West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Our Reference: 3395

15/05/2026

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Enquiry: West-South Yorkshire cross boundary bus services under franchising

Thank you for contacting West Yorkshire Combined Authority ('the Combined Authority') with your request for information, which was received on 18/03/2026.

Your request was:
Please provide any documents, correspondence, assessments or internal discussions that address:
1. Cross boundary operations between West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire, including how services will function when crossing the boundary under the respective network models.
2. Through ticketing or integrated ticketing arrangements, whether proposed, planned or under consideration and any related feasibility work or joint discussions with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA).
3. The potential expansion of cross-boundary services, including any analysis of how such services could reduce car dependency or improve regional connectivity.
4. Joint working between WYCA and SYMCA, including details of any formal or informal collaboration, working groups, meeting records or agreements relating to the coordination of the Weaver Network and the South Yorkshire People's Network.
5. Future strategic planning concerning seamless travel between the two regions under franchised or enhanced partnership arrangements.
This request is being handled under Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We have completed our searches, and I can confirm that the Combined Authority holds some information covered by your request.

S.No	Document name
D1.	Ref 3395 SYMCA Consultation Response to WYCA.pdf
D2.	Ref 3395 Franchising timescales.pdf

A number of documents relevant to your request are already published and accessible in the public domain. Information that is readily available to applicants is exempt from disclosure under Section 21(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. You may locate further

material through our published committee papers using the WYCA ModernGov link here search function, where agendas, decisions and minutes of Combined Authority meetings are available.

Please note that some of the information contained within these sources may now be superseded; however, it represents the most up-to-date information held by the Combined Authority at the time of your request.

1. *Cross boundary operations between West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire, including how services will function when crossing the boundary under the respective network models.*

Information relating to cross-boundary bus services that is already publicly available, such as current timetables, can be accessed through operators' published materials. Further information on the treatment of cross-boundary services under franchising can be found within the Bus Reform Assessment and associated documents - West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Bus Reform Assessment – link here and Consultation response report – link here. Information on the treatment of cross-boundary services under franchising can also be found within consultation materials on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Bus Service permit regime and associated consultation materials – link here.

The Combined Authority also holds additional information concerning cross-boundary operations, including route allocation material in relation to bus franchising and related correspondence with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA). This information is commercially sensitive and relates directly to future tendering activity and live contractual arrangements.

The information is therefore being withheld under Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act, as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of both the Combined Authority and potential bidders. The route allocation material is a live procurement document, and its release would reveal route-level planning that could distort competition, influence bidding behaviour and undermine the Combined Authority's ability to secure best value in future procurement rounds. The correspondence with SYMCA also contains sensitive operational discussions at a time when both authorities are progressing franchising at different stages, and disclosure at this point would risk affecting ongoing programme development and inter-authority collaboration.

As Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption, the Combined Authority has considered the balance of the public interest. There is a public interest in transparency around cross-boundary service planning, accountability for public spending and understanding how the Combined Authority coordinates with neighbouring authorities. However, releasing commercially sensitive procurement material and internal operational assessments would be likely to harm the Combined Authority's commercial position, distort the competitive environment for operators and prejudice future tendering

exercises. Disclosure would also risk inhibiting open dialogue with SYMCA at a time when both authorities are managing sensitive and evolving franchising programmes.

On balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure. The information is therefore withheld under Section 43(2).

2. *Through ticketing or integrated ticketing arrangements, whether proposed, planned or under consideration and any related feasibility work or joint discussions with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA).*

The Combined Authority holds limited information relevant to through-ticketing or integrated ticketing arrangements. We do not hold any formal written assessments or feasibility studies relating to integrated ticketing at this stage. However, we do hold SYMCA consultation response to WYCA (D1 attached) to the recent Service Permit Regime consultation, in which SYMCA expressed an intention to work collaboratively on future fares and ticketing matters.

We also hold a draft version of the Service Permit Regime guidance, which contains placeholder text referring to potential future ticketing arrangements between West Yorkshire and neighbouring authorities. This document remains under development and has not yet been approved. As it contains provisional and unconfirmed policy positions, it is being withheld under Section 22 (Information Intended for Future Publication).

In considering Section 22, the Combined Authority recognises the public interest in transparency around future ticketing arrangements and cross-boundary coordination. However, releasing an incomplete and unapproved draft would risk presenting a misleading picture of policy intentions and would undermine the safe space required for officials to develop and refine policy. It is in the public interest that the final, accurate and authoritative version is published once approved. On balance, the public interest favours maintaining the exemption at this time.

3. *The potential expansion of cross-boundary services, including any analysis of how such services could reduce car dependency or improve regional connectivity.*

The Combined Authority does not hold any analysis specifically assessing the potential expansion of cross-boundary services or the impact such expansion may have on car dependency or regional connectivity. Information relevant to wider network development and the transition to franchising is available within the September 2025 Combined Authority paper, Item 6 - Bus Franchising Update.pdf, which outlines the general approach to future network changes in West Yorkshire and is publicly accessible.

4. *Joint working between WYCA and SYMCA, including details of any formal or informal collaboration, working groups, meeting records or agreements relating to the coordination of the Weaver Network and the South Yorkshire People's Network.*

The Combined Authority holds a small number of email exchanges with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority that relate to joint working and coordination activity. These include operational discussions linked to franchising and cross-boundary service planning. As these exchanges contain commercially sensitive information connected to ongoing programme development and future procurement activity, they are being withheld under Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act as laid out above (Point 1). Disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of both the Combined Authority and operators by revealing internal assessments, operational intentions and strategic considerations that could influence market behaviour or distort future tendering. One further email exchange concerning the alignment of franchising timelines across several authorities is being disclosed with this response (D2). The personal data of a third party has been removed under Section 40(2) of the FOIA, which prevents the release of personal data. Disclosure would contravene UK GDPR principle (a) because there is no lawful basis for processing or sharing the personal data as part of a request.

No formal joint working groups, agreements or structured collaboration frameworks specific to the Weaver Network or the South Yorkshire People's Network are held beyond the correspondence described.

5. *Future strategic planning concerning seamless travel between the two regions under franchised or enhanced partnership arrangements.*

The Combined Authority does not hold any information that meets the scope of this part of the request. There are no documents or assessments relating to future strategic planning for seamless travel between the two regions under franchised or enhanced partnership arrangements.

If you believe that your request for information has not been handled properly, you can ask for an internal review of our decision. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Telephone: 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.gov.uk

For your information, there is no charge for making an appeal.

Yours sincerely,
Information Governance Officer
freedom.info@westyorks-ca.gov.uk