

Meeting: West Midlands Rail Board of Directors

Subject: Minutes

Date: Friday 15 September 2017 at 09.30am

PRESENT:

Partner Authorities

Councillor Mark Winnington	- Staffordshire County Council – In the Chair
Councillor Stewart Stacey	- Birmingham City Council
Councillor David Welsh	- Coventry City Council
Councillor Ian Kettle	- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Roger Horton	- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Ted Richards OBE	- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Angela McClements	- Telford and Wrekin Council
Councillor Peter Butlin	- Warwickshire County Council
Councillor Dr Ken Pollock	- Worcestershire County Council

Affiliate Partner Authority

Councillor David Jellyman	- Stoke on Trent City Council
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IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Crowton	- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Beatrice Filkin	- Department for Transport
Malcolm Holmes	- West Midlands Rail
Clare Horton	- Staffordshire County Council
Tom Painter	- West Midlands Rail
Toby Rackliff	- Transport for West Midlands
Peter Sargent	- Transport for West Midlands
Laura Shoaf	- Transport for West Midlands
Carl Craney	- West Midlands Combined Authority

BY INVITATION

Jane Fisher	- West Midlands Trains
Matt Stacey	- West Midlands Trains

Apologies for absence were recorded from Councillor John Clancy (Birmingham City Council), Councillor Jim O'Boyle (Coventry City Council), Councillor Patrick Harley (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillors Tony Johnson and Councillor Barry Durkin (Herefordshire Council), Councillors Steve Eling and Roger Horton (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillors Ian Morris and Andre Gonzalez de Savage (Northamptonshire County Council), Councillors Steve Davenport and Steve Charmley (Shropshire Council), Councillor Bob Sleight (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Philip Atkins (Staffordshire County Council), Councillors Sean Coughlan and Lee Jeavons (Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillors Roger Lawrence and Peter Bilson (City of Wolverhampton Council), Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Warwickshire County Council) and Councillor Adrian Hardman (Worcestershire County Council).

10. Chair's Announcement

The Chair welcomed the representatives from Abellio and West Midlands Trains to the meeting.

11. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Roger Horton declared non-pecuniary interests inasmuch as he was a member of the Transport Delivery Committee of the West Midlands Combined Authority and served as the Lead Member for Metro and Rail on that body.

12. Minutes of the meeting of the West Midlands Rail Board of Directors – 30 June 2017

The minutes of the meeting of the West Midlands Rail Board of Directors held on 30 June 2017 were agreed as a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2017.

13. Forward Plan

The Board noted a Forward Plan detailing items to be reported to future meetings.

AGREED;

That the Forward Plan be noted.

14. West Midlands Rail Programme Update Report#

Malcolm Holmes presented a general update to the Board which outlined progress against WMR objectives since the last meeting in June 2017. The report covered the following issues:

- West Midlands Franchise Competition;
- Rail Investment Strategy;
- West Midlands Station Alliance;
- Franchise Engagement Strategy;
- WMR Steering Group;
- Stakeholder Engagement and Media Coverage;
- Finance; and
- Risk Management.

He advised that the next meeting of the WMR Steering Group would be held in Bromsgrove prior to the meeting of the WMR Strategic Group which would be held in late October.

With regard to 'Finance' he alerted the Board to the possible Value Added Tax (VAT) liabilities together with Corporation Tax liabilities for WMR once the new franchise commenced and the steps being taken to address this issue.

Councillor David Welsh questioned the wording used in the Risk Management section of the report insofar as it related to possible industrial action. Malcolm Holmes detailed the experiences encountered by Rail North on this issue where Trade Unions had made direct approaches to Board Members seeking support. Councillor Welsh opined that the political affiliations and the role of Councillors as Directors of WMR should not be drawn into question. Malcolm Holmes advised that the purpose of the report was to highlight the risk. Councillor Welsh enquired as to

how the risk could be managed. Malcolm Holmes reminded the Board that it received regular reports on the position.

AGREED:

1. That the report be received and noted;
2. That Risk Description 2 be amended by the deletion of 'ferment' and the replacement thereof by 'foment' with the terminology being reviewed.

15. West Midlands Franchise Overview and Mobilisation Arrangements

The Board received a PowerPoint presentation from Jane Fisher, Mobilisation and Strategy Director and Matt Stacey, Mobilisation Stations Lead, from West Midlands Trains.

Jane Fisher and Matt Stacey responded to various questions posed by the Board including those relating to:

- Staffing Strategy;
- Seating layouts;
- Train lengthening;
- Timetable;
- Reputational risk for both parties in the event that promises were not met;
- Wi-Fi provision;
- Security arrangements including CCTV coverage;
- Customer Engagement and communications; and
- Charging policy on car parks.

AGREED:

1. That the presentation be received and welcomed;
2. That the thanks of the Board be extended to Beatrice Filkin for her help and support during the franchise exercise.

16. Franchise Engagement Strategy

Toby Rackliff presented a report which provided an update on the Franchise Engagement Strategy for WMR which had been approved previously by the Board in December 2016 and which sought approval for updates to the approach to the future engagement in light of recent changes to the DfT's franchising policy.

In response to a question from Councillor Stewart Stacey with regard to boundary changes and route re-mapping on Cross Country services and any potential impacts on the timetable, Toby Rackliff advised that this issue had been addressed in the last specification for the East Midlands franchise and was still a matter which was being discussed with the DfT.

AGREED:

That the updated sections of the Strategy be used as the basis for planning WMR's engagement with franchise and franchise consultation responses, noting that this would be kept under constant review to reflect on-going developments with any specific comments being fed back through the respective Officer Rail Devolution Group members.

17. UK Rail Industry Employee Relations Update

Tom Painter presented a report which updated the Board on the latest industrial relations developments affecting the UK rail network and which provided a commentary as to the potential implications for WMR.

Councillor Stewart Stacey commented on the position with Great Western Trains insofar as agreement had been reached with Trade Unions in respect of Driver Only Operation and enquired whether lessons could be learnt from this case. Malcolm Holmes undertook to look into this matter. The Chair opined that passengers were more concerned as to the level of service provided rather than the specific tasks carried out by train crew. He enquired as to the contractual requirements on this issue. Jane Fisher advised that this issue was not addressed in the Franchise Agreement but that it was intended that a second crew member would be on board. Beatrice Filkin advised that the contract protected the number of staff required to be on board.

AGREED:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That investigations be undertaken into the agreement reached by Great Western Trains.

18. Budget 2018/19

Malcolm Holmes presented a report which sought approval of the 2018/19 budget for WMR Ltd.

AGREED:

That the proposed budget for 2018/19 be approved.

19. Combining Leadership for the West Midlands

Laura Shoaf reminded the Board of the significant progress that had been made in achieving involvement in the franchise for the West Midlands service culminating in the new franchise arrangements which would commence on 10 December 2017. She presented a report which sought endorsement for a proposed amalgamation of West Midlands Rail (WMR) and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) rail activity under one Director. This had been designed to establish an efficient, effective and integrated way of delivering and to lead a renaissance on the rail agenda. She assured the Board that governance arrangements, funding, the overview by the Transport Delivery Committee or engagement with members would not be affected in any way. She advised that this matter had been considered by the Officer Rail Devolution Group (ORDG) which had decided to initiate a piece of work to establish 'checks and balances' into the proposals.

Councillor Roger Horton commented that the proposals would need to be subject to monitoring and partnership working. Councillor David Welsh commended the proposal given the inter-action with the WMCA. He questioned the strategic approach with regard to charging policies on Park and Ride Car Parks given the differences both within and outside the metropolitan area. Laura Shoaf commented that a consistent approach would be ideal but cited current difficulties where passengers travelled to 'free' car parks rather than the closest. She reminded the Board that the charging policy was ultimately a matter for the WMCA Board insofar as it related to the metropolitan area. The monitoring of the proposed arrangements would be undertaken through the Transport Delivery Committee, as at present. She reiterated that the

ORDG had initiated a piece of work in relation to 'checks and balances' of the proposed arrangements.

Councillor Ted Richards OBE requested a report on the revised arrangements in six months from commencement. Councillor Dr Ken Pollock commented that as the boundaries of the WMCA and WMR areas were not contiguous he was of the view that the revisions were premature until such time as the 'checks and balances' were in place. Laura Shoaf advised that no significant changes were proposed and that the exercise was a structural amendment only. It had been instigated in the interests of efficiency and presented an opportunity to avoid duplication of effort.

Councillor Stewart Stacey commented that the non-metropolitan councils were being granted equal status under the proposed arrangements and that it could be argued that the metropolitan councils could be considered to be detrimentally affected by the proposal.

AGREED:

1. That the WMR and TfWM activity be combined under one Director;
 2. That the proposed next steps outlined in the report be endorsed;
 3. That the arrangements be reviewed after an initial period of six months.
- [The meeting ended at 11:43 a.m.]*

CHAIR