

Meeting: West Midlands Rail Board of Directors

Subject: Minutes

Date: Friday 30 June 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 Paul Rone	- Herefordshire Council
Councillor Ted Richards OBE	- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Angela McClements	- Telford and Wrekin Council
Councillor Peter Butlin	- Warwickshire County Council

Affiliate Partner Authority

Councillor David Brown	- Cheshire East Council
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IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Crowton	- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Malcolm Holmes	- West Midlands Rail
Clare Horton	- Staffordshire County Council
Tom Painter	- West Midlands Rail
Toby Rackliff	- Transport for West Midlands
Peter Sargant	- Transport for West Midlands
Carl Craney	- West Midlands Combined Authority

BY INVITATION

Adam Checkley	- Network Rail
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Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Mark Winnington and seconded by Councillor David Welsh that Councillor Roger Lawrence be appointed Chair of the Board for the ensuing Municipal Year.

It was proposed by Councillor Peter Butlin and seconded by Councillor Ted Richards OBE that Councillor Mark Winnington be appointed Vice Chair of the Board for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Paul Rone queried whether any further nominations were to be sought for the position of Chair or Vice Chair. Councillor Ian Kettle commented that in view of the number of other duties undertaken by Councillor Roger Lawrence would he have the time and capacity to devote to the post. Councillor Mark Winnington assured the Board that it was highly unusual for Councillor Roger Lawrence to miss a meeting of the Board and that his absence today was

as a result of a clash of meetings. He advised that Councillor Lawrence and he were regular updated on West Midland Rail business via tele-conferences and/or meetings with appropriate Officers. He did not foresee any difficulties occurring as a result of the appointment but that this matter could be reviewed in due course if necessary. He asked whether there were further nominations for the position of Chair and Vice Chair. No nominations were made.

AGREED:

That Councillors Roger Lawrence and Mark Winnington be appointed as Chair and Vice Chair respectively of the Board for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Mark Winnington – Vice Chair – In the Chair

2. Welcome, apologies and announcements

The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting. He welcomed particularly Councillor David Brown (Cheshire East Council) to this his first meeting of the Board as an Affiliate. He advised that Councillor Daniel Jellyman (Stoke on Trent Council) had been appointed as the Council's representative at very short notice and was unable to attend the meeting. He also welcomed Adam Checkley, Network Rail, to the meeting.

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), Councillor Tony Johnson (Herefordshire Council), Councillors Steve Eling and Roger Horton (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Ian Morris and Andre Gonzalez de Savage (Northamptonshire County Council), Councillor Bob Sleight (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Daniel Jellyman (Stoke on Trent 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 Councillors Dr Ken Pollock and Adrian Hardman (Worcestershire County Council).

The Chair announced that letters of congratulations had been sent to the Right Hon. Chris Grayling MP and Paul Maynard MP on their appointments respectively as Secretary of State for Transport and Minister for Rail. He advised that he and the Chair together with the Officers of West Midlands Rail were in regular contact with the relevant Ministers and Civil servants at the Department for Transport.

He drew to the attention of the Board the changes in Principal Director and Substitute Director from Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Councillors Patrick Harley and Ian Kettle respectively, the Principal Director from Shropshire Council, Councillor Steve Davenport and the Substitute Director from Worcestershire County Council, Councillor Adrian Hardman.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made relative to items under consideration at the meeting.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of the West Midlands Rail Board of Directors – 10 March 2017

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2017 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

With reference to Minute No. 39 (West Midlands Rail programme Update Report), insofar as it related to the budget underspend, Councillor Ian Kettle queried the amount involved. Malcolm Holmes reported that it was in the region of £30/40k which had been carried forward into the current financial year.

With reference to Minute No. 42 (Franchise Management Arrangements), Malcolm Holmes undertook to circulate the slides used in the presentation to the Board. The Chair advised that an announcement on the award of the Franchise had been expected in June but this was no more likely to be in July. Malcolm Holmes advised that the evaluation of the bids was now virtually complete but was subject to Department for Transport and Treasury approval. He assured the Board that it would be notified at the same time as the successful Bidder was made known to the Stock Exchange and that a full briefing paper would be provided.

5. 2016/17 Chair's Report

The Chair presented his Annual report for 2016/17 which updated the Board on progress towards gaining greater influence over the West Midlands local rail network during the past year. He thanked the Officers of West Midlands Rail, Ltd, Transport for West Midlands, the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Civil servants at the Department for Transport for their efforts.

AGREED:

That the report be received and noted.

6. Forward Plan

The Board of Directors noted a forward plan of items to be reported to future meetings. Malcolm Holmes reported that the following reports would also be considered at the meeting scheduled for 15 September 2017:

- 2018/19 budget;
- Franchise Engagement Strategy – Update;
- New Franchise – key features and opportunities;
- Draft Rail Investment Strategy; and
- Industrial Relations.

Councillor Stewart Stacey queried the position with regard to slippage on the announcement of the award of the Franchise. Malcolm Holmes explained that a period of 12/16 weeks would be required from the date of the announcement to allow for mobilisation works to be carried out and that, if necessary, the existing contract could be extended. Councillor Stewart Stacey questioned

whether WMR would have any involvement in the decision on the extension of the contract. Malcolm Holmes advised that WMR would not have any involvement as this would be a matter solely for the Department for Transport.

AGREED:

That the Forward Plan including the additional items to be considered at the 15 September 2017 meeting be noted.

7. West Midlands Rail Programme Update Report

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

- West Midlands Franchise Competition;
- Engagement with Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority;
- WMR Executive Team Recruitment and Headcount;
- Single Network Vision;
- Rail Investment Strategy;
- West Midlands Stations Alliance;
- Franchise Engagement Strategy;
- Steering Group;
- Stakeholder Engagement and Media Coverage;
- Finance; and
- Risk Management.

With regard to Engagement with Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority, the Chair welcomed the approach adopted by the Mayor with no formal change to the WMR governance arrangements being required but with the Mayor offering his strong support for the work being carried out and offering to provide his support in influencing central government as and when required.

With regard to WMR Executive Team Recruitment and Headcount, Malcolm Holmes welcomed Tom Painter as Franchise Delivery Manager and Toby Rackliff as WMR Business Development Manager. He reported that it had not yet been possible to make an appointment to the post of Contract Support Manager. Councillor Peter Butlin questioned whether this would have an effect on the capacity of WMR to respond to the Work Plan. Malcolm Holmes acknowledged the slight risk involved but advised that the capacity would be covered by the use of other resources.

With regard to the Franchise Engagement Strategy, insofar as it related to the Wales and Borders Franchise, Malcolm Holmes reported that this was an unusual situation inasmuch as it would become almost entirely devolved to the Welsh Government / Transport for Wales. He undertook to arrange for copies of the comments submitted by WMR in response to the consultation exercise to be circulated to the Board. The Chair enquired as to whether the Board was content with the contents of the WMR response on this matter. Councillor Paul Rone advised that the franchise affected Colwall, Ledbury, Hereford and Leominster stations in Herefordshire and that he was satisfied with the comments made.

With regard to the West Coast Partnership, Malcolm Holmes reported that WMR was engaging with the Department for Transport on this issue. He advised on the three bidders for the Franchise. He reported that relationships with other train operators in the region were also being developed. Partnership Agreements with Chiltern Railways and Virgin were being devised which were intended to be tri-partite arrangements including Transport for West Midlands. The competition for the Cross Country Franchise would commence in April 2019.

Councillor Stewart Stacey commented on the importance of the Cross Country Franchise to the West Midlands region especially in terms of capacity and in terms of the local services to Tamworth and longer journeys to Derby and Sheffield. He enquired as to how this would work alongside HS2 and the links between Curzon Street and New Street. Malcolm Holmes advised that the current Cross Country Franchise did not meet any of its existing requirements satisfactorily and that this matter would form the basis of discussions with the Department for Transport. Toby Rackliff advised that HS2 Phase 2 would have a huge impact on the Cross Country Franchise and that the links between HS2 and the remainder of the network needed to be addressed. Based on the current plans through connectivity had been lost but this had been drawn to the attention of the Department for Transport with additional capacity created by HS2 being required for local services. Malcolm Holmes assured the Board that WMR now had more influence with the Department for Transport than was previously the case and he was hopeful that the issue could be resolved satisfactorily.

With regard to the new Steering Group that sat between the Board and the Officers rail Devolution Group, Malcolm Holmes advised that it was intended that a meeting would be held in July 2017 when two representatives would be appointed to sit on the Joint Strategic Board with the Department for Transport.

AGREED:

That the report be received and noted.

8. Single Network Vision

Tom Painter presented a report which sought the approval of the Board for the West Midlands Rail (WMR) Single Network Vision.

The Chair welcomed the report which would be helpful in informing Franchise Operators of what was expected of them. He enquired how the Board would be informed of progress. Tom Painter advised that a report would be included within the West Midlands rail Programme Update Report and could include a 'RAG' rating.

Councillor David Welsh welcomed the report but commented that it included reference to contentious issues such as car parking. He commented that arriving at a consistent approach to this issue would be problematic. Tom Painter reported that a review of the Park and Ride facilities operated by Transport for West Midlands was underway. Those facilities outside the control of TfWM would be more difficult to address but during discussions on

franchising the aims and aspirations of WMR could be made known. He acknowledged that a great deal of work would be required with regard to a charging policy and that whilst it would be complicated it was still worth attempting. Malcolm Holmes acknowledged that perhaps it was an aspiration too far and that complete consistency might not be possible. He added that in any event, it might not be what was required.

Councillor Peter Butlin commented that a car parking strategy which encouraged people to use the train was desirable and that a charging policy could deliver that or alternatively act as a deterrent. Councillor David Brown advised that this was an unfathomable concept as at Wilmslow Station the charge was £15 per day but the car park was full to capacity each morning. He suggested that passengers should be encouraged to cycle to the rail station with better provision made for secure cycle parking. Improved linkages with train and bus services would also assist in increasing train usage while reducing the reliance on car travel.

Councillor Paul Rone commented that the proposals were both aspirational and attainable and that every possible step should be taken to reduce reliance on car travel. He suggested that the local authorities be alerted to any proposals to introduce or increase car parking charges in order that the introduction of Resident Parking Schemes could be considered to prevent use of adjacent residential areas for parking by displaced car users.

Councillor Stewart Stacey commended the draft Single Network Vision and commented that it gave an indication on the number of areas to be considered in ensuring a traveller knew what their journey should be like. He queried whether the TfWM review was being undertaken in conjunction with Highway Authorities. He also referred to the section of the Strategy regarding 'Buying Your Ticket' and suggested that further consideration be given to this element to reflect latest purchasing patterns. Tom Painter undertook to review and revise this section of the document.

AGREED:

That subject to the review and revision of the 'Buying your Ticket' section the Single Network Vision be adopted as WMR policy.

9. West Midlands Stations Alliance

Toby Rackliff and Adam Checkley presented a report and gave a PowerPoint presentation which provided the Board with an update on progress with the Stations Alliance concept which had been developed jointly with Network Rail.

Councillor Peter Butlin queried the opportunity for local members to have an input into matters under consideration and in determining priorities. Adam Checkley reported that the purpose of the 'master planning' exercise, which would be rolled out across the network, would afford the local members to have input. Malcolm Holmes reminded the Board that this type of concept was virgin territory and acknowledged the need to widen the opportunities for contact with local authority Officers and Members. Currently the only opportunity for input from local authorities was through this Board and he invited Members views on

the establishment of a suitable and appropriate mechanism. Toby Rackliff suggested that, in the interim period, any requests and / or concerns be raised with the appropriate Officers Rail Devolution Group member.

Councillor Angela McClements welcomed the concept of the Stations Alliance. She advised that her local station at Wellington was a good example a business had been introduced but failed with no attempt to repeat the trial. Adam Checkley reported that some community based schemes had been tried but had failed. He suggested that some needed to be based on a social need rather than an economic case. He opined that Wellington Station still presented an untapped opportunity.

Councillor Stewart Stacey enquired whether the Stations Alliance concept was replicating the Single Network Vision. He also commented on the number of 'alliances' which created an opportunity for confusion, for example West Midlands Rail alliance and West Midlands Stations Alliance. Malcolm Holmes acknowledged the latter point and undertook to re-consider the appellation of the West Midlands Stations Alliance. He commented that, given the interest by the Board in stations a route by route approach might not be the best way forward. He suggested that the priorities identified by Members and Officers should be concentrated upon.

AGREED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted;
2. That the continuing work on the development of the Stations Alliance concept be endorsed;
3. That the re-naming of the concept together with a methodology for local member input into identifying issues for consideration and prioritisation be the subject of further consideration.

[The meeting ended at 11:21 a.m]

CHAIRMAN