



Report of the Director of City Development

Scrutiny Board (City & Regional Partnerships)

Date 16th October 2009

Subject: Session 1: Inquiry into Integrated Transport Strategies for Leeds and the Wider Region -Transport Governance Discussion and Options Paper

Electoral Wards Affected: All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Scrutiny Board at its last meeting agreed the attached terms of reference for an Inquiry into Integrated Transport Strategies for Leeds and the Wider Region. This first session will focus on the following:

- The governance arrangements for transport strategy within West Yorkshire and in the Leeds City Region and the way in which the needs of the people of Leeds are represented at each level (this report).
- The recently announced forerunner status for the city region(separate report to this meeting)
- The key priorities for local and regional transport as set out in the existing strategies, and the way in which these complement and interact with one another (separate report to next meeting).

2.0 Purpose of the Report

2.1 The Scrutiny Board is asked to consider options on the formation of appropriate transport governance arrangements for the city region and West Yorkshire.

3.0 Recent progress

3.1 At their meeting on 30th March 2009, the Leaders' Board agreed to progress the development work needed to implement the governance reforms for the West

Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority (WYITA), with strengthened city region partnership; this was in line with the recommendations made by consultants, Atkins.

3.2 Since, being confirmed as Project Director in May, the author has held a series of meetings with DfT, Government Office, LCR Secretariat and Chief Officers from across LCR to clarify and confirm understanding of current views on the subject and the recommendations emerging from Atkins' work. A number of key views have been reaffirmed in these discussions:

- DfT seem more interested in how LCR decision making arrangements would be progressed, e.g. how individual LTPs are integrated into the LCR transport strategy, as part of a wider funding package, rather than in the development of the WYITA governance scheme.
- Devolution of any measures emerging from the forerunner process, will only progress hand in hand with the establishment of formal, clear and accountable governance arrangements with a strong vision and purpose.
- The current governance arrangements are regarded as complex, unwieldy and ineffective.
- The governance review undertaken by Atkins is a strong piece of work but considered by some to be voluminous and somewhat impenetrable.

3.3 Following this stock-take of the current position, consideration by the Scrutiny Board of a number of key questions would be useful at this stage.

4.0 Vision

4.1 Very importantly, the backdrop to any discussions on this subject is the LCR Transport Strategy, which has been the subject of considerable joint working over the last 9 months and which should be approved by the Leaders at the Transport Summit in Harrogate, in November 2009.

4.2 The LCR strategy, which will form an integral part of the more locally focused LTPs, will set the transport vision and direct future major investment decisions, policies and actions across the Region.

4.3 Adoption of this strategy by all relevant authorities and appropriate representation on any revised governance arrangement/ Boards or Panels should facilitate the taking of decisions on powers of direction, voting and veto rights, scrutiny arrangements etc.

If we are to be ready for, and to accelerate, the economic upturn, it is considered vitally important that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to ensure delivery of the Strategy.

4.4 The following outlines options for discussion in respect of the formation of robust transport arrangements for the city region and West Yorkshire.

5.0 Leeds City Region Partnership

5.1 It was agreed stronger LCR governance should build on existing arrangements.

5.2 It is widely accepted that there needs to be a delegation of powers from the Leaders' Board to the Transport Panel to increase its capacity and to strengthen its role; the Chair of the Panel would champion the Transportation cause at a Regional and National level.

- 5.3 The potential for the Panel to be convened under Joint Committee arrangements needs further examination and advice from the Legal Officers Group. Initial feedback is that a LCR Transport Joint Committee would be feasible.
- 5.4 If accepted and progressed, the greater decision making powers that would flow to the Panel would necessitate a review of a number of issues e.g.
- Clarification of where the powers would come from (e.g. DfT, Leaders' Board, individual Local Authorities, WYITA/ Metro)
 - Membership review – inclusion of key stakeholders e.g. Yorkshire Forward, Government Office and Local Authorities not currently Panel members.
 - The merits of weighted voting and veto rights would need discussion and clarification.
 - Scrutiny arrangements to ensure transparency and accountability
- 5.5 Depending on the outcome, the role and Membership of the Connectivity Partnership would also need to be clarified.

6.0 West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority (WYITA)

- 6.1 There are a number of similar key issues arising from the establishment of a WYITA Governance Scheme. They include:
- Membership of the WYITA
 - Voting rights
 - Veto rights
 - Powers of direction
 - Scrutiny arrangements
 - Possibility of independent experts on the WYITA
 - Future funding arrangements of locally important schemes
 - Ability of authorities to deliver LTP3 schemes
- 6.2 It would be useful if these issues, which have been expanded upon in the following text, are discussed by the Scrutiny Board.
- 6.3 The ITA is responsible for advising on strategic WY transport planning issues, principally via the production of LTP3, which, is also reliant on significant joint working between the authorities. There is a history of good collaborative working between the various authorities, notably on LTP2 and LCR Transport Strategy.
- 6.4 The delivery of schemes in line with the latter and the objectives to be set out in LTP3 will be key and is an area highlighted for improvement. The newly formed WY Chief Officers Group is an obvious focal point for co-ordinating and overseeing programme delivery. The Chief Officers group should be charged with monitoring and managing the delivery of LTP3 schemes and strategies and be accountable to the LTP Steering Group and to WYITA. The actual delivery of schemes on the ground would remain the responsibility of the relevant District Council(s) and/or Metro.
- 6.5 Provision for powers of direction need to be considered to ensure that the schemes and strategies contained within LTP3 are delivered. Such powers would enable WYITA to step in and “direct” a particular course of action. This may only be necessary on an identified Strategic Transport Network (currently being developed),

and used only in exceptional circumstances. Consensus should be the norm and solutions should be identified via the Chief Officers Group. However, to ensure deliverability of LTP3, the recommendation is that powers of direction should be available to the WYITA on the Strategic Transport Network.

- 6.6 Future funding arrangements will need to be clarified, particularly in regard to the funding of local priority projects. Dealing with the local issues as well as the strategic issues will be an important consideration.
- 6.7 Atkins made a strong recommendation that the new WYITA needs to be strategic in its modus operandi. Atkins therefore recommended the number of WYITA Members should be reduced, from the current number of 22 to 10. The proposal was that the 10 would comprise relevant Cabinet / Executive Members from each of the 5 authorities responsible for Highways & Transportation. A change from 22 to 10 would require a change in legislation. It is important to note here that there was consistent opposition to this proposal from existing Members of the WYPTA.
- 6.8 Alternative suggestions have included a Cabinet style executive of 5-7 Members. This would be the decision making body supported and advised by the remaining ITA Members. It was suggested the 5-7 Members need not be the relevant Executive / Cabinet Members.
- 6.9 Irrespective of formation, it is considered important that there needs to be a core group of WYITA Members providing clear strategic transport direction. For this reason, it seems logical these should include the relevant Portfolio holders. A move to appoint Portfolio holders to the WYITA could be achieved in advance of any revised formal governance scheme by altering the Membership in the annual appointment process in May / June 2010.
- 6.10 Voting rights for the revised WYITA Membership would also need to be resolved. Consensus however should be the norm and only in exceptional circumstances would a vote be required.
- 6.11 Another key issue is whether or not voting rights should be weighted in some way to reflect population and /or length of the highway network. The key issue here is the need to get the right representatives on the WYITA. If this could be achieved, and in order to emphasise joint working and cooperation, one option is for the "one person one vote" principle to apply.
- 6.12 It has been suggested that non-elected independent experts should join WYITA to advise and make recommendations, using their expertise and experience. This would appear to be a positive move but one that would only work if these were paid positions with no voting rights, with the number of experts to be agreed. Appointments could be temporary depending on the circumstances.
- 6.13 With regard to veto rights, again, it is recommended that consensus should be the norm. The suggestion is that veto rights would not be appropriate in the revised governance arrangements and that majority decisions (weighted or otherwise) should be taken.
- 6.14 An associated issue is the setting up of appropriate scrutiny arrangements which would need to be established for the WYITA. Should this be comprised of former PTA/ITA members?

7.0 Next Steps – Work Programme

7.1 The Project Director will be developing in the near future a detailed project plan for taking forward the LCR partnership and the WY Governance arrangements.

8.0 Recommendation

8.1 The Scrutiny Board is requested to comment on the various issues raised and to provide advice on the way forward and next steps.