

Item 9 Development Committee
4th March 2026

West Yorkshire Mass Transit

Spatial Development Framework Joint Development Plan Document

Regulation 18 DRAFT
January 2026



Chapter 1: Introduction

Context

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (the Combined Authority), working with partners, is proposing a transformative Mass Transit network to deliver improved connectivity, economic growth, and housing growth across the region. Mass Transit is a large-scale public transport system, which may comprise one or more of the following transport technologies: advanced bus rapid transit, light rail, tram or tram-train vehicles. Mass Transit will form part of the wider ‘Weaver Network’¹ - an integrated network of public transport (and active travel) across West Yorkshire.

The Combined Authority and all five West Yorkshire Local Planning Authorities (Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, and Wakefield) have signed a ‘Statement of Intent’ relating to the proposals for Mass Transit². The agreement promotes effective co-ordination and co-operation to positively influence the project and includes creating a strategic policy framework to add to existing local planning policy and inform the development of future Local Plans. This strategic policy framework will take the form of a Spatial Development Framework, which will have formal planning policy status explained further in chapter 2. This is a farsighted move to join-up policies and investment in transport and development in a way that has not been done recently in England outside London.

The Spatial Development Framework will set out policies to support Mass Transit and shape how future development can be planned around the transport hubs that will be built as part of the Mass Transit network. Spatial in this context is about taking a strategic and place-based approach to the planning of future development and the use of land. The first element of the Spatial Development Framework is to prepare a joint Development Plan Document covering West Yorkshire, there may be further policy documents which provide additional detail.

The joint Development Plan Document is to be prepared collectively by the five Local Planning Authorities through a Joint Committee. It will cover the overall principle of delivering Mass Transit and apply to the geography of the West Yorkshire local authority areas, as shown on the Context map below. Once adopted by each Local Planning Authority, it will form part of the statutory Development Plan for each Local Planning Authority and will carry the same weight as other Local Plans. The Combined Authority and Local Planning Authority intend to develop further policies specifically in relation to

¹ The Weaver Network will bring together all local bus, rail and proposed Mass Transit services to offer simpler fares and ticketing and improved travel information.

² WYCA (2021) Mass Transit Statement of Intent

phase one of the Mass Transit project in due course – phase one is identified on Figure 1³.

Purpose of this consultation

This first stage consultation (known as ‘Regulation 18’) is to seek views on the scope and content of the joint Development Plan Document from members of the public, businesses, community groups, charitable organisations, statutory bodies and other stakeholders.

The feedback received will inform the development of draft planning policies which are due to be consulted upon in mid-2026. Subject to the outcome of this second stage of consultation (known as ‘Regulation 19’) it is the intention of the Local Planning Authorities to submit the draft joint Development Plan Document to Government by the end of 2026. The joint Development Plan Document would then be subject to Independent Examination, during which interested parties will have an opportunity to provide further comments before any decision is made⁴.

How to provide feedback?

This first stage of the consultation (known as ‘Regulation 18’) is to seek views on the scope and content of the joint Development Plan Document from the public, businesses, community groups, charitable organisations, statutory bodies and other stakeholders.

The Regulation 18 Consultation on the joint Development Plan Document will run from Thursday 29 January until Thursday 12 March 2026.

Once you have reviewed the consultation materials online, or at one of the locations across West Yorkshire listed below, please submit your response by completing the survey at

<http://yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/SDFReg18>

Consultation responses can also be submitted:

- By email - MassTransit@westyorks-ca.gov.uk
- By post - Freepost WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY (no stamp needed)

³ WYCA (2025) West Yorkshire Mass Transit Consultation Outcome Report.

⁴ The joint DPD is being prepared under Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. It is informed by a Sustainability Appraisal to meet the specific requirements of Regulation 12, and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, as well as a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report, and an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA).

If you have any questions, need to respond in a different way, or require consultation materials in another format, please contact us using the details above, or by phoning us on 0113 245 7676 (Metroline - charged at the standard operator's rate).

Structure of this document

The remainder of this consultation document sets out the proposed spatial vision and objectives followed by the strategic policy themes around which the joint Development Plan Document will be developed in greater detail before further consultation in mid-2026:

Chapter 2 – Context, vision and objectives

- West Yorkshire Mass Transit – what's happened so far?
- The role of the joint Development Plan Document
- Spatial vision
- Joint Development Plan Document objectives
- Spatial options

Chapter 3 – A co-ordinated approach to delivering great places

- Policy Theme 1 - A place-based approach to transit-oriented development
- Policy Theme 2 - Creating a seamless, integrated transport network
- Policy Theme 3 - Delivering inclusive growth

Chapter 4 – Environment and climate change

- Policy Theme 4 - Climate change
- Policy Theme 5 - Protecting and enhancing the built environment

Chapter 5 – Funding and delivery

- Policy Theme 6 - Co-ordination of funding and investment on Mass Transit
- Policy Theme 7 - Safeguarding and delivery of Mass Transit infrastructure

For each of the seven policy themes, the document explains why it is considered that a policy is needed and provides an overview of what the policy will do. This consultation document does not include suggested policy wording; that will be provided in a subsequent 'Regulation 19' consultation draft anticipated in mid-2026.

Chapter 2: Vision, objectives and options

West Yorkshire Mass Transit – what's happened so far?

West Yorkshire faces a persistent productivity challenge, characterised by an annual £11 billion output gap (the difference in the value of the regional economy

when compared to the UK average) compared to the UK average⁵.

Analysis indicates that this underperformance is not just due to the structure of the economy but is also directly linked to transport constraints. The lack of a modern integrated public transport network also contributes to high carbon emissions and social exclusion. Mass Transit is a key component of a wider set of proposals for addressing these issues.

The proposals for a West Yorkshire Mass Transit network are well established and have been subject to previous consultations including:

- 2021: Connectivity Infrastructure Plan⁶ (a proposed delivery pipeline of infrastructure improvements) and Mass Transit Vision 2040.
- 2022/23: Updated Mass Transit Vision 2040⁷ which, among other things, set out a vision and five objectives for Mass Transit.
- 2024: Route Options for Phase One of Mass Transit⁸ - which consulted upon route options between Central Leeds and South Leeds (the 'Leeds Line'); and Bradford to Leeds (the 'Bradford Line').

In 2025, the Combined Authority consulted upon a draft West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan. This emphasised the importance of the alignment of transport and land use planning for delivering sustainable growth through maximising access of development to existing and planned transport infrastructure such as Mass Transit. It included a commitment to work with the five Local Planning Authorities to develop a strategic approach to integrating development and land use across West Yorkshire with existing and planned infrastructure, including Mass Transit, a franchised bus network and rail⁹. The Local Transport Plan objectives are at Box 1.

⁵ WYCA (2025) West Yorkshire Local Growth Plan: 2025-2035

⁶ WYCA (2021) Connectivity Infrastructure Plan: draft for engagement.

⁷ WYCA (2022) West Yorkshire Mass Transit Vision 2040

⁸ WYCA (2025) West Yorkshire Mass Transit Consultation Outcome Report.

⁹ WYCA (2025) Local Transport Plan.

Box 1 – Local Transport Plan Objectives



Enabling Inclusive growth

Around one in five people in West Yorkshire live in areas that fall within the most deprived 10% in England. Transport barriers limit people's access opportunity – barriers include travel cost and lengthy journeys.

Boosting productivity

Poor public transport connectivity constrains growth and agglomeration benefits, with this impact seen most within densely populated areas of our region. Congestion is costing us, with parts of our network severely congested, and our rail and bus services also unreliable and overcrowded. Alongside this to deliver new jobs and houses without a significant increase in traffic, transport investment is needed to support growth in locations which have good access to services and sustainable transport.



Improving Health and Wellbeing

Active travel and public transport are essential in addressing major health challenges of our time. How we travel is also linked to many of the health and environmental challenges that we face today, compounded by residents in West Yorkshire having low levels of physical activity. In 2022, cars and vans contributed more than half of nitrogen oxides, two thirds of PM2.5 emissions, and almost 90% of PM10 from domestic transport emissions in the UK.

Tackling the Climate Emergency

Transport is the highest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK. Most journeys in West Yorkshire are made by cars and vans and changes in vehicle technology alone will not be enough. We need to reduce how much we travel by private car now by shifting more trips to public transport, cycling and walking, to reduce emissions at pace and see significant progress by 2030.



Also in 2025, the Combined Authority published a draft Local Growth Plan which identified 'an integrated transport network' as one of five regional priorities for growth. The Mass Transit system is viewed as central to realising the Combined Authority's ambition to grow the West Yorkshire economy in an inclusive way. The draft Local Growth Plan states that the joint Development Plan Document (alongside a proposed Mass Transit and Rail Growth Prospectus) will set the foundations to maximise sustainable economic growth and transformational opportunities along the routes.

These strategies and documents have been prepared to fully align with the overall policy intent set out at a national level through the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). The National Planning Policy Framework establishes that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of all plan-making, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places.

The role of the joint Development Plan Document

It is the view of the Combined Authority and the five Local Planning Authorities that a strategic, West Yorkshire-wide approach to planning is required to deliver the transformational change expressed in the Mass Transit Vision 2040, the draft West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, and the draft Local Growth Plan. This requires clearly setting out priorities for how the region should grow, as well as the principles to guide growth and how it should be delivered, so that it is well-planned and aligned with the new Mass Transit network.

Under changes to the planning system set out in the Planning and Infrastructure Act (2025), the Combined Authority will have powers to prepare a Spatial Development Strategy. The Spatial Development Strategy will be used to define the long-term pattern of development at the regional level and set out other region-wide priorities for growth and change.

Ahead of the preparation of the Spatial Development Strategy there is the opportunity for a joint Development Plan Document to establish consistent cross-boundary policies that can align the proposed Mass Transit network with spatial and land use principles to maximise the benefits of the investment. The joint Development Plan Document will provide a long-term (25 years) West Yorkshire-wide framework supporting the delivery of all phases of Mass Transit.

Putting this framework in place is a proactive approach that sets out a clear and joint ambition and can be a tool for implementation that is also aligned to the business case and transport consenting processes that are being prepared for the different phases of Mass Transit¹⁰.

It will seek to ensure that decisions on land use, growth, regeneration, and transport are aligned. It will also guide decision-making related to the early phases of Mass Transit and associated development, while also establishing clear strategic principles and criteria for future, more detailed, local planning as the Mass Transit network progresses.

Adopted and emerging Local Plans in West Yorkshire set ambitious targets for housing and employment growth. The joint Development Plan Document will not review or update these targets or any of the associated site allocations. However, it will provide a clear strategic policy direction on how the delivery of planned growth can be enhanced by using the investment in Mass Transit to create well-designed, locally appropriate mixed-use development and regeneration in well-connected places, improving access to jobs and services, enabling greater economic growth across the region.

¹⁰ Transport and Works Act Orders are the usual way for consent for Mass Transit are applied for.

The joint Development Plan Document will form part of the statutory development plan for each of the five Local Planning Authorities, alongside their Local Plans. It is expected that the joint Development Plan Document may contain two broad types of policy:

- a) high level strategic principles to be applied to the planning, design and/or implementation of Mass Transit; (some of these may be used in decision making where appropriate).
- b) those which form a framework for future Local Plans to provide further detail.

Given the context set out above, and the relationship between the joint Development Plan Document, existing Local Plans, and the forthcoming Spatial Development Strategy, it is important to state that the joint Development Plan Document will NOT include:

- Any site allocations (housing, employment, or mixed-use)
- A local or strategic Green Belt review
- Detailed safeguarding of routes for Phase One, or later phases of the Mass Transit network
- Any new growth targets, or any proposals for the distribution or reallocation of growth
- The direct replacement of adopted Local Plan policies

Spatial vision

There is a need to translate the Mass Transit Vision into a 'spatial vision' from which specific objectives for the joint Development Plan Document can be developed. The proposed spatial vision for Mass Transit is provided in Box 2.

Box 2: Proposed spatial vision for Mass Transit

The Mass Transit network provides a once in a generation opportunity to support sustainable and inclusive economic and housing growth in West Yorkshire by improving the connections between places making it easier for residents, workers and visitors to access jobs and services, and unlocking development and regeneration.

The places connected by the Mass Transit network (as shown on the Context map) provide a clear spatial focus for investment, both to encourage its use, but also to regenerate and improve the quality of the existing urban environment and deliver new housing and employment. Along the proposed Mass Transit lines (or corridors), opportunities to meet identified needs on previously developed land will be maximised, making the most of opportunities to deliver higher density and high-quality development in accessible and well-connected places.

This will require a proactive and planned approach to delivery to ensure investment is co-ordinated and timely. The result will be a Mass Transit network that is fully integrated into existing urban areas and proposed new developments. This will maximise accessibility for users and connectivity between West Yorkshire's towns

and cities through a people-first design approach. Enhancements to the built and natural environment will deliver places on the network where people want to live, work, visit and enjoy.

Figure 1: Context map – Indicative West Yorkshire Mass Transit Network as basis for Broad Mass Transit Corridors. Source: West Yorkshire Mass Transit, Phase one route options consultation (2024)

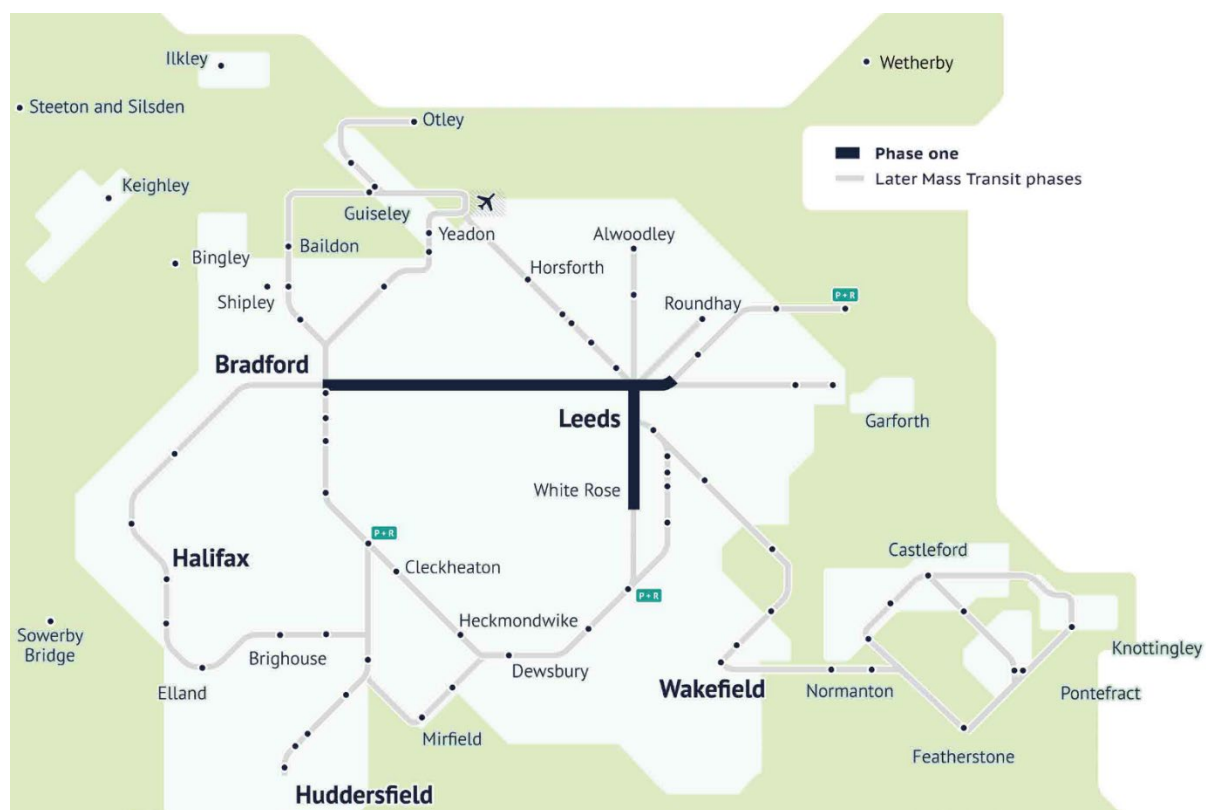


Figure 1:

'This consultation will support development of planning policy in relation to West Yorkshire's Mass Transit network. All diagrams in this document are illustrative and indicative. They do not represent fixed alignments, site boundaries, land-take requirements, or development allocations, and are intended to support strategic policy discussion only. Indicative Mass Transit corridors or lines are shown for strategic planning purposes only. These do not represent fixed alignments, stations, depots, or land requirements. Locations shown are indicative only and subject to further design, assessment and consent.'

Joint Development Plan Document Objectives

The following draft spatial planning objectives have been developed to deliver the spatial vision and express how the joint Development Plan Document will contribute to the delivery of the Mass Transit objectives as detailed in the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan and the West Yorkshire Local Growth Plan:

- **SO1: To integrate transport and spatial planning** by delivering high quality development in sustainable locations that are well-connected and are accessible to the proposed Mass Transit network. This will maximise the opportunities for housing and employment growth within existing settlements, especially on previously developed land where available.
- **SO2: To generate inclusive growth** and realise wider socio-economic benefits for all by improving connectivity between homes, health care, economic hubs, and regeneration areas to drive up a productive and resilient economy.
- **SO3: To help create a fully integrated transport network** that promotes sustainable travel patterns by creating seamless integration across all modes, prioritises active travel, and reduces car dependency and its associated environmental impacts.
- **SO4: To deliver high-quality, place-led regeneration** that creates safe, attractive, and well-designed, well-connected places, which respect and enhance local character and heritage.
- **SO5: To create healthy and inclusive communities** where inequality is reduced, homes are more affordable, the benefits of growth are shared equally, communities become more cohesive, liveable and active, and all residents can safely and easily access services and opportunities (particularly education and health).
- **SO6: To support the transition to a net-zero carbon economy** by providing a low-carbon transport alternative and shaping energy-efficient, climate-resilient development.
- **SO7: To protect and enhance the natural and built environment** delivering measurable gains for biodiversity and green infrastructure, improving air and water quality, and conserving the significance of local character and identity, and heritage assets.
- **SO8: To identify principles to be used for future safeguarding of land** potentially required for future phases of the Mass Transit network to be applied following identification of preferred routes (including associated infrastructure, e.g. depots, servicing etc) through other design, assessment or consenting processes to protect them from development that would prejudice construction or operation.

Spatial options

The adopted and emerging Local Plans in Bradford, Calderdale, Leeds, Kirklees and Wakefield set out the scale of growth – in terms of new homes and retail, leisure, and employment space – that needs to be delivered across West Yorkshire. The purpose of the joint Development Plan Document is to set out how the proposed Mass Transit

system can support and unlock the delivery of this growth in a way that maximises its economic, environmental, and social benefits.

We suggest there are two options for how the joint Development Plan Document could be developed to fulfil its vision and proposed objectives.

Option A: Maximise the benefits of Mass Transit through joined up approach to spatial planning across West Yorkshire (Preferred option for joint Development Plan Document)

This option would create a set of spatial and land use policies and principles to help maximise and fully realise the benefits of Mass Transit. It would establish a region-wide, proactive, and coordinated approach that sets a clear ambition and a framework for implementation.

This option would seek to prioritise development of new homes and business space close to mass transit stops, locations that will be highly accessible. This would support increases in development density to reflect enhanced accessibility and connectivity and promote intensification of economic activity in a way that supports the economy by enabling clustering, employment growth, and employers to access a larger workforce. By increasing residential densities it will support housing growth in a sustainable way. It provides an opportunity to support and enhance the role of city, town and local centres and other economic hubs as focal points for retail, education, services, and employment. It can support the creation of great places that are well-designed, walkable and bikeable, sustainable, safe and inclusive. And it can support growth and opportunity in key economic corridors across West Yorkshire linking economic assets and connecting people to jobs and opportunities, driving up social inclusion.

This approach can create a clear and powerful framework for implementation, helping focus and coordinate investment and intervention at the regional scale across different public sector bodies – bringing together transport, local and social infrastructure, regeneration, housing, economic development, and skills investment. This approach can also send clear and consistent signals to the market regarding the places for growth, and where and how the public sector will seek to unlock private sector investment and development.

Option B: Rely solely on Local Plans to secure the benefits of Mass Transit (Business as Usual)

This option assumes that Mass Transit proceeds, with no Development Plan Document and without a clear strategic policy framework to help focus development in well-connected places near Mass Transit stations and stops. Without a consistent and cross-boundary steer development would still occur in accordance with established plans and strategies, but it would be more ad hoc, and may fail to maximise the opportunity to achieve the scale, density, quality, sustainability, and positive impact of fully aligning development with the proposals for Mass Transit.

Equally, the opportunity would be lost to plan proactively and collaboratively for higher quality development to help create great places, to drive-up sustainability, and to create a strong and coherent framework for the coordination of other investment along main economic corridors. Under this option there is a greater likelihood that investment in supporting social and environmental infrastructure will be reactive and not be embedded within new development, placing increased pressure on existing services. There could also be an inconsistent approach to the consideration of how the most deprived communities across West Yorkshire can benefit from the Mass Transit network.

Chapter 3: A co-ordinated approach to delivering great places

Issues and opportunities

Mass Transit is set to be one of the most significant infrastructure interventions in the region and it is right that it is shaped by a fully integrated approach to spatial planning and delivery. Taking a place-based approach is the best way to align the investment with development proposals to maximise the economic, environmental, and social benefits and define how Mass Transit can be a positive influence on the places of West Yorkshire.

It also sends a clear signal to communities, investors, and developers that the region is ambitious and determined to deliver the right type of growth, in the right places, to benefit everyone. It also provides a framework where future growth opportunities can be identified over the long term – in conjunction with the different phases of the Mass Transit network – and be used to inform the scope of additional Development Plan Documents, and/or future updates to Local Plans, where appropriate.

It is important to recognise that aligning spatial and land-use planning with the proposals for Mass Transit will look different in the different places across the region. The spatial policy framework is not seeking to enforce a ‘one-size fits all’ approach on the future planning of the region. Instead, it is the means to create consistency and coherence when looking to maximise the opportunity from the investment. Clearly, locally appropriate responses will be different depending on whether the context is a highly urban city-scale environment versus a more district-scale or neighbourhood-scale context. The framework is intended to be both strategic and flexible enough to respect those different contexts, whilst establishing key principles that can proactively secure real benefits.

Policy Theme 1 – A place-based approach to transit-oriented development

Why is a policy needed?

In simple terms, transit-oriented development is making a more efficient use of land to deliver more sustainable development. This aligns with the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, which defines transit-oriented development as compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development organised around a station or stop. It is not simply development near transit; it is development oriented towards it. The application of these principles has been effective in other locations, such as Manchester and London, when delivering similar Mass Transit projects.

It is also about supporting high quality development and regeneration in existing places by creating zones of activity within the catchment of the Mass Transit stations and stops. It prioritises ‘placemaking’ to create vibrant, mixed-use communities that reduce reliance on private vehicles, helping foster inclusive growth and environmental resilience. In turn, it provides an opportunity to enhance the role and function of places as destinations and anchors within local communities.

Directing growth and regeneration to align with the investment in Mass Transit will help West Yorkshire act as more of a cohesive, single unit rather than separate centres of activity. This will build upon collaboration on planning issues as part of Local Plan-making processes, and acknowledges that working collectively and cross-boundary on Mass Transit proposals can help improve the region’s productivity by supporting agglomeration, clustering activity around well-connected places, reducing travel times, and improving reliability between key centres and economic hubs.

As Mass Transit is delivered and matures, the certainty provided by an enhanced transport network will also encourage businesses to relocate within the economic hubs served by the network and support existing firms to invest and expand. Investment plans and development strategies can capitalise on Mass Transit’s ability to bring firms closer to workers and suppliers and increase the effective density of employment across the region by better matching labour supply to jobs. Mass Transit also provides the opportunity to increase knowledge-sharing in key sectors and support continued growth in existing specialisms such as digital, financial and professional services, health innovation, and innovative manufacturing.

A place-based approach which supports transit-oriented development also provides a greater opportunity to coordinate the delivery of strategic-scale sites across the region. The investment in Mass Transit can help ‘de-risk’ and unlock key development sites by improving certainty and viability.

What will the policy do?

At the heart of using transit-oriented development to deliver great places is a strong focus on ‘people-first’ design and placemaking. This is to support the long-term vision for West Yorkshire and make sure the Mass Transit project integrates, supports, and enhances those characteristics that make the region unique. It must make the places and locations that it serves better off and be a means to align a range of policy interventions to help overcome existing challenges and deliver positive benefits to all.

This policy will take a long-term view over the spatial planning of the region, recognising that the Mass Transit project will be delivered in phases. As such, it provides a platform for further collaboration at the regional and local level, linked to the production of the Spatial Development Strategy and future Local Plans. It acknowledges that development opportunities linked to stations and stops will evolve over time, and that it is important to be proactive and think ahead so that the Mass Transit investment can be used as a catalyst for revitalising places.

Transit-oriented development by itself does not automatically create successful places. It provides the spatial logic for ‘*where*’ development might occur, but it must work in conjunction with placemaking principles to help support the rationale for ‘*how*’ development is delivered. This draws upon the ideas set out in West Yorkshire Mass Transit “Approach to Placemaking” strategy and recognises that these ideas must be embedded within the design, construction, and operation of Mass Transit¹¹.

The policy will establish a series of principles for how transit-oriented development could be promoted across the region, these include:

- promoting a mix of development types in well-connected and highly accessible places within the catchment of transport hubs.
- encouraging high quality development that supports and enhances the role of city, town, and local centres and other economic hubs as focal points for housing, retail, education, services, and employment.
- supporting a range of development densities to align the proposals for Mass Transit with local development opportunities and strategic regeneration sites.
- increasing development density in certain locations to help unlock development potential, support a greater scale of development, and improve viability. This will also increase the number of people living and working closer to the Mass Transit network, helping to secure its ongoing viability and commercial success.
- specifying design criteria so that the Mass Transit project enhances the quality, character, and amenity of the places it passes through.

¹¹ WYCA (2023) West Yorkshire Mass Transit: Approach to Placemaking.

- designing and integrating Mass Transit stations and stops so that they enhance and celebrate local identity and build upon the unique local characteristics (such as townscape, heritage, and culture) across the region. This includes adhering to the "Streets for Everyone" principles, ensuring that transit-oriented development repairs urban severance and enhances the built environment.

On this basis, this policy theme will require that the Combined Authority and the Local Planning Authorities continue to identify, support, and enhance the role of well-connected places. This will help to create more sustainable patterns of development in alignment with current and emerging Local Plans and help ensure the most appropriate locations and types of development are delivered to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable future for West Yorkshire.

Policy Theme 2 – Creating a seamless, integrated transport network

Why is a policy needed?

Mass Transit is the missing link in the West Yorkshire transport system to deliver much-needed improvements in capacity, quality, and connectivity. It will be the central part of an integrated and seamless multi-modal transport system that links Mass Transit with bus, rail, walking, and cycling to create seamless door-to-door journeys and offer an attractive alternative to car travel.

The investment in the Mass Transit provides an opportunity to:

- **Increase capacity** – by creating additional routes and an overall uplift in capacity across the network. A range of different transport modes and types will offer the ability to carry significantly more passengers, providing crucial additional capacity on congested routes.
- **Improve accessibility** – by being designed to be inclusive, accessible, and safe for all ages and abilities. It will be affordable and equitable, making sure cost is not a barrier to access.
- **Boost connectivity** – Increasing productivity by providing fast, high capacity, and direct connectivity between major centres, key employment and housing locations, and other hubs of activity, like hospitals or schools. Mass Transit can enhance the effective density of urban centres, helping expanding labour market catchments.
- **Create seamless integration across all modes** – by improving the overall offer and providing realistic choices for all users, so that people can select the right mode for the right journey. There will be a deliberate focus on the “*first and last mile*” to allow fully joined-up journeys.
- **Increase frequency and reliability** – by delivering more frequent services on specific routes to improve connections with existing communities.

- **Raise the quality** – by offering a high quality, attractive alternative to car travel. Vehicles and stops will be visually attractive, safe, secure, and monitored by CCTV, with real-time displays. Quality will also be enhanced by having seamless, joined-up timetabling, tickets, fares, and information linked to the Combined Authority’s ambitions for the Weaver Network.
- **Accelerate decarbonisation and improving air quality** – by helping achieve the region’s ambitions to reduce carbon emissions and be ‘net zero carbon’. The service will be zero-emission at the point of use, powered by green renewable sources, and provide an attractive, clean alternative to car travel, supporting modal shift and improving air quality.

What will the policy do?

This is about connecting and integrating Mass Transit within existing places and transport hubs in a way that makes connections easy and travel more attractive to all users.

The policy will set out principles to make journeys to and from stations and stops easier, safer, and more inclusive. It will focus on making new development associated with Mass Transit seamlessly fit into the places they are located. This will include providing attractive public realm; providing effective signage, wayfinding, lighting, and safety features; and increasing the provision of blue and green infrastructure to elevate the quality of place.

The policy will also support the creation of a more reliable transport network with more frequent services, so that places are better connected and people can have confidence in accessing jobs and services when they need them, and that this access is equal and fair. This includes identifying and improving connections to other transport modes in the places and communities not directly served by the Mass Transit network, so that they have greater integration and reliability to improve access to services, facilities, jobs, and homes.

The policy will positively enhance the role that the stations and stops play in the places they are located. This will include being a positive influence during both construction and operation. It means fully aligning the route planning and implementation of Mass Transit with existing and planned development and regeneration sites, so that the physical development of the region is integrated with the transport network and focuses on delivering inclusive growth and environmental resilience. This will require a more conscious strategy to connect planned development with transport hubs through improved active travel links for the “*first and last mile*”, as well as improving the overall quality of place.

To be effective in transforming the transport network the design and implementation of Mass Transit must also be aligned with complementary investment as part of a

reformed bus network, rail improvements, active travel, park and ride, and approaches to car parking. This will help create real sustainable transport choices for people across the region, and to use the investment to help create places and neighbourhoods that improve the overall quality of place.

As with other matters, the integration of Mass Transit will look different in different places across the region. For example, for major transport hubs, usually within larger urban areas, the focus is likely to be on physically stitching into the existing urban fabric, including direct integration with existing transport infrastructure (stations and buildings). There may be an immediate focus on rail integration at key interchanges to support wider regional and national connectivity. This will require a strong focus on integration with the surrounding streetscape and public realm, with a view to raising the quality of place through improved wayfinding, signage, lighting, safety, and design. It will also be important to acknowledge the role these locations will play in helping increase the presence of blue and green infrastructure into urban environments, helping tackle issues such as air and noise pollution, lower carbon emissions, and help improve resilience to climate change.

For town, district, or local centre locations, the focus is likely to be on integrating into the existing transport network, looking at opportunities to reduce the distance and time required at points of interchange. Integration should account for and respect local character, design, and context, and taking a more 'people-based' approach should ensure there is increased permeability along with easy and safe access. Again, there will be a stronger emphasis on integrating the first and last mile of journeys to make them as seamless as possible, whilst promoting greater levels of active travel and shared mobility.

Policy Theme 3 – Delivering inclusive growth

Why is a policy needed

The region faces significant inequalities. Approximately 20% of the population lives in areas ranked within the top 10% most deprived in the UK. These communities are often physically disconnected from the economic opportunities generated in the main urban areas, which creates a barrier to inclusive growth.

Transport is often the barrier rather than an enabler, and reliable access to employment, education, and services like healthcare is frequently reliant on car ownership. Although the public transport network is improving, it suffers from congestion-related delays, often making it an unreliable option for time-sensitive commitments like shift work or childcare.

This policy is a means to create a more inclusive West Yorkshire where people are better connected to homes (including more truly affordable homes), jobs, opportunities, and

services. There is an opportunity to help overcome spatial disparities across the region by linking together major hubs of activity and planned developments so that the region can work together to deliver more than the sum of its parts.

The West Yorkshire Plan's (2040) mission for the future is about creating a "*happy West Yorkshire*", a "*safe West Yorkshire*", and to create an inclusive region that is filled with "*great places and healthy communities*". This policy is about using the investment in Mass Transit to help tackle long-standing challenges through positive action.

What will the policy do?

The policy will create a framework whereby the investment in Mass Transit can be a catalyst for creating better places and better lives. To secure long-term benefits 'on-the-ground' the investment in Mass Transit must directly connect existing communities that experience deprivation and social exclusion and improve access to homes (including more truly affordable homes), jobs, services, and facilities.

As noted above, the policy will focus on integrating with the existing transport network, looking to reduce the distance and time required at points of interchange, and ensure that those communities that are not directly connected to the Mass Transit network can benefit through enhanced services and easier connections. Connecting these excluded communities (and more peripherally located places) to the network and providing better links to main centres of economic activity will help overcome barriers to participation, and means benefits are extended to a much wider area across West Yorkshire, helping more places to thrive.

More specifically, this policy will take a strong focus on designing and delivering a Mass Transit network for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities – recognising that inclusive design is indivisible from good design. It will set out criteria linked to:

- overcoming transport-related social exclusion;
- ensuring all journeys are safe, welcoming, and inclusive;
- improving physical inactivity levels by making stations and stops fully integrated with the local community and therefore promoting walking and cycling for 'first and last mile' journeys;
- improving health and well-being by reducing a reliance on car use that contributes to health issues such as poor air quality due to harmful pollutants from road traffic;
- increasing opportunities to access physical activity or leisure pursuits, including greater access to nature and blue and green spaces; and
- overcoming barriers and severance issues created by heavy traffic flows and major road infrastructure, which restricts movement, and increased exposure to harmful noise levels, which can cause health problems.

The policy will also seek to reduce the direct and indirect costs associated with accessing and using the current transport network. Connecting existing places to the Mass Transit network can help lower the cost of living by reducing the necessity of car ownership, and also by making access to employment, services, and facilities easier and therefore bringing time and efficiency savings. Integrated ticketing combined with multi-modal transport hubs will allow low-income residents to have greater access to opportunities across the region without high travel costs.

Chapter 4: Environment and climate change

Issues and opportunities

A key principle of the approach to placemaking for Mass Transit is being environmentally responsible – this applies both to responding to climate change and its impacts as well as the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

The climate crisis and its impacts are well recognised in West Yorkshire, with a shared ambition to tackle the climate emergency by reducing carbon emissions and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Each West Yorkshire council has declared a climate emergency. There is therefore a shared collective ambition to reduce carbon emissions and respond to the impacts of climate change. The joint Development Plan Document provides an opportunity to provide a planning framework for how Mass Transit can contribute to this.

West Yorkshire is shaped by its diversity in its physical and natural environment. From beautiful natural landscapes and internationally important wildlife to green spaces, parks and trees in towns and cities the natural environment plays an important role in the region – providing for nature, climate resilience and spaces for leisure and recreation.

West Yorkshire's natural environment supports a wide range of habitats and species; however, the nature network has suffered severe decline - as well as losing habitats and species, natural processes that provide flood protection, climate regulation, and urban cooling have weakened. Land use change and climate change are the primary drivers of this degradation. Nature's collapse is not just an environmental crisis—it undermines economic resilience and community safety¹².

Development around Mass Transit can be leveraged to support the natural environment, provide for nature as well as provide wider benefits for climate resilience through providing for multi-functional green infrastructure.

¹² WYCA (2025) Draft West Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Policy Theme 4: Climate

Why is a policy needed?

Transport is the largest carbon-emitting sector in West Yorkshire, accounting for 37% of greenhouse gas emissions, dominated by road transport¹³. Part of the vision for the future of West Yorkshire is about tackling the climate emergency through the fair and inclusive decarbonization of the transport network, as part of the wider mission to achieve net zero by 2038¹⁴. Mass Transit is a key part of the pathway to net zero¹⁵¹⁶. Modelling suggests that major investment in sustainable transport alongside behaviour change, technology and other policy interventions can make a significant contribution towards a net zero carbon transport sector¹⁷.

Future climate hazards within the West Yorkshire region are likely to include warmer and wetter winters, increased heavy rainfall, drier and hotter summers with increased extreme heat. Climate change poses risks such as flooding, extreme weather, and overheating in urban areas, which can disrupt transport networks and increase costs¹⁸.

There is a recognition that recent extreme weather in West Yorkshire has disproportionately harmed vulnerable communities and damaged infrastructure. There is an objective to build a climate resilient region¹⁹²⁰. The delivery of the Mass Transit network should therefore also be about creating system-wide sustainability and resilience.

Current and emerging local plans address the need to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change in a range of different ways. A strategic policy can help to identify a consistent policy approach to the provision of Mass Transit infrastructure and surrounding development.

What will the policy do?

Reducing carbon emissions

A strategic planning policy for reducing carbon emissions associated with Mass Transit infrastructure could include:

- setting out how Mass Transit infrastructure could be operationally net zero. (This could also include policy for exploring options for renewable energy sources such as solar energy along the network).

¹³ WYCA (2025) Draft Local Transport Plan.

¹⁴ WYCA (2023) The West Yorkshire Plan.

¹⁵ WYCA (2025) West Yorkshire's Climate and Environment Plan (2025 2038)

¹⁶ WYCA and Districts (2025) Local Area Energy Plans (draft)

¹⁷ WYCA (2021) WYCA Connectivity Infrastructure Plan.

¹⁸ WYCA (2025) Draft Local Transport Plan

¹⁹ WYCA (2024) West Yorkshire's Climate and Environment Plan (2025 2038)

²⁰ WYCA (2024) The Mayor's West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan – draft for consultation

- setting out how the design and construction of Mass Transit infrastructure can be achieved in line with sustainable design and circular economy principles.
- seeking to minimise whole life carbon emissions for the implementation of Mass Transit infrastructure.
- exploring if specific sustainable design standards such as BREEAM could be supported.

The approach could include providing a high-level framework for Local Plans to:

- set out in more detail how Mass Transit can support the transition to net zero at the local level
- encourage surrounding development to prioritise decentralised energy options, linking in with existing or planned heat networks for example.

Climate resilience

For a future Mass Transit system to be resilient to the different impacts of climate change, the approach to strategic planning policy could include:

1. embedding climate resilient design considerations to address extreme and warmer temperatures, including for example:
 - thermal comfort at stations and stops, maximising opportunities for passive cooling (through orientation, shading and materials). This could involve setting out a cooling hierarchy.
 - providing for thermal comfort whilst people are travelling on the infrastructure.
 - the provision of green and blue infrastructure to assist with cooling and flood resilience (providing wider benefits to biodiversity as covered in policy theme 5).
2. embedding flood risk avoidance as a first principle wherever possible and ensuring a flood resistant and resilient scheme inclusive of appropriate sustainable drainage as a core principle in planning for transport infrastructure.

The approach could also include providing a high-level framework for future Local Plans to further enhance green and blue infrastructure, including sustainable drainage, and ensure this is integrated and complementary to Mass Transit infrastructure to maximise the benefits of this such as cooling and reducing flood risk.

Policy Theme 5: Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

Why is a policy needed?

West Yorkshire contains internationally protected wildlife sites including the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation / Special Protection Areas and other European/Ramsar sites that may have pathway connectivity (e.g. via air quality, recreation, and hydrology). Any potential impacts on internationally protected sites will be considered through the Habitats Regulation Assessment process for this joint Development Plan Document. Where likely significant effects cannot be excluded, Appropriate Assessment will be undertaken as part of the joint Development Plan Document HRA prior to adoption. Subsequent plans and projects will also be subject to HRA where required at the appropriate plan-making stage. Other irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodlands are protected under national and local planning policy.

West Yorkshire is also home to some national character areas (South Pennine and Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe) – any potential impacts on these landscapes will also need to be kept under review as the project progresses.

Mass Transit and associated development have both the potential to impact on the natural environment through their construction and operation, but also provide the opportunities for enhancement to nature, increase access to the natural environment as well as contribute to wider climate resilience as identified in policy theme 4.

The Local Plans in West Yorkshire have a range of policies to conserve and enhance the natural environment but these are not specific to Mass Transit and vary by each Local Planning Authority. A strategic policy approach to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment is required to ensure that there is a clear and consistent policy approach across West Yorkshire and support the sustainable delivery of Mass Transit.

The joint Development Plan Document can support the delivery of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain by setting out how works associated with the scheme can enhance wider environmental benefits, aligning this with the objectives of the West Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and maximising opportunities for habitat restoration and connectivity ²¹.

What will the policy do?

Provide a framework for biodiversity enhancement, nature recovery and blue and green infrastructure for sites/areas around future Mass Transit infrastructure, in ways which support the Mass Transit Design Philosophy and Mass Transit Sustainability Strategy.

A strategic planning policy for Mass Transit could include:

²¹ WYCA (2024) Mass Transit Sustainability Strategy

- exploring opportunities to maximise new biodiverse-rich habitats along existing and new Mass Transit routes and associated infrastructure such as highways, cycleways, pavements, bus corridors etc.
- providing a framework for the delivery of biodiversity net gain as part of construction and maximising associated opportunities for habitat restoration.
- seeking to avoid and minimise effects on sensitive environmental assets, and where necessary mitigate impacts (notwithstanding the separate requirements of Habitat Regulation Assessment for European sites).
- incorporating wildlife-friendly infrastructure design into existing and planned development to enhance ecological connectivity.
- maximising the provision of green and blue urban infrastructure within the scheme footprint, supporting and complementing wider green and blue infrastructure delivery within the region.
- significantly increasing the number of urban trees and woodlands, planting resilient species particularly where existing canopy cover is limited, and prioritising links to habitats.
- providing a framework for sustainable drainage to support wider green and blue infrastructure, prioritising solutions which have benefits for nature.

The approach could also include providing a high-level framework for future Local Plans to support planning for increased and multi-functional green infrastructure around Mass Transit routes, stations and stops, and how that greening can maximise multiple benefits, for example: sustainable urban drainage, shading, reduced noise pollution and improved air quality as well as incorporating habitats for wildlife in urban spaces around mass transit.

Chapter 5: Funding and delivery

Issues and opportunities

This consultation document sets out the potentially transformational nature of the positive change that Mass Transit can facilitate across West Yorkshire, in terms of social inclusion, economic development, placemaking, and natural environment.

However, evidence from across the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States, demonstrates that these outcomes are not a given. They require significant co-ordination of public and private investment towards a shared set of goals with a clear programme of action and the implementation of a wide range of complementary transport, planning and economic policies²². The Combined Authority and the Local Planning Authorities will all have important roles to play in this respect.

²² J Siraut (2004) Economic and regeneration impacts of Croydon Tramlink

All adopted and emerging Local Plans in West Yorkshire acknowledge the importance of infrastructure and delivery mechanisms, including the role of partnership working and developer contributions which can include Section 106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy funds. However, the need for a co-ordinated region-wide approach to the development of funding and delivery mechanisms will be critical to ensure that the place-based benefits of Mass Transit are realised across West Yorkshire.

At the strategic level, the Combined Authority will work with key government departments and agencies to maximise the co-ordination of public and private funding streams, for example to deliver infrastructure which is essential to bring forward key development sites identified in Local Plans along Mass Transit routes.

Through its devolved powers and funding across transport, skills, housing and economic development, the Combined Authority will work with the five Local Planning Authorities and other local partners to align strategic decision making, resources and delivery mechanisms.

Implementation of Mass Transit will require the co-ordinated provision of a complex range of enabling and supporting infrastructure assets and facilities including: existing and new Rights of Way/Pathways; stops and interchanges; walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure; buildings (e.g. operations control centre, depot buildings, welfare facilities etc); signalling and control systems; high and low voltage power supply network; structures (bridges, tunnels etc); park and ride facilities; public realm works (e.g. landscaping and sustainable drainage systems); utilities; and earthworks. These facilities and infrastructure need to be planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way to facilitate a safe, functional, efficient and effective Mass Transit system.

Some works will be delivered directly by utility companies, highway authorities and other statutory providers without planning permission using permitted development rights, but many of the supporting facilities will need planning permission or other consent²³. Larger facilities, for example, Park and Ride sites and depots/stabling yards will require significant areas of land for which future Local Plans should make provision as necessary.

It will be essential that the demand associated with Mass Transit – both directly through the operation of the network and indirectly through the intensification of development in and around transit hubs and interchanges – is factored into utilities demand forecasts well in advance. This will require proactive and ongoing engagement between the Combined Authority, the five West Yorkshire Local Planning Authorities and the utility companies to ensure the regulatory regime supports timely investment.

²³ For example, via deemed permission through a Transport and Works Act Order, in the case of Phase One.

The delivery of Mass Transit will be a long-term complex process, over many years, with significant risks. One of these will be potential conflict with other land uses, for example where planning permissions are granted along a proposed Mass Transit route. This could place constraints on the design. A failure to protect or ‘safeguard’ the land required for Mass Transit in the future could also undermine its delivery, if development encroaches on the proposed route or occupies land for supporting infrastructure, constraining the ability of the system to reach its full potential.

Policy Theme 6: Co-ordination of funding and investment on the Mass Transit network

Why is a policy needed?

Working with Government, the Combined Authority and the Local Planning Authorities will look to explore the feasibility of a range of local funding and finance mechanisms to supplement grant funding. This will include opportunities for capturing increases in land value. Options could include, for example, a Community Infrastructure Levy (first used in London to contribute towards the funding of the Elizabeth Line), or more localised developer contributions. The viability and mechanisms for this require further investigation on a region wide (cross boundary) basis and no preference is established at this stage for source or mechanism.

The Local Planning Authorities may want to take a proactive approach to the preparation of development frameworks for key transit-oriented developments or other large-scale development/regeneration areas served by the network. District partners are already taking such approaches in Leeds (e.g. Leeds Southbank) and Bradford (e.g. Southern Gateway) for Phase 1 of the network, to provide statements of intent and confidence to investors.

What will the policy do?

A strategic policy approach to funding and delivery will seek to maximise opportunities arising from Mass Transit across West Yorkshire by:

- emphasising the critical role that the Combined Authority and District authorities will have in securing and prioritising funding and investment through deploying the full range of its devolved powers (including as Local Transport Authority and strategic planning) and funding to secure, prioritise and co-ordinate the delivery of a wide range of public resources towards the Mass Transit objectives.
- confirming that the Combined Authority will work with the five Local Planning Authorities to align resources and delivery mechanisms to drive implementation.
- setting out how Local Planning Authorities will be expected to take a proactive approach to planning for the development and placemaking opportunities afforded by Mass Transit, including through:

- future Local Plan updates, ensuring their spatial strategies align with the phased delivery of the Mass Transit network.
- working with stakeholders to prepare development frameworks, masterplans and delivery plans for associated infrastructure.
- development management decisions on development proposals which come forward along the proposed Mass Transit routes.

In the absence of strategic policies which commit the Combined Authority and Local Planning Authorities to work collaboratively and take proactive measures to co-ordinate and manage investment and funding, there would be a greater reliance on landowners and developers to put in place the supporting infrastructure (secured through planning obligations) on a site-by-site basis. This has a high risk of development not being delivered in ways which either enable or maximise the wider benefits of the Mass Transit network.

Policy Theme 7: Safeguarding and delivery of Mass Transit infrastructure

Why is a policy needed?

A strategic policy is needed to establish a consistent region-wide approach to ensure that land required for the Mass Transit routes, supporting infrastructure, and facilities is identified and, where appropriate, safeguarded or allocated in future Local Plans. This is needed to protect the network from proposals which would prejudice the delivery or safe operation of Mass Transit.

Any safeguarding principles set out in the joint Development Plan Document will be strategic and criteria-based, and will not fix route alignments, or identify any land-take or specific sites; these matters will be determined through subsequent Local Plans. This should enable integration with other development and reduce uncertainty among the public, landowners, developers and investors.

Delivering Mass Transit will require organisational co-operation and co-ordination to realise the full benefits of the project. There will need to be a full programme of integration with other transport bodies and organisations, such as Network Rail, Great British Railways, National Highways, and the Train Operating Companies. It will also require the co-ordination of other infrastructure plans, policies, programmes, and interventions to make sure delivery of the project happens in a streamlined manner.

Furthermore, the physical construction of the project (at all phases and stages) should represent best practice and deliver its own benefits. Each phase of construction has the potential to be disruptive, both to road users (as a result of utility works), and to the local community due to likely construction impacts on noise, light, air pollution and visual amenity. A strategic approach to the management of construction across the

network can identify good-practice principles and a consistent approach to construction environmental management to support efficient consenting without prejudicing the outcome of project-level Environmental Impact Assessment.

Strategic policies could also support the delivery of the Combined Authority's stated objectives for Mass Transit to provide significant employment and skills development and supply chain contracts within the region both during construction and operation of the network, enabling a significant proportion of the income and spending to be captured locally.

What will the policy do?

A strategic policy would support the Combined Authority and the Local Planning Authorities to work collaboratively to:

- establish safeguarding principles that would be applied to the routes and land required for the individual phases of the Mass Transit network, as they are confirmed.
- enable relevant future Local Plans, following the announcement of routes (and subject to further assessments), to identify and protect sites and routes for Mass Transit.
- establish principles for construction and environmental management to manage impacts during construction of the network.
- develop a Mass Transit Infrastructure Delivery Framework as a mechanism to work proactively with infrastructure providers to ensure that investment/funding commitments for necessary upgrades to support timely and co-ordinated delivery of construction works. This would support the 'single dig' approach to minimise utility diversions and limit disruption to residents and businesses.

Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Accessibility	The ease with which a person can access and use facilities, services, and information in their environment regardless of mobility capabilities. Accessibility ensures that everyone can participate in social, economic, and recreational activities.
Community Infrastructure Levy	A charge which can be levied by Local Planning Authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for Local Planning Authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area.
Economic corridors	Economic corridors are integrated networks of infrastructure within a geographical area designed to stimulate economic development.
Economic hubs	Economic hubs are focal points for commercial, leisure, retail, and other forms of economic activity (including residential). Economic hubs include established city, town, and local centres – but also include other locations of significant economic activity, for example, Leeds Bradford International Airport.
First and last mile	This refers to the initial segment (origin to public transport) and final segment (public transport to destination) of a journey. It is important as poor connections at the beginning and end of journeys can deter public transport use. Solutions include focusing on integrated, accessible options like bike shares or improved walking routes to connect people effectively with main transit hubs.
Green and Blue Infrastructure	A network of multi-functional green (e.g. parks, gardens, recreational space, natural and semi-natural) and blue (e.g. rivers, streams, canals, ponds etc) spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.
Mass Transit (network)	In West Yorkshire this will be a system of urban transportation which may include a combination of advanced buses, light rail/trams, tram-trains and ultra-light rail.
Mass Transit lines	Corridors in West Yorkshire along which Mass Transit routes are proposed to be identified and delivered (see Context Map).
Mass Transit route	An alignment for one of the proposed Mass Transit lines which make up the proposed West Yorkshire Mass Transit network.
Mass Transit stop	A designated stop where passengers board or alight a Mass Transit vehicle.
Safeguarding	Refers to policies and regulations designed to protect future infrastructure projects from conflicting developments.

Section 106 agreement	A legally binding agreement between a local planning authority and a property owner. A Section 106 agreement is secured as part of the planning applications process to ensure the developer meets certain ‘planning obligations’ to mitigate the impact of the development on the local community and infrastructure.
Transit-Oriented Development	An approach to urban development designed to bring people, services, and activities together with quality public transport supported by walking and cycling conditions to facilitate shorter trips, better lifestyles, and more efficient use of resources.
Transport related social exclusion	Where limited access to transport or other issues with the transport system means that people cannot fully participate in society in the way they would like. This can include being able to access a good education, having meaningful and gainful employment, connecting with friends and family, and being able to access leisure facilities, tourist attractions, and the natural environment.
Weaver Network	An integrated network of public transport (and active travel) across West Yorkshire which will bring together all local bus, rail and proposed Mass Transit services to offer simpler fares and ticketing and improved travel information.

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Non-Technical Summary - West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Joint Development Plan Document.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority is planning a new **Mass Transit network** – a modern, high-quality public transport system. Mass Transit is a vital part of the Weaver Network, which is a new approach to an integrated network of public transport and active travel in West Yorkshire.

This major investment will transform how people travel, connect communities, support new homes and jobs, tackle climate change, and create better places to live. By serving our existing places and business locations linking people to jobs, health, education, and leisure, Mass Transit could drive a cleaner, fairer, and better-connected West Yorkshire.

This consultation is about how the benefits of Mass Transit can be maximised by making sure that, aligned to mass transit, new homes, business premises, services and public spaces are built in the right locations, in the right way. To help achieve these aims, the five West Yorkshire Local Planning Authorities and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority are working together to create a shared planning policy document called a **joint Development Plan Document**. This is called a **Spatial Development Framework**.

Why does this matter?

West Yorkshire faces some big challenges:

- An economy growing its productivity, but lower than the UK average.
- A need to accelerate sustainable and inclusive economic and housing growth
- Congestion and unreliable journeys linked to too many trips reliant on the car within the region.
- Unequal access to jobs, opportunities, education and healthcare
- A need to continue to reduce harmful emissions and improve air quality
- Pressure on town centres and neighbourhoods because of the increase in online shopping and inequality

Mass Transit can help address these challenges — but **only if we plan purposefully and proactively around it**. Without a joined-up approach, we risk missing opportunities for regeneration, and investment alongside Mass Transit.

What is the joint Development Plan Document?

The joint Development Plan Document is a shared planning document covering **Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield**.

It will:

- Guide how development and regeneration happen near Mass Transit stops and hubs
- Help Local Planning Authorities work together across boundaries

- Support greener travel, healthier communities and inclusive growth
- Provide a framework for securing and bringing together public and private sector investment to make the most of the Mass Transit opportunity
- Inform decisions for the next **25 years**

It will not:

- Decide exact Mass Transit routes or stations
- Allocate specific housing or employment sites
- Change Green Belt boundaries
- Set new targets for housing or employment land development

Our Vision

Mass Transit is a **once-in-a-generation opportunity** to:

- Boost the economy by connecting employers to their workforce, supporting firms, innovators and entrepreneurs to collaborate, and strengthening economic hubs
- Connect people to jobs, education, health, leisure and services
- Integrate public transport by serving major railway stations and connecting to places people want to go.
- Support regeneration of towns, city centres and neighbourhoods
- Build high-quality, well-designed, walkable places at the right density
- Reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality
- Make sure everyone benefits, including the most disadvantaged communities
- Make it easier to travel without a car

What are we trying to achieve (our objectives)?

The joint Development Plan Document is guided by clear objectives, including:

- Better links between transport and development
- Growth that benefits all communities
- Safer, healthier, more walkable neighbourhoods
- Attractive and well-connected town and local centres
- A low-carbon, climate-resilient future
- Protection of green spaces, nature and heritage
- A framework for safeguarding land needed for future Mass Transit

How could this work?

The preferred approach of the Combined Authority and the five West Yorkshire Local Planning Authorities is to **focus new development around Mass Transit stops and hubs**. This will support new homes, jobs and services within reasonable walking

distance of Mass Transit, and vibrant, mixed-use places with shops, workplaces, homes, public services and public spaces. The joint Development Plan Document will create a framework for coordinated investment focused where this could bring the greatest benefit.

The alternative option is a business-as-usual approach leaving everything to individual Local Plans would risk uncoordinated development and missed opportunities, and weaker social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

Policy themes

The document identifies seven policy themes which we are seeking views on. They are set out below.

1. A place-based approach to transit-oriented development

New development should be designed **around** Mass Transit stops. This means:

- Walkable and bikeable neighbourhoods at the right density
- The right mix of homes, jobs, shops and services
- Buildings and public spaces that are well-designed and which respect and enhance local character and heritage
- Town and city centres are more attractive as places to live, work and visit

2. Creating a seamless, integrated transport network

Mass Transit should connect seamlessly with buses and trains; walking, wheeling and cycling; and park-and-ride and car rental or ride sharing services, where appropriate. Stations and stops, and their surrounding areas, should feel:

- Safe, welcoming and easy to use
- Well-lit, well-signed and accessible to everyone
- Integrated into streets and public spaces

3. Delivering inclusive growth

Too many people in West Yorkshire struggle to access opportunities, partly because of poor transport. Mass Transit has the potential to:

- Connect people to jobs and education
- Reduce the need to own or use a car
- Enable quicker journeys
- Improve access to healthcare, green spaces and leisure
- Support healthier, more active lifestyles

4. Climate change

Transport is a major source of carbon emissions in West Yorkshire. The plan aims to:

- Support a low-carbon future
- Encourage people to switch from cars to public transport

- Design infrastructure that copes with heat, flooding and extreme weather

5. Protecting and enhancing the environment

Mass Transit has the potential to improve the environment by:

- Creating new green spaces, trees and habitats, supporting biodiversity
- Improving air quality, reducing environmental emissions by helping reduce car use.
- Managing rainwater through natural drainage
- Making towns and cities greener and more resilient to climate change

6. Co-ordination of funding and investment on Mass Transit

To succeed in maximising the benefits of Mass Transit there is a need for:

- Joined-up public investment across different policy themes including transport, housing, regeneration, economic development, skills, and local infrastructure
- Clear signals to developers and investors about the places in which to invest
- A framework that can inform future regeneration plans for areas with the greatest potential that will be connected by Mass Transit

7. Safeguarding and delivery of Mass Transit infrastructure

To avoid problems later, land may need to be protected for future Mass Transit routes, depots, interchanges and park and ride sites.

This plan does **not** fix routes or designs now but sets out policies that will help prevent development that could block future options.

What are we asking you?

We want your views on:

- The overall vision and objectives
- Whether planning proactively around Mass Transit makes sense
- The proposed policy themes
- Whether anything important is missing
- How this approach could be strengthened and improved

How to provide feedback?

This first stage of the consultation - known as 'Regulation 18' - is to seek views on the scope and content of the draft joint Development Plan Document from the public, businesses, community groups, charitable organisations, statutory bodies and other stakeholders.

The Regulation 18 consultation will run from **Thursday 29 January until 23.59 on Thursday 12 March 2026.**

This consultation includes the ‘Draft West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Joint Development Plan Document (DPD) Regulation 18 Main Report’ and the following supporting documents.

- Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report
- Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Compatibility Assessment
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report (issued for statutory consultation in December 2025)

For further information we have also provided a Non-Technical Summary and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Once you have reviewed the consultation materials online, or at one of the locations across West Yorkshire listed [here](#) , please submit your response by completing the survey at:

<http://yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/SDFReg18>

Consultation responses can also be submitted:

- By email - MassTransit@westyorks-ca.gov.uk
- By post - Freepost WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY (no stamp needed)

If you have any questions, need to respond in a different way, or require consultation materials in another format, please contact us using the details above, or by phoning us on 0113 245 7676 (Metroline - charged at the standard operator’s rate).

Your feedback will help shape the second draft of this joint Development Plan Document which will include draft planning policies. This will be available for public consultation in 2026.

What happens next?

- This is the first consultation stage called Regulation 18
- Feedback will be used to draft detailed policies
- A second consultation (known as Regulation 19) on an updated version of the joint Development Plan Document, which includes proposed policies, will take place in 2026
- A report summarising the responses received to the second consultation will be submitted alongside the joint Development Plan Document to the Planning Inspectorate by the end of 2026
- The submitted joint Development Plan Document will be independently examined by the Planning Inspectorate before adoption by each of the five West Yorkshire Local Planning Authorities. This is likely to take place in late 2027 or early 2028.

