

## **BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

# **ECONOMY, SKILLS AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE**

**1400 hours on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Committee Room 2 – Actions**

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### **Present:**

Councillor Zafar Iqbal (Chair)

Councillors Sir Albert Bore, David Barrie, Zaker Choudhry, Phil Davis, Liz Clements, Timothy Huxtable, Josh Jones and Ken Wood

### **Also Present:**

Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde, Managing Director, West Midlands Trains

Francis Thomas, Head of Corporate Affairs, West Midlands Trains

Malcolm Holmes, Interim Executive Director, West Midlands Rail and Interim Director of Rail, Transport for West Midlands

Kerry Whitehouse, Interim Flood Risk Manager, Birmingham City Council

Baseema Begum, Research & Policy Officer, Scrutiny Office

Rose Kiely, Overview & Scrutiny Manager, Scrutiny Office

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## **1. NOTICE OF RECORDING**

The Chairman advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (which could be accessed at "[www.birminghamnewsroom.com](http://www.birminghamnewsroom.com)") and members of the press/public may record and take photographs.

The whole of the meeting would be filmed except where there were confidential or exempt items.

## **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mahmood Hussain and Ziaul Islam. Councillor Josh Jones submitted an apology for lateness.

The Chair stated that he would be re-arranging the order of the agenda to take the West Midlands Rail Franchise item first.

### **3. ECONOMY, SKILLS AND TRANSPORT: ACTION NOTES 14<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2017/ISSUES ARISING**

The Chair, Cllr Iqbal confirmed progress on outstanding actions from the Committee's previous meeting:

- An email was circulated on 10<sup>th</sup> January providing more information on the Employment Services budget as requested.
- Cllr Josh Jones requested an update on the Birmingham Cycle Revolution programme at a future meeting. The Cabinet Member for Transport & Roads is attending the Committee's next meeting and it has been requested that an update the latest position on the BCR programme is provided.

### **4. WEST MIDLANDS RAIL FRANCHISE**

Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde ran through the presentation as included in the agenda pack members.

During discussion and in response to Members the following points were made:

- Plans for new stations are being developed by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), West Midlands Rail (WMR) and West Midlands Trains (WMT). The operation of trains and timetable of services is currently work in progress. The timetabling work will determine where trains can stop and consideration of this will be in line with and in balance with passenger need and the available capacity at Birmingham New Street station.
- Work is on-going on through the Midlands Connect partnership to increase capacity including looking at a better local service on the Tamworth corridor and Sutton Coldfield. Also consideration of routes to Water Orton where there is a lack of capacity through the Midlands Rail Hub.
- 5 stations will serve venues being utilised as part of the Commonwealth Games 2022. Three of these will require a small intervention. Perry Barr and University station require a more work and schemes are currently being worked on to rebuild University station because of the huge footfall. Perry Barr station needs a significant amount of work as this is where the Commonwealth Games village will be based and ties in with the regeneration of the area.
- In terms of investment in trains it was confirmed that 1050 new car parking spaces would be created as part of the franchise agreement.
- Car parking at train stations has traditionally been funded through capital funding. The policy of limited car parking at stations has encouraged more people onto trains and that has many benefits such as reducing congestion and improving air quality with fewer vehicles on the road. Innovative technology is being supported.
- The improvements to the passenger experience will see the fleet of trains increase from 556 to 706 by 2021/22. This includes a new fleet for the high capacity Cross-City line. This new fleet will include more room for standing in line with a model used in other cities. The aim is to provide a more

comfortable standing experience and WMT and WMR are working with TfWM on this.

- There are plans to enable train users to use 'Smart' ticketing however it is understood that personal service is also important and there is a commitment in the franchise agreement on staffing levels. Ticketing offices are under review as there will be an impact on usage in line with smart ticketing when it gets underway.
- It is anticipated that with the design of the new trains there should be no impact on trains during the autumn period when traditionally there has been a leaf fall timetable operating at some stations.
- In terms of increases to services, safety, capacity and timetabling it is imperative that Network Rail are involved in those conversations especially as Birmingham continues to see more growth in commuting.

Malcolm Holmes explained his role and that of WMR as detailed in the presentation circulated. In particular he highlighted and commented on:

- The Single Network Vision (i.e. what the passenger gets) agreed by the Board of Directors (includes elected members from each of the member authorities).
- That he receives tactical direction from the Rail Officers Devolution Group (made up of transport officers) from each of the partner authorities that meets monthly.
- That the Rail Investment Strategy is about capital investment looking at what the needs are in the wider region in the decades coming. This is affected by likely changes in housing growth and the economy and identifying the gaps. This can then be used to lobby Government on the amount of funding needed.
- In terms of rail franchising it was important to clarify the different markets within the West Midlands region and ensure there was the correct specification and procurement in the franchise with WMT. WMR have devolved powers to manage the franchise from the Secretary of State.
- In addition it was important to ensure that the WMR brand and identity was connected to the region and its people.
- A dedicated fund from the Department for Transport (DfT) for the marketing of West Midlands Rail services. This demonstrates the significance as it has not been done before and the fact that many more journeys are transferring from cars to trains.
- The West Midlands Station Alliance brings together industry partners (WMR, WMT and Network Rail) to work together and get investment to enhance stations. The Alliance has a long term vision for stations (this is currently not done elsewhere) that will enable it to work much more collaboratively and efficiently.
- The Alliance has been operating in shadow form in the last year and is working on two trial routes.
- Work is still underway on Snow Hill station in terms of responding to growth in the city including an oversight of developing a new station. There is also

work going on through Midlands Connect in terms of providing additional capacity into Birmingham through the opening of platform 4 at Snow Hill.

- There is also work going on at St Chads tram stop adjacent to Snow Hill that will open up direct access into Snow Hill and it is anticipated that this will be delivered in the next 12 months.
- In terms of the work at Moor St station there is more complexity due to the number of active projects. The aim is to utilise the additional capacity here and link the station up through a 'One Station' aim that will link the new station at Curzon St with Moor St and New St stations. This work is being by the City Council as part of work to Moor St Queensway.

**RESOLVED:-**

1. Malcolm Holmes to provide Councillor Huxtable with further information on the implementation of the 'Baby on Board' scheme on local rail services.

**5. FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

Kerry Whitehouse, Interim Flood Risk Manager outlined the key points from her report and during discussion with Members the following points were made:

- The budget for flood risk works is currently £300,000 and is funded through the Economy directorate's revenue budget.
- Key assets are prioritised and maintained through a programme of works based on how likely they are to block. Priority is also given to areas where there have been historical problems.
- Residents are engaged with through flood management groups.
- Following the 2016 flooding incidents the City Council has tried to engage with affected communities and tried to set up flood management groups where needed. This enables the community to fund sandbags and support.
- The City Council works with the Environment Agency and resilience team.
- The City Council needs to bid to Government for funding and bring forward schemes. Individuals would have to fund themselves or go through the City Council to get funding.

**RESOLVED:-**

2. Cllr Ken Wood requested a copy of the rolling programme of flood risk management works.

**6. WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE ECONOMY, SKILLS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2017-18**

(See document No 4)

The Chair confirmed the later start of the next meeting at 3pm and the items scheduled.

Councillor Bore stated that the Committee would need to very specific in aspects picked up on the potential inquiry marked on the work programme as 'Future of Birmingham – economic growth and consequences of growing population'.

In terms of a potential inquiry on 'The Skills Agenda' it was felt by Councillor Bore that an assessment was needed on what the changes have been in the position of the city as a consequence of different skills programmes and the impact they have had. An analysis is required on whether the investment has changed the position of Birmingham and the skills spectrum of the local population.

Councillor Clements emphasised that it was important that all areas specific to the remit of the Committee are considered in future work programming including libraries and arts.

**RESOLVED:-**

That the above points are noted.

**7. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS**

None.

**8. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**9. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

Agreed.

**RESOLVED:-**

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

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The meeting ended at 1554 hours.