have been invited to provide feedback via an online consultation survey or by using a dedicated email address.
- 4.3 A detailed consultation and engagement strategy was devised to ensure we attract a diverse mix of stakeholders to have their say on the first phase of Mass Transit route options this summer. A summary of the engagement activity includes:
- Approximately 30 leafletting events across high footfall locations across Leeds and Bradford.
 - Consultation promotional leaflet drop to properties with postcodes across Leeds and Bradford. Encouraging them to take part in the consultation.
 - Letters to those who own a property along the route or in close vicinity to the route inviting them to take place in the consultation.
 - Approximately 23 drop-in community engagements.
 - 3 online webinars. Recordings will be added to the Your Voice consultation page.
 - Awareness raising campaign and social media activity.
 - Online survey: hosted on WYCA's Your Voice webpage
 - Consultation brochure
 - Pre-recorded presentation designed to be inclusive for those with a hearing/visual impairment
 - Consultation survey available in different languages at request
 - Tactile map version of Phase 1 route map options
- 4.4 Outreach to a large number of community groups in Leeds and Bradford to raise awareness of the route proposals and the importance of their participation in the upcoming consultation has been undertaken. These groups have been invited to share the details of the consultation with their members and on their own internal and external communications channels to ensure wide audience reach.
- 4.5 Engagement meetings, to raise awareness of the route options proposals and encourage formal responses to consultation, have taken place with statutory stakeholders and key stakeholders across transport, business, health, and education sectors. Stakeholder engagement has also been undertaken with accessibility and women and girls groups.
- 4.6 Promotion and awareness raising of the consultation has been delivered in close partnership with District Partner communications teams and community teams. The Communication Teams have supported by cross promoting and sharing details of the route options consultation via partner-owned communications channels. Community



teams have identified events and opportunities for the Mass Transit team to attend and promote the consultation.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 Work will continue on the development of the SOC+ and preparatory work for the TWAO application. This will be informed by the responses received from the first round of consultation with a view to identifying an emerging preferred scheme in the early part of 2025. This in turn will further inform the SOC+ which is scheduled to be submitted to the DfT in Q2 2025.