

Development Committee – Wednesday 15th January 2025

Item 9

Email from WYCA

Good afternoon Naomi,

As per my previous email, please see the response below.

Thank you for your enquiry in relation to franchising of bus services within West Yorkshire and specifically in relation to Todmorden as a border town.

The network that will be franchised is set out in our Franchising Scheme that was published on the Combined Authority website (link: [West Yorkshire Bus Franchising Scheme March 2024](#)). A table is provided at Annex 1 within that document which sets out the list of services to be franchised (presented as the start and end points of service). The franchised network will reflect the network as it stood at the time that the Franchising Scheme was made in March 2024.

Work is underway to start procuring the first contracts in October 2025, with the first franchised buses on the road from March 2027. Under Franchising, bus services will be brought within West Yorkshire Combined Authority's control. That means we would set routes, timetables, fares, and standards. Once Franchising is rolled out, we aim to deliver:

Consistent customer standards to ensure reliable, frequent, and accessible services for all.

- Bus routes, timetables, and fares set based on passenger needs, not profit.
- Seamless travel across West Yorkshire's buses with standardised ticketing and fares, and one point of customer contact.
- Investment in a modern, zero-emission fleet and infrastructure for a cleaner, greener, more efficient network.

In rolling out Franchising, the Combined Authority would want all services operating in our region to conform in aiming to deliver the positive impacts for passengers outlined above.

In line with Franchising legislation, the franchising scheme only applies within the West Yorkshire Combined Authority boundaries (unless the scheme had been developed jointly with other Local Transport Authorities). Cross-boundary bus services are therefore not permitted to form part of the Franchising Scheme and would instead require a service permit to operate within West Yorkshire as non-franchised services.

In implementing the Franchising Scheme, the Combined Authority will ensure there is an effective approach on cross-boundary services, and the use of a permit scheme is a key part of the proposals. The Combined Authority will establish a Service Permit Regime to apply from the commencement of franchised service operations.

Operators of cross-boundary services would be entitled to apply for a service permit with conditions that will be developed as part of the Service Permit Regime. The Combined Authority would look to specify requirements, such as bus age and involvement in regional ticketing schemes, where these

were beneficial to passengers to ensure that the customer experience is consistent with that offered by franchised services. The exact scope of the Service Permit Regime would be subject to formal consultation.

Facilitating cross-boundary services under a franchising scheme is a key requirement of the Franchising Guidance. We are consulting with operators to make sure that this process is as easy as possible. The Combined Authority remain committed to operating the current network, including the cross-boundary services which provide crucial employment, education, and leisure links beyond the West Yorkshire boundary.

As necessary, the approach to development and implementation of the Service Permit Regime will be coordinated between the Combined Authority and the other neighbouring Local Transport Authorities. This approach includes working directly with Transport for Greater Manchester to coordinate the development of the Service Permit Regime. A Service Permit Regime is already in place within Greater Manchester as part of their franchised bus operations, and this regime applies to some services which currently operate cross-boundary into Greater Manchester.

I hope this information is helpful.

Kind regards,

Sunny Williams (she/her)

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