

SCRUTINY BOARD (INFRASTRUCTURE, INVESTMENT & INCLUSIVE GROWTH)

WEDNESDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER, 2019

PRESENT: Councillor P Truswell in the Chair

Councillors N Buckley, L Cunningham,
N Dawson, K Dye, J Goddard, R Grahame,
K Maqsood, M Shahzad, J Taylor and
P Wadsworth

40 APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

There were no appeals.

41 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information.

42 Late Items

43 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations.

44 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor C Hall.

45 Minutes - 9 October 2019

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

46 Advancing Bus Provision

The report of the Head of Democratic Services, Director of City Development and West Yorkshire Combined Authority set out the progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Inquiry into Advancing Bus Service Position.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Cllr L Mulherin – Executive Member
- Andrew Hall - Head of Transportation
- Cllr K Groves – Chair of WYCA Transport Committee
- Dave Pearson – Director, Transport Services

- Andrew McGuinness – Chair, Association of West Yorkshire Bus Operators & Regional Manager, Northern & Yorkshire Regions, CPT UK
- Paul Matthews – MD First Leeds
- Alex Hornby – Transdev
- Dwayne Wells – Arriva

The Board was given a presentation which focussed mainly on the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance. Issues highlighted included the following:

- West Yorkshire Bus Alliance Commitments
- Governance Structure and Partnership Agreements
- Priorities and Customers
- Developing a Sustainable Bus Network
- Changes to the Bus Industry

Further issues highlighted included the following:

- Ambitions to increase bus patronage by 50%. It was anticipated that it would take five to ten years to achieve the level of growth required.
- Further investment was needed in bus corridors.
- The need to make services more viable and affordable.
- The need for integrated ticketing across providers.
- Reassurance about the future delivery of commitments made by First including investment in vehicles in light of the anticipated changes in ownership of the company.
- Development of the National Bus Strategy and the need for national policy.
- The need for bus operators to work in partnership with local authorities.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following was discussed:

- The need for improvements on smaller bus networks to improve connectivity for older people and families. Members were informed that the connectivity strategy would consider all kinds of bus transport and better connect people to education and employment opportunities. Work on the core network would support other parts of the network. Provision of demand led services was also discussed.
- Should the Alliance have ownership or part ownership of one of the bus providers there is legislation in place to enable a public body to operate in a commercial environment. WYCA had commissioned expert advice to consider available options. Financial liabilities will need to be considered.
- Concern regarding the reduction of services and lack of clarity on changes to services.
- Investment in upgrading vehicles and providing new vehicles which would contribute to reducing emissions.
- Ongoing work to simplify fare structures.

- Use of technology for timetable information, tracking and ticketing.
- The need to revise the planning process with regard to bus provision and to ensure that funds from Section 106 agreements are used more efficiently.
- Lack of accountability and how the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance could address this.
- The potential impact on staff and customers of a change in ownership of a bus operating company.

In consideration of the recommendation, the status of recommendations were agreed as follows:

- Recommendation 1 – Not fully implemented (progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 2 – Not fully implemented (progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 3 - Achieved
- Recommendation 4 – Not fully implemented (progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 5 - Not fully implemented (progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 6 – Not fully implemented (progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 7 - Not fully implemented (progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 8 – Not fully implemented (progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- Recommendation 9 - Not fully implemented (progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)

The following key points were raised during consideration the recommendations:

- Infrastructure investment – There was constant engagement with engineering teams and bus operators to minimise disruption planned roadworks.
- An update was requested on the position with the retrofitting of emission control technologies to vehicles.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report and discussion be noted.
- (2) That the above status of tracking recommendations be approved.

47 Referral to Scrutiny - Proposal for Surface Level Car Park Kirkgate Market

The report of the Head of Democratic Services presented details of a referral that had been made to the Board by Councillor M Dobson which raised concern about the impact of a proposal to build a surface level car park on part of the outdoor market at Kirkgate Market on the Council's declared Climate Emergency.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor J Pryor – Executive Board Member, Learning, Skills & Environment
- Councillor A Khan – Chair, Kirkgate Market Management Board
- Councillor M Dobson – Leader, Garforth & Swillington Independents
- Martin Farrington – Director City Development
- Chris Coulson – Executive Manager, Tech Asset Management
- Steve Mason – Head of Markets
- Lawrence Brown – Kirkgate Market Trader Representative on the Markets Management Board.

Councillor Dobson addressed the Board. He raised the following issues:

- The potential impact of the proposals on the Council's declared Climate Emergency and aspirations to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- A 42 space car park with a one hour minimum stay could generate up to 504 traffic movements a day and add traffic to the already congested network.
- There was alternative provision at the adjacent NCP car park.
- The level of impact previous parking provision at George Street had had on footfall given the use of the spaces by market traders and staff.
- The need to deliver improved public transport links to increase footfall at Kirkgate Market.
- Concern regarding the ballot and the lack of clarity in the breakdown of any distinction between the views indoor and outdoor traders.
- Concern that there had not been consultation with the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee.

In response to Councillor Dobson's submission, Martin Farrington addressed the Board. The Markets Management Board had been established in 2013 to enable traders to have a greater say in the running of the markets. The Board includes representatives from the indoor and outdoor markets as well as Elected Members and independents. The decision to explore the feasibility of a surface level car park was made in response to a direct request from market traders. Traders had expressed a view that the NCP and Victoria Car Parks are not regarded as easily accessible and convenient for market shoppers, adversely affecting certain types of shopping habits such as bulk buying. The Board considered a range of arguments setting out the environmental benefits of the market as compared with other food retailers and accessibility of goods for families on low incomes. Members also noted that the proposed car park would be able to facilitate electric charging points. With regard to the ballot, 64% were in favour of the proposals.

Councillor Pryor informed the Board that there had been support for a car park by traders following the original consultation. It was not thought that there would be a net increase in parking given the loss of car parking at George Street. Cllr Pryor highlighted the environmental benefits of purchasing products from the market as opposed to other retailers.

Further issues highlighted included the following:

- Incentives for market users to use the NCP car park.
- The expectation that other new food retail developments would include a car park in their planning application.
- The expected loss of nearby parking with the Quarry Hill Development.
- The role of parking in securing the long term viability of the market.
- A perceived loss of market custom since the development of the Victoria Quarter.

In response to Members comments and questions, further discussion included the following:

- Concern that the report did not fully consider highways issues or address the dispersal of traffic through the city. It was reported that the traffic impact would be fully considered as part of the planning application and by highways officers in their role as a formal consultee.
- Increased landscaping was being considered as part of the proposals along with additional tree planting.
- It was suggested that the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee should be consulted.
- Concern that it was not possible to evaluate the carbon footprint of this proposal against the potential environmental benefits.
- The market hosted 245 businesses some of which were struggling. These businesses and the market also supported the city centre and other business in the city. The proposals would support the market and other retailers.
- Suggestions for alternative ways of spending the capital for this project. It was reported that funding of the project would be through revenue generated by the car park.
- It was recognised that there would be some disruption for outside traders during any period of works for the proposals. Most of the work would be outside market operating hours. For those who were directly affected and forced to move, compensation could be made through rent reduction.
- There was a vacancy rate of 52% at the outdoor market. There had been a decline nationally. Younger traders preferred indoor stalls and longer hours. The outdoor market was promoted and aimed at the kind of businesses that would use it.
- It was thought that the proposed car park would take users from the NCP car park.

In summary, Councillor Dobson felt this proposals was not the right way to meet the Council's aspirations in relation to the climate emergency declaration

and that this could be part of a wider discussion. He noted the need to balance climate change considerations with the need to support market traders. He asked whether alternative options had been explored.

In conclusion it was reiterated that Kirkgate Market was a vital retail asset at the heart of the city. The request was brought forward by the traders and the Council was responding to that request. This is not regarded as a large infrastructure project and officers noted that there are many larger projects with car parks that had not been referred to scrutiny or the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee.

It was suggested that the application be referred to the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee and that a review of the Council's car parking policy is considered in light of the impact of the climate emergency. It was also agreed that the Chair would write to the Chief Planning Officer to highlight the Board's particular concern about levels of traffic dispersal.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the matter be referred to the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee
- (2) That the Board should consider including a review of the Council's Car Parking Policy in its work programme, particularly in light of the Climate Emergency declaration.
- (3) The Chair write to the Chief Planning Officer to highlight the Board's concerns about traffic dispersal.

48 Work Schedule

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's Work Schedule for the remainder of the current Municipal Year.

A copy of the Board's Work Schedule and recent Executive Board minutes were appended to the report.

RESOLVED – That the Board's Work Schedule be noted.

49 Date and Time of Next Meeting -

Wednesday, 8 January 2020 at 10.30 a.m. (Pre-meeting at 10.00 a.m. for all Board Members)