

**Meeting:** West Midlands Rail Board of Directors

**Subject:** Minutes

**Date:** Friday 15 December 2017 at 09.30am

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**PRESENT:**

**Partner Authorities**

Councillor Roger Lawrence	- City of Wolverhampton Council (Chair)
Councillor Ian Kettle	- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Roger Horton	- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Steve Davenport	- Shropshire Council
Councillor Ted Richards OBE	- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Lee Jeavons	- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Peter Butlin	- Warwickshire County Council
Councillor Dr Ken Pollock	- Worcestershire County Council

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Matt Crowton	- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Adam James	- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Chris Wragg	- Northamptonshire County Council
Tom Painter	- West Midlands Rail
Toby Rackliff	- West Midlands Rail
Peter Sargant	- West Midlands Rail
Andy Baker	- Worcestershire County Council
Margaret Smith	- Warwickshire County Council
Laura Shoaf	- Transport for West Midlands
Claire Melvin	- Transport for West Midlands
Carl Craney	- West Midlands Combined Authority

**BY INVITATION**

Ian Baxter	- SLC Rail
Richard Brooks	- West Midlands Trains
Jan Chaudhry-van_der Velde	- West Midlands Trains

Apologies for absence were recorded from Councillor Stewart Stacey (Birmingham City Council), Councillor Glen Williams (Cheshire East Council), Councillors David Welsh and Jim O'Boyle (Coventry City Council), Councillor Patrick Harley (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillors Tony Johnson and Councillor Barry Durkin (Herefordshire Council), Councillor Steve Eling (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillors Ian Morris and Andre Gonzalez de Savage (Northamptonshire County Council), Councillor Steve Charmley (Shropshire Council), Councillor Bob Sleigh (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillors Mark Winnington and Philip Atkins (Staffordshire County Council), Councillor Angela McClements (Telford and Wrekin Council), Councillor Sean Coughlan (Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Peter Bilson (City of Wolverhampton Council), Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Warwickshire County Council) and Councillor Adrian Hardman (Worcestershire County Council).

## **20. Chair's Announcement**

At the invitation of the Chair introductions were duly made.

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

The Chair reported that Malcolm Holmes Interim Director, West Midlands Rail, would not be in attendance at the meeting having suffered a family bereavement. He advised that he would be writing, on behalf of West Midlands Rail, to Malcolm Holmes offering condolences.

## **21. 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.

## **22. Minutes of the meeting of the West Midlands Rail Board of Directors – 15 September 2017**

The minutes of the meeting of the West Midlands Rail Board of Directors held on 15 September 2017 were agreed as a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

With reference to Minute No. 17(2), Tom Painter reported that the agreement reached by Great Western Railway involved Guards having responsibility for closing train doors with Drivers having responsibility for opening them. Councillor Roger Horton commented that the means of opening and closing train doors was still a current issue across the rail industry.

## **23. Forward Plan**

The Board noted a Forward Plan detailing items to be reported to future meetings. The Chair commented that further consultation was required on the dates of meetings of the Board from September 2018 onwards.

### **AGREED:**

That the Forward Plan be noted.

## **24. West Midlands Rail – Official Launch**

The Board viewed a video of activities on Monday 11 December 2017 connected with the official launch of the new rail franchise.

## **25. West Midlands rail Programme Update Report**

Peter Sargant and Toby Rackliff presented a general update to the Board which outlined progress against WMR objectives since the last meeting in September 2017. The report covered the following objectives:

- West Midlands Franchise Mobilisation;
- West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy;
- West Midlands Stations Alliance;
- Franchise Engagement Strategy;
- New Stations;
- Stations Upgrades Projects;
- Rail Partnerships;

- Community Engagement;
- Stakeholder Engagement and Media Coverage;
- Finance; and
- Risk Management.

Councillor Roger Horton expressed his pleasure that Smethwick Galton Bridge Station would be served by the Welsh Franchise. With regard to the Great Western Franchise he queried whether the main line and local services were being split. Toby Rackliff reported that this was being considered as an option.

With regard to the New Stations, Councillor Dr Ken Pollock queried the progress with the proposed station at the West Midlands Safari Park. Jan Chaudhry-van\_der Velde advised that discussions between WMT and the Safari Park operators had commenced. Peter Sargant advised that timetable development work would dictate what services could be provided.

**AGREED:**

That the report be received and noted.

**26. Developing Collaboration between WMT and WMR**

Jan Chaudhry-vander Velde and Richard Brooks reported on their experience in the first six days of operating the new franchise. Jan Chaudhry-van\_der Velde commented that launching a new franchise in snowy conditions had been challenging but had indicated the resilience of the rail industry as it was probably the only form of public transport that had been available on Sunday 10 December 2017.

He advised that the rail industry was used to dealing with incremental change which often meant that changes went unnoticed by the public. The new franchise had involved dramatic change with the launch being attended by a number of high profile guests and had been the subject of media coverage including Japanese television. On behalf of West Midlands Trains he thanked the Board of Directors for its support and he advised that he looked forward to forging a strong working relationship with Members and Officers.

He suggested that there was a need to consider both collaboration and devolution during the remaining period of the franchise. He outlined the experience he had gained during his employment at Merseyrail which would assist in addressing some of the challenges ahead. He outlined the arrangements for the 'Top Team' at WMT and advised that the exact working arrangements would be discussed with the relevant Officers.

Councillor Peter Butlin reported that the opening of Kenilworth station had originally been planned for 10 October 2017 but had now been deferred until February 2018. He sought an assurance that rolling stock, training, familiarity with routes etc. would be in place for the opening. Jan Chaudhry-van\_der Velde confirmed that WMT had the matter in hand including the sign off of access rights with the Office of Rail and Road.

**AGREED:**

That the report be received and noted.

## **27. West Midlands Stations Alliance Update**

Toby Rackliff presented a report which updated the Board on two key areas of activity by the Shadow West Midlands Stations Alliance (WMSA). Firstly, an update on progress with the West Midlands Stations Alliance master planning work and secondly, seeking approval for WMR to enter into the formal alliance agreement between the three WMSA partners. The Chair commented that there was a need for the stations to be viewed as assets.

Councillor Peter Butlin enquired whether the draft agreement would be used also for Virgin Trains and Chiltern Railways. Toby Rackliff advised that it would be used as a template for agreements with those companies. Councillor Roger Horton commented that the proposals were very positive and that it was important that stations had ambience as the lack of it could serve to discourage passengers from using the service.

### **AGREED:**

1. That the recent progress with the master planning pilot work be noted;
2. That approval be granted to WMR entering into the west Midlands Stations Alliance agreed as detailed at Appendix A to the report with delegated authority being granted to Officers to make other non-material changes as required prior to the formal sign off by a WMR Director.

## **28. Rail Investment Strategy**

Ian Baxter presented a report which detailed the progress made to date in developing the West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy. The Board received a PowerPoint presentation on the purpose and steps taken to develop the Rail Investment Strategy.

Councillor Roger Horton outlined the aspirations for the Sandwell area to be included in the Rail Investment Strategy. The Chair commented that the presentation provided an overview and suggested that there would be a number of opportunities for member authorities to feed in their respective aspirations. Ian Baxter reported that a number of aspirations had already been received from local authorities. The Chair suggested that Councillor Roger Horton should confirm that his aspirations were included within those submitted already by Sandwell MBC.

Councillor Roger Horton commented that he was concerned that services at Sandwell and Dudley Station could be reduced as a result of the introduction of HS2 services. He suggested that services at Wolverhampton and Coventry Stations could be affected similarly.

### **AGREED:**

That the report and presentation be received and noted.

## **29. UK Rail Industry Employee Relations Update**

Tom Painter presented a report on the latest industrial relations developments affecting the UK rail network and which provided a commentary as to the potential implications for WMR. He updated the position with regard to the number of days of strike action and the number of affected days. He clarified the report insofar as Guards were currently responsible for the opening and closing of doors on services operated

by WMT. Jan Chaudhry-van\_der Velde outlined the roles and responsibilities of train staff.

The Chair commented that there was a need to ensure that contingency plans were in place in the event of industrial action. He commented that WMR would seek a commitment for the retention of a second staff member to be retained on trains. He advised Directors that if they were approached by any Trades Union officials with regard to operational issues on WMT services they should listen but not respond. He advised also that the views and advice from the WMCA Monitoring Officer with regard to this matter would be sought.

**AGREED:**

1. That the report be received and noted;
2. That a report from WMT on Workforce Planning' be submitted to a future meeting of the Board.

**30. WMR Ltd. Company Administrative Matters**

Tom Painter presented a report which outlined a number of company administrative matters which required approval.

Councillor Ian Kettle questioned whether the proposed change to year end date of the financial year would have budgetary implications. The Chair advised that these would be accommodated.

**AGREED:**

1. That the opening of two bank accounts as detailed in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report be approved;
2. That Councillors Ted Richards OBE and Councillor Dr Ken Pollock become the authorised signatories of the abovementioned bank accounts in accordance with the required Banking Mandate resolutions set out in Appendix B to the report which would take effect from the 2018 – 2019 financial year;
3. That the amendment of the West Midlands Rail Ltd. year end date to 31 March be approved;
4. That the appointment of external auditors at an approximate cost of £7,000 be approved;
5. That the dormant accounts of West Midlands Rail Ltd. for the financial year ended 30 April 2017, as included within the report at Appendix A be approved;
6. That further consultation be undertaken with regard to the most suitable day and dates for meetings of the Board from September 2018.

*[The meeting ended at 11:27 a.m.]*

**CHAIR**