

Mass Transit Project Team
West Yorkshire Combine Authority

04 January 2023

In response to your invitation to share our views on your revised Mass Transit Vision 2040 we can but express surprise at the almost complete lack of content addressing the Leeds Outer North East area and its public transport needs.

You received many responses from people in this area, which includes the “major settlement” of Wetherby. The Town, together with the large residential areas of Boston Spa, Collingham, East Keswick, Bardsey, Harewood and Scarcroft has many thousands of residents who pay Council Tax to Leeds and have a right to be afforded the due consideration.

- The first matter that was brought to your attention in 2021, when you were asking for opinions of The West Yorkshire Transport Vision 2040, was the absence of any meaningful reference to Wetherby Town as part of the “Vision”. This being to the point where this major town with important transport connections within the town was not even named on your map of the visualized Mass Transit Integrated Transport System. And it is still not named thereon.
- Wetherby is correctly referred to as a major settlement by Leeds City Council Departments. One definition of a major settlement however as defined by Leeds CC Planners is a 15 minute frequency of buses to Leeds. This is not and never has been the case.
- Kirk Deighton and Spofforth in nearby North Yorkshire are also affected by services serving Wetherby. Unfortunately, too little regard is paid to “cross border” travel in the area. Buses to Knaresborough and York have been reduced from hourly to 4x per day. The bus service to Harrogate has also been reduced. Local residents soon will not be able to access the hospital at York and have fewer services running to Harrogate hospital.

Wetherby is immediately adjacent to the A1M and A58. Traffic for Harrogate, York and Leeds travel through the town on a daily basis throughout the day and evening including weekends.

- What consideration has been given to a P&R next to Wetherby. It would undoubtedly remove a lot of “local traffic” from A1(M), which is often used as a commuter route into Leeds and also commuter traffic from the A58 corridor. This will only get worse when Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon build 1100 houses at Swinnow Park, Wetherby adjacent to A1M.
- The above P&R scheme could provide a connection by bus to Garforth rail station. Wetherby does NOT have a railway station but many make the journey to Leeds or York for that purpose.
- Again, there is no information or stated intention about how the A58, a major commuter route and route to the A1(M) is to be serviced. How are the connections to the major public transport system to be made? How is the near total car dependency of the area to be addressed to meet climate priorities?

Working to ensure that the physical character of Wetherby and District is protected and developed for the benefit of the community of both current and future generations.

- **LCC did declare a Climate Emergency in 2019 but this seems to have been overlooked in subsequent Public Transport decisions outside of the City centre.**

You acknowledge in your “You Said, We Did” document that there are a number of communities across West Yorkshire that do not feature within the Mass Transport Vision. You say that this was done after a “rigorous, well evidenced and carefully considered process.”

- We would request to have you publish, given your EDI policy, the reasons why the Wetherby area and the Leeds Outer North East and its residents are so comprehensively ignored or unseen in your “Vision”.
- Leeds CC Officers have been asked similar questions and consistently fail to give a proper explanation.

We read of your aspirations for a Mass Transport system and its supporting methods of Public Transport.

- Public Transport has changed a lot in Wetherby in the last 4 years, due to reduced frequencies and unreliability.
- Bus stops in Leeds centre have been removed and repositioned on numerous occasions without prior notification for Wetherby area bus users.
- The Network map, yet again, barely acknowledges Wetherby, with the type face being so small and so high up on the map in the bus shelters that it is impossible to see/read it.
- The bus companies providing the X98 and X99 service persist in referring to Deighton Bar rather than saying Wetherby. The Bar has long gone and Deighton Road and Deighton Gates school are the only place names with Deighton that exist at the far northern end of Wetherby.
- One may be forgiven for expecting to see in the “Vision” a positive suggestion of an improved linking bus service to the MT grid and appropriate Park and Ride, so as to encourage thousands off cars off the road, an additional reduction of vehicles out of Leeds City area and the opportunity for residents to leave the car behind for envisaged complete journeys.

Currently Wetherby bus services have been abandoned by First Bus and have been taken up by Transdev. The Transdev bus service frequency from Harrogate to Leeds is being reduced. The Connexions service from Wetherby to York is under threat. What price Bus Partnership Schemes and Enhanced Partnership Schemes?

- **We would like to think that WYCA does not take its eye off the ball whilst enthusiastically progressing the expensive MT scheme with the result that important public transport links are not improved accordingly.**
- **Furthermore, some 30000 residents of Leeds Outer North East, appear to have been abandoned with respect to any meaningful and progressive Public Transport initiatives.**

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