STATEMENT OF REASONS

THE WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY (BUS FRANCHISING) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2026

Made under the Transport Act 1968 and The Acquisition of Land Act 1981

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1 Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Reasons is issued by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority ("WYCA") for the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) entitled: "West Yorkshire Combined Authority (Bus Franchising) Compulsory Purchase Order 2026" ("the Order").

1.2 The Order is made pursuant to Section 10(3) of the Transport Act 1968, with WYCA being of the view that the proposed acquisitions will facilitate the implementation of the West Yorkshire Bus Franchising Scheme made on 27th March 2024 ("the Scheme").

1.3 The Order is being made in accordance with the Government Guidance on Compulsory Purchase (June 2026), which requires a compelling case in the public interest to justify the confirmation of compulsory purchase powers. WYCA considers that such a case exists.

2 Background

2.1 WYCA is promoting the Order to implement the Scheme. The Scheme establishes a system in which WYCA will regain control of the bus network in West Yorkshire through franchising to create a more reliable, better value and better-connected bus network for the region of West Yorkshire.

2.2 WYCA is committed to ensuring that every bus passenger in West Yorkshire should expect high customer standards and to delivering more accessible services for all. By bringing buses back under public control, WYCA will be able to simplify fares, routes and timetables based on passenger needs, not profit.

2.3 The Scheme also aids WYCA to deliver on its aspirations to deliver greener buses across West Yorkshire with its intention being to introduce a new fleet of zero emission buses over time. This will allow WYCA to set quality standards for the vehicles operating on the network.

2.4 Under the franchising model WYCA will determine routes, frequencies, fares, and standards for vehicles and services. It will also own a significant portion of the bus fleet and depots required to service the fleet. Public ownership of depots enables new operators to bid for contracts without the burden of investing in costly infrastructure, thereby encouraging competition and delivering better value for money.

2.5 Bus is currently the most widely used form of public transport in West Yorkshire and accounts for 4% of modal share across the region.

2.6 For a sustained period, the West Yorkshire bus network has been shaped by declining patronage.

2.7 Promoting bus use is a key commitment within the Mayor's West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan and the Bus Service Improvement Plan ("BSIP") with the aim of delivering an integrated, better-connected bus network that is affordable, reliable and easy for customers to travel on. This is supported by the Mayor's pledge to bring buses back into public control, which was supported by the Bus Reform Assessment and the decision in March 2024 to make a franchising scheme enabling WYCA to set routes, fares, frequencies and the overall standard of buses in the region.

2.8 WYCA's vision for buses is set out in the BSIP, detailing how WYCA will improve buses for the benefit of passengers in West Yorkshire. The Scheme is built on the BSIP priorities, see section 6 below, which form part of the strategic objectives for franchising delivery.

2.9 Customers will benefit from a centralized point of contact for all customer queries and support services, ensuring high-quality, consistent and trusted travel information across all bus journeys.

2.10 A greater role in the operation of bus services means that WYCA will be able to better align the network to maximise the benefits of new and existing bus priority schemes and have greater oversight to track and manage the punctuality and reliability of services.

2.11 Further details relating to the national and local policy context of the Scheme are set out in Section 6 below.

2.12 **The Order Map and the Schedule**

2.12.1 The schedule to the Order ("the Schedule") lists owners, lessees, tenants and occupiers of the Order Land. It also lists other parties with a qualifying interest in the Order Land as defined by section 12(2) of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, including those with the benefit of rights within the Order Land.

2.12.2 Where appropriate, WYCA will only seek to acquire the freehold or leasehold interests of the Order Land subject to existing rights and obligations owed to the third parties.

2.12.3 Where that is not possible, WYCA will consider the grant of equivalent or alternative rights to the current beneficiaries of the third-party rights if reasonably required for the continued enjoyment of their properties benefitting from the right, where practicable to do so having regard to the underlying scheme of development supported by the Order.

2.12.4 The map to the Order ("Order Map") identifies the land proposed to be compulsorily acquired (coloured pink) ("the Order Land"), as described further in Section 3 (Description of the Order Land) below.

2.12.5 The Order Land relates to existing bus depots which have been identified as strategically necessary to deliver the Scheme. Depots that are not pivotal to the strategic delivery of the franchising scheme will be provided by operators.

2.13 **The programme for commencing the Scheme**

2.13.1 The Order Land is essential to the delivery of the Scheme, which will be delivered in three "Rounds":

Round	***Anticipated Tender Launch Date***	***Anticipated Contract Signature Start Date (no earlier than)***	***Anticipated Service Commencement Date***
1	31st May 2027	12th February 2028	13th November 2028
2	21st April 2028	28th October 2028	30th July 2029
3	23rd December 2028	28th July 2029	29th April 2030

2.13.2 **Round 1 – Anticipated service commencement date is 13 November 2028**

Round 1 and its associated procurement programme relates to bus services covering the areas known as the Kirklees (Dewsbury) zone, Kirklees (Huddersfield) zone and Leeds 1 zone.

2.13.3 **Round 2 – Anticipate Service Commencement Date is 30th July 2029.**

Round 2 and its associated procurement programme relates to bus services currently covering the areas known as the Five Town zone which comprises the districts in Castleford, Featherstone, Knottingley, Normanton and Pontefract, Leeds 2 zone, and Wakefield zone.

2.13.4 **Round 3 – Anticipate Service Commencement Date is 29th April 2030**.

Round 3 and its associated procurement programme relates to bus services currently covering the areas known as the Bradford zone, Calderdale zone and Keighley zone.

3 Description and status of the Order Land

3.1 WYCA believes the land and depots forming part of the Order Land to be essential for the operation of its business and the delivery of the Scheme.

3.1.1 **Title information and further details relating to the Order Land**

3.1.1.1 Further information about the Order Land together with title information is set out below:

3.1.1.2 **Round 1**

a) Dewsbury Depot – A parcel of land situated off Mill Street East, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF12 9AG that presently makes up the Dewsbury Depot.

The depot is in an area with mixed commercial uses to the south of Dewsbury Town Centre with access to the A638 leading to the surrounding areas.

The overall site is approximately 7,800m2 and is bordered to the east and west by industrial units and the River Calder to the north. Site access is via Mill Street East. The building consists of a large multi-roofed structure approximately 2,500m2 containing a selection of workshops, bus parking and multi-storey offices/staff welfare facilities. There is an external area for additional vehicle parking and wash bays.

The freehold title to the parcel of land at Dewsbury Depot is currently owned by Arriva Yorkshire Limited (CRN: 00084167) and contains the whole of the land registered at Land Registry under title numbers WYK697169 and WYK412594.

3.1.1.3 **Round 2**

a) Castleford Depot - A parcel of land at Wheldon Road, Castleford, West Yorkshire, WF10 2JJ that presently makes up the Castleford Depot, West Yorkshire.

The Castleford depot is located to the north east of Castleford Town Centre.

The site is approximately 11,500m2 and is bordered by residential and educational properties, as well as an access road and train line. The site is bound by a combination of masonry boundary walls and chain link security fencing, with reinforced concrete posts. Access and egress to the site is via Wheldon Road to the north of the site.

The site consists of a car parking area to the front of the property with additional bus parking bays located to the rear. The site has an incorporated vehicular access route, operating as a one-way system in a clockwise direction.

The main depot building is a steel framed structure approximately 3700m2 containing workshops and inspection pits, as well as bus fueling and washing lanes.

The freehold title to the parcel of land at Castleford Depot (registered at Land Registry as West Riding Bus Depot) is currently owned by Arriva Yorkshire Limited and contains the whole of the land in Land Registry title number WYK488995.

3.1.1.4 **Round 2 (Ancillary Land)**

a) Car park adjoining the Castleford Depot - A car park located adjacent to the Castleford Depot is used in conjunction with the Castleford Depot.

The majority of the freehold titles to the car park are owned by Arriva Yorkshire Limited (registered at Land Registry under title numbers WYK160470, WYK60085, WYK55259, WYK160470, WYK65399, WYK83351, WYK135163, WYK160470, WYK56712, WYK665890, WYK140231, WYK79778, WYK104593, WYK662184 and WYK200376. Arriva's interest in the freehold of the car park is part of the Order Land.

The freehold titles of the car park also comprise two small parcels of land registered under title numbers WYK71422 and WYK53919, both owned by The Council of the City of Wakefield. The council's freehold interests at the car park are not part of the Order Land as the council is a constituent council of WYCA.

During the process of the land referencing, WYCA's agent identified that two small parts of the freehold of the car park are unregistered. These parcels of land are included in the Order Land and referenced as 3/1 and 3/15 in the Order Map.

Given that details of the ownership of the land are not registered at Land Registry, WYCA has arranged to publish notices on site in an effort to identify the owners of the land.

Despite notices being published and enquiries undertaken, WYCA has not been able to establish the owners of the unregistered land forming part of the car park.

The leasehold title to the car park is registered in the name of Yorkshire Bus Company Limited (company registration number: 2959409) and is registered at Land Registry under title number WYK223720.

The Yorkshire Bus Company is registered at Companies House as Yorkshire Bus Group Limited which, pursuant to records at Companies House, is a company that was dissolved on 25 December 2017.

No evidence has been provided to WYCA to evidence that the lease has been surrendered. WYCA's surveyors who undertook the land referencing exercise confirmed that contact was made with the Government Legal Department responsible for Bona Vacantia and believes the leasehold title vests in the Crown.

The leasehold title of the car park does not form part of the Order Land as a result. WYCA intends to make an application for the lease to be disclaimed. There is no reason to believe that such an application would not be successful.

The lease was originally made between (1) The Council of the City of Wakefield and (2) West Riding Automobile Company Limited for a term of 99 years from 1 December 1980. The lease requires the landlord's written consent to be obtained prior to any assignment, underletting or sharing of possession of the car park.

The lease also contains a covenant on the part of the tenant which specifies that the car park may not be used for any purpose other than in connection with the tenant's business as passenger transport operator without written consent from the landlord.

The freehold title of the car park adjoining the Castleford Depot will be acquired pursuant to the Order Land. If the Order is confirmed, the requirement for obtaining consent will no longer apply.

3.1.1.5 **Round 3**

a) Keighley Depot – A parcel of land situated on Suresnes Road, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD21 2AL that presently makes up the Keighley Depot. The depot is in an area with mixed residential and commercial uses to the west of the centre of Keighley.

The site is approximately 4,800m2 and is bordered to the east, south and west sides by roads and mainly residential properties to the north. There is also a lane which passes through part of the site freehold but is outside the depot boundary. Site access is from Chapel Lane and Suresnes Road.

The site consists of a large multi-roofed structure approximately 3,744m2 in size, containing 3-storey offices/staff welfare facilities, workshops, bus parking, bus washes and fueling lanes and a small external area with limited bus/car parking, chassis wash and fuel tank.

The freehold interest of the Keighley Depot is owned by AJS 22 LTD (CRN: 02307915) (registered at Land Registry as land and buildings on the East side of Suresnes Road, Keighley) and registered under title number WYK500012.

The leasehold interest of the Keighley Depot is owned by Transdev Blazefield Limited (CRN:2605399) (previously known as Blazefield Holdings Limited) ("Transdev") registered under title number WYK735633.

The lease was granted on 12th February 2003 by AJS Property Investments Limited to Blazefield Holdings Limited for a term of 35 years and is due to expire on 8th August 2036.

The freehold interest to Keighley Depot is subject to a lease of electricity sub-stations granted to Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) PLC (CRN: 4112320) that is due to expire on 18 February 2085. The leasehold title is registered under title number YY203114. WYCA intends to acquire the land subject to this lease.

b) A parcel of unregistered land adjoining the Keighley Depot – A parcel of unregistered land measuring 40.52m2 which is located between the title boundary of the Keighley Depot as registered under title numbers WYK500012 and WYK735633 and the adopted highway at Chapel Lane, Keighley.

The parcel of unregistered land is shown coloured pink and edged red and marked with reference 8/12 in the schedule to the CPO Order and Order Map and is located at the access point and is required for the purpose of gaining access to the Keighley Depot via Chapel Lane, an adopted highway.

The land is unregistered and WYCA has not been able to establish ownership of the land via records at Land Registry. A local land charges search was commissioned and the results did not reveal any local land charges registered against the parcel of land in question.

A review of the title deeds available from Land Registry in respect of the registered title to the Keighley Depot (as registered under title number WYK500012 and WYK735633) was undertaken. The review did not conclude the ownership of the parcel of unregistered land nor did it suggest that the unregistered land should fall within the freehold ownership of AJS22 Ltd (as registered under title number WYK500012) or the leasehold ownership of Transdev (as registered under title number WYK735633).

As WYCA was unable to establish the ownership of the unregistered land via Land Registry, WYCA's agent issued a public notice to identify the owners of the unregistered land.

Despite the enquiries undertaken by WYCA, no potential owners of the unregistered parcel of land could be identified.

3.1.1.6 **Round 3 (Ancillary Land)**

a) Leasehold title to the Chapel Lane Car Park (ancillary land to the Keighley Depot) - A separate car park located at Chapel Lane, Keighley which is used in conjunction with the Keighley Depot.

The freehold title to the car park is owned by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and is registered under title number WYK780615. The freehold interest in the car park does not form part of the Order Land.

A leasehold interest in the car park is owned by Keighley & District Travel Limited pursuant to a lease dated 25th July 2012 made between (1) City of Bradford

Metropolitan District Council and (2) Keighley & District Travel Limited. This lease is not currently registered at Land Registry.

The lease was granted for a period of 10 years from 1st April 2010 and the contractual term expired on 1st April 2020, although it enjoyed the protection of the security of tenure provisions in the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 and a continuation tenancy has therefore arisen. The lease contains a covenant on the part of the tenant to only use the site for parking of minibuses, single-deck buses and cars belonging to the tenant and its employees.

The lease also provides that the tenant may transfer or charge the whole of the car park site if the landlord provides written consent in advance.

Given that the landlord, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, is a constituent member of WYCA, WYCA expects to be able to deal with the relevant requirements for consent pursuant to the lease.

3.1.2 **Summary of the Order Land**

Round 1			
Land Reference (as per CPO Schedule)	**Property**	**Interest to be acquired**	**Owner of the land / interest**
4/1-4/2	Dewsbury Depot (Land off Mill Street East, Dewsbury WF12 9AG)	Freehold interest registered under title numbers WYK697169 and WYK412594	Arriva Yorkshire Limited (Arriva)
Round 2			
3/22-3/23	Castleford Depot (Land at Wheldon Road, Castleford, West Yorkshire, WF10 2JJ)	Freehold interest registered under title number WYK488995.	Arriva Yorkshire Limited
3/2-3/14, 3/16-3/20	Car park adjoining the Castleford Depot	Freehold interest registered under title numbers WYK160470, WYK60085, WYK55259, WYK160470, WYK65399, WYK83351,	Arriva Yorkshire Limited

		WYK135163, WYK160470,WYK56712, WYK665890, WYK140231, WYK79778, WYK104593, WYK662184 and WYK20037	
3/1, 3/15	Two parcels of unregistered land at the car park adjoining the Castleford Depot	Unregistered	Unknown
Round 3			
8/1-8/11	Keighley Depot Suresnes Road, Keighley, West Yorkshire,BD 21 2AL	Freehold interest registered under title numbers WYK500012	AJS 22 LTD
8/1-8/11	Keighley Depot Suresnes Road, Keighley, West Yorkshire,BD 21 2AL	Leasehold interest registered under title number WYK735633	Blazefield Holdings Limited
8/12	A parcel of unregistered land adjoining the Keighley Depot	The unregistered land identified as private road (Roper Street) and verge in the CPO Schedule and shown coloured pink and edged red and marked 8/12 on the CPO Map	Unknown
8/13	Chapel Lane Car Park (ancillary land to Keighley Depot)	Leasehold interest dated 25th July 2012 made between (1) City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and (2) Keighley & District Travel Limited which is not currently registered at Land Registry.	Keighley & District Travel Limited

4 Enabling Powers

4.1 WYCA is empowered to make the Order under Section 10(3) of the Transport Act 1968 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981.

4.2 Section 10(3) of the 1968 Act provides: *"If the Authority for an integrated transport area, a combined authority area, a combined county authority area or a passenger transport area so request in writing, the Minister may authorise the Executive for that area to purchase compulsorily any land which the Executive or any wholly-owned subsidiary of theirs require for the purposes of their business, and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 shall apply to the compulsory purchase."*

4.3 Section 10(3) of the 1968 Act thereby expressly empowers the Executive to purchase compulsorily any land which the Executive requires for the purposes of its business.

4.4 "The Executive" is specifically defined for such purposes in s.9(1)(c) of the 1968 Act as follows:

"any reference to "the Executive" is a reference to—

(i) in England and Wales (except as mentioned in subparagraphs (ia) to (ie)) the body which immediately before the date mentioned in paragraph (a) above was the Passenger Transport Executive for the designated area for the purposes of this Part of this Act corresponding to that passenger transport area; and …"

4.5 By virtue of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Order 2014 (as amended by the West Yorkshire (Election of Mayor and Functions) Order 2021) and as amended by the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 (Consequential Amendments and Revocations) (England) Regulations 2026 the Passenger Transport Executive was dissolved, and its functions were transferred to WYCA.

4.6 Article 8 of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Order 2014 provides:

"(2) The Executive shall be dissolved and all functions, property, rights and liabilities of the Executive shall be transferred to the ITA.

(3) Subject to article 7(4) and Schedule 2 and to the following provisions of this article, any reference in any enactment (whenever passed or made) to a passenger transport executive or to passenger transport executives is to be treated, in its application to the combined area, as if it were a reference to the Combined Authority."

4.7 WYCA therefore has the power under s.10(3) Transport Act 1968 to purchase compulsorily land required for its business, including implementing a bus franchising scheme.

4.8 By submitting the Order for confirmation to the Secretary of State, WYCA is seeking the written approval of the Minister for it to exercise the compulsory purchase powers.

4.9 The power contained in the 1968 Act is the most appropriate power for the Scheme. and the Order Land is required for the purposes of WYCA's business.

4.10 WYCA considers that there is a compelling case in the public interest to bring forward the Order.

4.11 **WYCA's decision relating to the Order**

4.11.1 At a meeting held on 24th July 2025, WYCA resolved to delegate to its Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Mayor, to:

4.11.1.1 Approve a final Statement of Reasons, Compulsory Purchase Order and Map for submission to the Secretary of State for Transport.

4.11.1.2 Take all necessary and relevant steps to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the Compulsory Purchase Order(s), including the preparation for and conduct of a Public Inquiry (if required).

4.11.1.3 Take all necessary steps to agree the quantum of and settle compensation in accordance with relevant legislation and the compensation code applicable to Compulsory Purchase Orders.

4.11.2 A further decision approving this Statement of Reasons in draft form and all accompanying documents and approving the decision by WYCA to proceed with the submission and making of the Compulsory Purchase Order was obtained at WYCA's meeting of 30th July 2026.

5 The Scheme and objectives

5.1 **Current operational context**

5.1.1 Bus services in West Yorkshire are currently operated under a deregulated model. The bus market in West Yorkshire comprises 26 bus operators and is primarily dominated by three major commercial operators Arriva, First Bus and Transdev along with a number of SMEs.

5.1.2 Each operator manages its own depots, engineering, and driver facilities, which gives them control over fleet deployment and operational efficiency.

5.1.3 The geographic location of depots plays a crucial role in determining dead mileage (distance travelled without passengers), driver changeover efficiency, and overall service reliability, factors that are equally important under a franchising model as under a deregulated model.

5.1.4 The bus stations across the region are also critical for the provision of franchised services. WYCA owns or controls the bus stations in West Yorkshire which are required to operate bus franchising.

5.2 **The Scheme and its objectives**

5.2.1 On 27th March 2024 the Mayor of West Yorkshire determined to make the Scheme. Details of the Scheme can be found in the West Yorkshire Bus Franchising Assessment dated September 2023.

5.2.2 The Order involves the acquisition and integration of the 8 identified bus depots and ancillary land into the franchised bus network infrastructure. The acquisition of the Order Land is critical to the implementation of the Scheme and the ultimate success of bus franchising in West Yorkshire.

5.2.3 The Order Land will be used to house and maintain the bus fleet.

5.2.4 The Order supports WYCA's ambitions for public transport to be reliable and resilient, inclusive and affordable, and zero-emission, providing cleaner options for travel. WYCA has concluded that it should own the strategic assets required to deliver franchised services, including depots and bus fleet.

5.2.5 There are various benefits associated with WYCA owning the strategic assets to deliver the franchised services, which are:

5.2.5.1 **Control–** Owning the assets comprised in the Order Land brings greater control and certainty for WYCA alongside the ability to influence outcomes over the bus network.

5.2.5.2 **Competition–** Owning of the assets comprised in the Order Land removes barriers associated with access to depots and provision of depots for larger contracts, which makes it more likely that a greater range of operators will bid for the franchising contracts. A lack of access to depot facilities could mean that operators are unable to enter or compete in the market.

5.2.5.3 **Environmental** – Owning the assets comprised in the Order Land allows WYCA to have greater oversight over and planning of the transition to a zero-emission bus fleet, providing greater power over WYCA's fleet investment plan and control of the emissions from the depot facilities.

5.2.5.4 **Customer consistency** – WYCA is committed to delivering a bus service that is reliable, better value and better-connected for the region of West Yorkshire. It is

considered that owning the assets comprised in the Order Land will assist in delivering consistency for customers through WYCA having greater influence on the network.

5.2.6 The Assessment explained that the strategic depots are "*key to supporting the delivery of bus service operations across West Yorkshire and play an important role in managing and maintaining the fleet and supporting the granting of and adherence to operator licenses issued by the Traffic Commissioner's Office*."

5.2.7 Minor refurbishments and EPC improvements are planned for the developments to improve energy efficiency.

5.2.8 Access to depot facilities is likely to be central to increasing competition between operators tendering for franchising contracts. As such, the availability of depots under WYCA's control for the largest "Tier A" contracts under the terms of the bus franchising contracts is necessary to support the operation and maintenance of the bus fleet. Acquisition is essential to ensure that all bidders for the franchised contracts can submit comparable bids using the same infrastructure, thereby supporting fair competition.

5.2.9 In respect of ancillary land identified in Section 3, these form part of the Order Land as they provide essential car parking facilities for staff to enable the operation of the depots.

5.3 **Fleet**

5.3.1 In addition to depots, in order to successfully deliver the Scheme, a fleet of public service vehicles is required for use by successful bidders. WYCA has undertaken an assessment of fleet requirements to determine the number of vehicles required for each round of the franchising process. A fleet strategy has also been developed which will ensure that sufficient fleet is available in each round to deliver bus franchising.

Fleet for Round 1 has been secured through a mix of procuring new electric vehicles and the transfer of vehicles from outgoing operators to incoming operators through a residual value mechanism, for which agreement in principle has been reached. Similarly for Rounds 2 and 3, fleet will be acquired through a mix of procurement of new vehicles and transfer of vehicles through the residual value mechanism.

Contingency arrangements have also been developed, which include the procurement of new diesel vehicles, the procurement of vehicles from the second-hand market, as well as a provision for the use of operator provided temporary vehicles.

6 Policy and Planning Context

6.1 Bus Use Context

6.1.1 The current bus system in West Yorkshire faces fundamental challenges both for the customer, impacting the day-to-day experience of using the bus, and bus operators (the market), which impacts the industry's financial stability and the continued operation of bus services.

6.2 Customer context

6.2.1 Bus is a key element of West Yorkshire's transport offer and forms a vital part of the transport mix across the region, particularly for those citizens who rely on it as their primary mode of transport. Across West Yorkshire, over 1.7 million journeys are made by bus each week.

6.2.2 However, bus patronage trends demonstrate a long-term decline from 169 million trips in 2009/10 to around 116 million in 2024/25. Alongside this, the bus network does not meet customer needs with issues around reliability and punctuality, customer satisfaction and inconsistency over the customer offer.

6.3 Market context

6.3.1 Prior to the pandemic, 85% of the operated bus mileage was operated on a commercial basis, with the remaining 15% being operated under contract to WYCA under tendered services at a net cost of £17.1million in 2018/2019. The most recent data demonstrates that there has been an increase in the cost of tendered services, with increasing public subsidy of previously commercial services.

6.3.2 Since the pandemic, there has been an increasing pressure on the tendered service budget due to slow recovery of bus patronage, with an increase in public sector support for services peaking at £25.4million in 2020/21 before levelling off to £21.4million in 2021/22.

6.3.3 This has resulted in commercial cuts and WYCA having to tender more services in order to support the network.

6.3.4 When viewed against the coexisting financial pressures on WYCA's tendered services budget, WYCA has identified a clear need for further intervention to protect the network and customer offering and a clear case for bus franchising through the West Yorkshire Bus Franchising Assessment.

6.4 Policy Context

6.4.1 National Policy Context

6.4.1.1 The National Bus Strategy for England, *Bus Back Better (2021)*, sets out the government requirements for local authorities to work with the bus industry to improve bus services making them more frequent, reliable, affordable and accessible. Key measures include enhanced partnerships, simplified and capped fares, better integration with other transport modes, and significant investment in bus priority infrastructure to reduce delays. Local Transport Authorities, including WYCA, have been required to produce Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) to access funding, ensuring improvements are tailored to local needs and deliver tangible benefits to communities.

6.4.1.2 The National Bus Strategy builds on the Bus Services Act 2025 which introduced new powers for partnership and franchising in combined authority areas. This was to enable improved local bus services that realise untapped growth potential, lead to better journeys and better value for taxpayers and passengers.

6.4.1.3 The Bus Services Act (2025) gave all local transport authorities in England the power to franchise bus services without needing Secretary of State approval, building on the Bus Services Act (2017) and providing further strategic drive to reform local bus services.

6.4.2 Local Policy Context

WYCA's Bus Service Improvement Plan 2024 ("BSIP 2024")

6.4.2.1 First launched in 2021, the BSIP sets out a clear roadmap for delivering a world-class bus service across West Yorkshire. The most recent update to the BSIP sets out plans for improving buses in West Yorkshire and how the Mayor and WYCA will transform bus travel across the region.

6.4.2.2 The BSIP identifies the following priorities:

- An enhanced, fully inclusive and more cohesive bus and wider public transport network – which takes people where they need to go, when they need to go, and encouraging confidence in the network.
- Clear and simple fares – to make paying for bus travel more affordable, easier, convenient and flexible.
- Improved, more inclusive customer service and support – so all passengers have the right tools to travel with confidence and help they need if their journey does not go to plan.

- Priority for buses on our road – so journeys by bus are quicker, with less time spent stuck in traffic, and are a viable alternative to the private car.

- More green and better vehicles – to improve the onboard experience and make bus the sustainable choice for travel in West Yorkshire.

- Safe, accessible and welcoming stations, stops and public spaces – that provide a high-quality environment for passengers waiting for their services

6.4.2.3 The BSIP also builds on key information that has been outlined in the West Yorkshire Plan and The Mayor's West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan. One of the key outcomes from these plans is bus franchising.

6.4.2.4 The franchising scheme supports the priorities set out in the BSIP and the West Yorkshire Bus Franchising Assessment strategic objectives reflecting the priorities listed above.

The Mayor's West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (adopted March 2026)

6.4.2.5 The Mayor's West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, the statutory transport plan for the region (endorsed by all five Local Authorities), outlines how WYCA wants to create a leading transport network for West Yorkshire: benefitting people, places and our planet by embedding sustainable transport choices to enable the economy to grow. It is based on the six principles for the Weaver Network (WYCA's leading transport network): integrated, inclusive and affordable, reliable and resilient, safe, active, and zero-emission.

6.4.2.6 The Plan was developed from engagement and input from public and private sector partners, including the five local authority partners. It sets out how WYCA, its public and private sector partners, neighbouring city regions and the government can maximise the benefits of transport investment.

6.4.2.7 The Plan sets out that WYCA will be the principal commissioner of public bus services in West Yorkshire, enabling it to make decisions that directly affect bus services in the region, to drive improvements and efficiencies. This is set out in "*Policy 18: Bus Franchising Delivery*" of the Plan.

6.4.2.8 The Plan details the strategic priorities for bus, framed around the BSIP priorities, and how the Plan can deliver a stable, integrated and better-connected bus network as part of our Weaver Network.

6.4.2.9 The Plan identified mid-term targets for the first 5 years of the Plan. One of the mid-term targets is to grow the number of journeys made by sustainable transport from 4% of mode share to 7% by 2030.

6.5 Works required to the depots

6.5.1 The existing depots are already operating as depots and benefit from planning permission to be used as depots.

6.5.2 Under WYCA's proposed franchising regime, the depots will be leased to operators and will therefore be subject to the requirements of the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 which set out the EPC standards to be met.

6.5.3 WYCA has a strategy to ensure that all depots will be compliant with the relevant requirements and that any other minor refurbishment works can be carried out.

6.5.4 WYCA has carried out surveys which indicate that where works are required, they can be undertaken while the depots remain in operational use. Where possible, WYCA will undertake these works in advance of acquisition with the current owner's agreement or otherwise in the mobilization period between acquisition and franchising becoming operational.

6.5.5 In relation to future EVI works which may be required to the depots, WYCA has implemented a programme for submission of planning applications required for those works with forecasted dates as follows:

Dewsbury – planning application to be submitted in January 2028 and a decision expected in May 2028

Castleford (if required) – planning application to be submitted in April 2028 and a decision expected in August 2028

Keighley – planning application to be submitted in January 2029 and a decision expected in May 2029.

6.5.6 There is no reason to believe that planning permission will not be granted for these works.

6.5.7 Prior to EVI works being carried out, the depots will continue to be operated using diesel buses to deliver the Scheme. This will not affect the operation and running of the franchising services.

7 Justification for the Use of Compulsory Purchase Powers

7.1 The Mayor of West Yorkshire, at WYCA's meeting on 14th March 2025, determined to proceed to make the bus franchising scheme ("Scheme") for West Yorkshire. WYCA has concluded that ownership of the strategic depot locations and core bus fleet is necessary for the delivery of bus services.

7.2 Ownership of the Order Land to deliver the Scheme

7.2.1 The ownership of bus depots included within the Order Land by WYCA is essential to the successful delivery and long-term sustainability of bus franchising across

West Yorkshire, being a fundamental component of the franchising model. The rationale for this approach is not only to secure operational sites but also to remove one of the largest barriers to market entry within the bus industry.

7.2.2 WYCA's Depot Strategy concluded WYCA should provide strategic depots for franchising contracts in order to reduce barriers to entry for new operators, enable small and medium-sized operators to compete for larger contracts, increase competition for franchised services, support value for money through a more competitive market and provide WYCA with greater influence over network outcome and long-term asset investment.

7.2.3 Ownership of depots by incumbent operators could be perceived to confer an ongoing commercial advantage on those operators, creating a potential procurement risk. Unsuccessful bidders for Tier A may argue that incumbent operators benefit from a privileged relationship with critical assets and the requirement to renegotiate leases could impact on future procurement processes. Freehold ownership by WYCA creates a level playing field, removing a significant barrier to entry for new market participants who might otherwise be deterred by the high capital costs of securing or developing a depot site.

7.2.4 Depot availability dependent on a lease with a third-party landlord gives rise to an additional potential point of failure in the delivery model, creating uncertainty around the availability of depots, future rental costs, future lease costs, and the length of asset availability. Freehold acquisition removes this complexity entirely by ensuring that assets can be made available to franchise operators on a consistent and transparent basis.

7.2.5 WYCA's key objective of long-term certainty over the strategic depot estate required to support franchising would be undermined if delivery of the depot strategy depended upon incumbent operators being willing to act as long term landlords. Engagement with incumbent operators has demonstrated that there is no certainty that suitable lease terms could be agreed or that operators would be willing to enter into such arrangements at all, requiring them to have long-term involvement in assets that they may no longer require for their own operational purposes which may be operated by their direct competitors.

7.2.6 WYCA's future proposals will involve significant public investment in depots, including refurbishment works, depot modernization and the provision of zero-emission bus infrastructure. Under a leasehold model, in addition to rental payments, WYCA would invest substantial public funds into assets in private ownership and WYCA would have limited control over those assets required to ensure that public investment continues to deliver public benefit over time. Freehold acquisition will mean that this investment is protected long term.

7.2.7 A leasehold model also creates a risk that by making such investment, WYCA could be seen as conferring an economic advantage on incumbent operators in breach of restrictions on subsidy control. WYCA would need to demonstrate that the overall arrangement did not provide a selective economic advantage to incumbent operators compared with other market participants. There could also be an increased risk of a procurement challenge based on an actual or perceived risk of distortion of competition.

7.2.8 Given the critical role that depots play in the delivery of franchised bus services, WYCA requires the full control provided by ownership of assets, enabling it to directly manage compliance, maintenance, investment and health and safety. A leasehold model risks placing WYCA in the position of bearing significant operational, reputational and health and safety risks for assets over which they do not have complete control and freehold ownership removes that risk. As the franchising authority, WYCA can also set and enforce consistent standards for depot use (e.g. safety, environmental compliance, accessibility), which supports network-wide quality.

7.2.9 There are also potentially negative capital and revenue implications of a leasehold model for WYCA. Whilst a significant proportion of lease costs are treated as capital expenditure, there remains an ongoing revenue impact associated with the unwinding of a lease liability, meaning that leasehold arrangements continue to create a recurring call on revenue budgets throughout the duration of the lease term. Freehold acquisition provides greater financial certainty for WYCA, preventing reliance on future revenue budgets to meet lease costs and reducing affordability risks.

7.2.10 It is for the above reasons that, while alterative ownership models were considered and assessed as part of the development of the Depot Strategy, leasehold ownership was not taken forward as the preferred approach. It is clear that leasehold ownership will not deliver WYCA's desired strategic outcomes and freehold ownership will.

7.3 **Site Selection for the land forming part of the Order Land**

7.3.1.1 In selecting sites to deliver the Scheme, WYCA considered and assessed:

7.3.1.2 Existing bus depots in West Yorkshire;

7.3.1.3 Land availability through a search of potential sites based on a size requirement of 6 – 8 acres within the relevant franchising areas, taking into account site size required for operation of the depot;

WYCA prepared a mock-up of the depot with required infrastructure to house , service and charge circa. 125 buses indicated that circa. 6.5 acres will be required if

a site is rectangular. WYCA therefore allowed up to 8 acres for abnormally shaped sites; and

7.3.1.4 All known potential alternatives identified through meetings with district councils, blue light services, land agents and regeneration sites.

7.3.2 WYCA undertook an assessment of existing depots in West Yorkshire and concluded on a list of potential sites throughout the region. To inform the assessment, WYCA commissioned a set of valuations and report from a market-leading property agent to assess the condition of the existing depots and to ascertain the value of the depots and reasonable purchase price. This assessment has since been reviewed by Carter Jonas on behalf of WYCA, who have confirmed that there are no further sites available.

7.3.3 WYCA then developed its Depot Strategy. The Depot Strategy outlined WYCA's approach to the selection of the depots and set out an analysis of whether the depots were suitable for the delivery of the Scheme when assessed against the criteria set out at 7.3.8.

7.3.4 The Depot Strategy also identified sites which were considered as alternatives to the chosen depots and set out analysis of the suitability of the alternative site when assessed against the criteria set out in 7.3.8. The Depot Strategy was approved by WYCA at its meeting held on 30 January 2025.

7.3.5 WYCA has considered developing new depots on vacant land. With the full support of WYCA's local authority partners, a scoping exercise was undertaken to source appropriate development land. The exercise verified that there is a severe shortage of sites to develop new build depots in West Yorkshire.

7.3.6 Following assessment, WYCA concluded that the depots included within the Order Land should be pursued as they are essential for the operation of its business and delivery of the Scheme and that alternative sites for depots could be discounted due to factors such as planning constraints, poor location or insufficient capacity.

7.3.7 Sites have been assessed by WYCA by reference to specific criteria.

7.3.8 In respect of each existing bus depot, ancillary land and alternative site identified, WYCA assessed the location of each property against the following key criteria:

7.3.8.1 Capacity

7.3.8.2 Location & Dead Mileage

7.3.8.3 Planning Deliverability

7.3.8.4 ZEB Feasibility

7.3.8.5 Availability

7.4 Round 1 Properties

7.4.1 Dewsbury Depot

Dewsbury Depot is well located and will play an important role in supporting the delivery and future development of bus services in Dewsbury. As the site is already an operational bus depot, no planning change of use is required.

7.4.2 Round 2 Properties

7.4.2.1 Castleford Depot

Castleford Depot is an operational bus depot of a suitable size to support local bus operations and is well located to serve the surrounding network. As an existing depot, the site already benefits from planning consent for its current use and can be utilised immediately without the need for a change of use.

7.4.3 Round 2 (Ancillary Land)

7.4.3.1 Car park adjoining the Castleford Depot

The car park adjoining Castleford Depot is considered by WYCA as essential for the operation of Castleford depot; it provides the only access to the workshop building and was considered as part of the Depot Strategy when WYCA completed its analysis on Castleford Depot.

The majority of the freehold interests at the Castleford Car Park are owned by Arriva.

There are two parcels of unregistered freehold land forming part of the site at Castleford Car Park. There is no alternative to this parcel of unregistered land as it forms part of the car park required by WYCA.

7.4.4 Round 3 Properties

7.4.4.1 Keighley Depot

The Keighley Depot is an existing depot and already benefits from planning permission for use as a depot.

7.4.4.2 A parcel of unregistered land adjoining the Keighley Depot

The parcel of unregistered land adjoining the Keighley Depot is located at the access point and represents a gap between the title boundary of the Keighley Depot as registered at Land Registry under title numbers (WYK500012 and WYK735633) and the public adopted highway where the Keighley Depot (Chapel Lane).

There is no alternative to this parcel of unregistered land as it is required for access.

7.4.4.3 **Chapel Lane Car Park (ancillary to Keighley Depot)**

The car park is required to support the operational function of the depot.

7.4.5 **Land interest**

Consideration was made as to whether to seek to acquire the freehold or a leasehold interest in each of the depots and ancillary land. In addition to the points set out in 7.2 Ownership of the Order Land to deliver the Scheme, WYCA considers that the acquisition of the freehold interest is necessary as:

(i) it allows WYCA to have full control over the depot and any future works that may be required to it. Ownership and control of depots is necessary to ensure WYCA's ability to manage the depot estate strategically and to ensure facilities remain available on an equitable basis to future operators. A leasehold interest in depots would leave ownership and control of a significant strategic aspect of the scheme with incumbent operators, and is one of the largest barriers to market entry within the bus industry.

(ii) the acquisition of a leasehold interest would likely be more expensive over the long term due to additional operational, administrative and financial burdens and the potential for a widening funding gap if rents were to be continually re-evaluated and increased. In addition, freehold arrangements provide greater long-term financial certainty, which in the context of a long-term franchising programme, this reduces future affordability risks and provides a more sustainable basis for managing the strategic depot estate. and

(iii) a leasehold interest would likely create greater liabilities for WYCA who, as the tenant, would be responsible for repairing any damage caused by operators.

7.4.6 **Leasehold interests where the freeholder is a constituent member of WYCA**

(i) WYCA is satisfied that the acquisition of the leasehold title the Car Park at Chapel Lane (ancillary to Keighley Depot) is justified, as the freeholder for this site is a constituent member of WYCA and supports the Scheme (being City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council).

7.5 **Analysis of alternative sites**

A summary of the reasons why the depots included within the Order Land have been selected as required for the delivery of the Scheme over alternative sites is set out below. WYCA has also considered the appropriate model for acquisition either through entering into a lease or acquiring the freehold for each depot.

7.5.1 **Round 1 Properties**

7.5.1.1 **Dewsbury Depot**

The alternative site for Dewsbury was one at Heckmondwike, which is also an existing depot. Heckmondwike does have a larger bus capacity compared to Dewsbury but one of the main issues with the alternative site is that it is spread over two sites with a public road going down the middle of it.

Both the Dewsbury Depot and the alternative site are existing depots and already have planning permission to be used as such.

However, with a public road separating the alternative site, Heckmondwike was concluded as not suitable. This is because in order to move buses from one side of the depot to the other, a driver with a bus driving license will be required, which in turn places additional burden on staffing requirements and presents significant operational issues on a day-to-day basis.

The alternative site also had minimal depot driver parking. Drivers previously parked at a nearby supermarket, but this is no longer a feasible option since parking fines were introduced. WYCA therefore considered that the alternative site was not sufficient from a capacity perspective.

When assessed against the requirement for dead mileage, WYCA concluded that Heckmondwike was better placed when compared to the Dewsbury Depot. However, WYCA concluded that the issue of dead milage at the Dewsbury Depot could be addressed by WYCA through re-scheduling of the bus routes.

7.5.2 **Round 2 Properties**

7.5.2.1 **Castleford Depot**

The alternative site identified for the Castleford depot is the Wheldale Colliery Site which would provide over 30 acres of development land. WYCA considered that the alternative site was too big for its requirements.

The Wheldale Colliery Site is approximately 0.6 miles East of the Castleford depot and so there would be minimal dead mileage. However, the Wheldale Colliery site requires WYCA to acquire the site and obtain planning permission to develop the land into a new depot. The alternative site will also require full installation of utilities and connections following a new build. Given the extent of development works required, WYCA considered that the alternative site would not be feasible.

7.5.3 **Round 2 (Ancillary Land)**

7.5.3.1 **Car park adjoining the Castleford Depot**

This is part of the same site as the Castleford Depot and the rear yard and frontage car park operate as one. The car parking is in a separate title but adjoins the Castleford Depot. Given the yard and car park operate as one, WYCA did not consider it appropriate to consider an alternative.

7.5.4 Round 3 Properties

7.5.4.1 Keighley Depot

The alternative site identified for the Keighley Depot is the West Lane site, which is a brownfield site. WYCA would need to obtain planning permission and carry out extensive works to develop the alternative site for use as a depot. WYCA did not consider this to be feasible or deliverable in terms of financial viability.

There is a risk of contamination at the alternative site at West Lane site, and the project was considered unfeasible and undeliverable due to contamination risks along with the need to obtain planning permission and the need for extensive works to be carried out to develop the alternative site into a depot.

In light of the extensive works required to develop the alternative site into a depot, WYCA concluded that the existing Keighley Depot represents the only viable and deliverable option associated with the Scheme.

7.5.4.2 Chapel Lane Car Park (ancillary to Keighley Depot)

The car park is required to support the operational function of the depot, with no suitable alternative parking provision available locally.

7.6 The Cost of Constructing New Build Depots

WYCA has assessed the financial viability of constructing new-build depots at each of the alternative sites where this would be required. WYCA's experience of developing similar schemes (such as the development of the new Wakefield Depot), shows that the construction of a new-build depot is likely to be significantly more expensive than purchasing the existing depots.

Estimated replacement costs for the alternative sites for Castleford and Keighley are projected at approximately seven times the Market Value of the related existing depots. This would significantly exceed the available budget for the Scheme and greatly impact the value for money of the Scheme. As such, the new-build approach is deemed not financially viable.

For Heckmondwike, which was the alternative site identified for the Dewsbury Depot, there was no new-build costs assessment as Heckmondwike is an existing depot and there would not be a requirement for WYCA to development the site. However, Heckmondwike was discounted as an alternative site principally due to the presence of a road running through the site.

7.7 Negotiations with landowners

7.7.1 WYCA has made efforts to acquire the land by agreement but has not been able to secure voluntary transfers.

7.7.2 The efforts made by WYCA to acquire the Order Land by agreement from the landowner and the status of negotiations is set out below.

7.8 **Efforts to Acquire by Agreement**

7.8.1 In line with government guidance that compulsory purchase should be a measure of last resort, WYCA has proactively engaged with the current owners to acquire the land by agreement but has not been able to secure negotiated settlements.

7.8.2 All negotiations have been conducted in good faith, with WYCA providing the relevant owners with clear information about the intended use of the site, the basis for valuation, and the statutory process.

7.9 **Negotiations with existing operators and landowners in respect of Depots**

Arriva

7.9.1 Reasonable steps have been made to acquire the Order Land owned by Arriva by WYCA in relation to the acquisition of the Dewsbury Depot and the Castleford Depot, including ancillary land at the Castleford Depot Car Park owned by Arriva. WYCA made a written conditional offer to Arriva on 11th September 2025 that covers all of Arriva's interest in the depots and the ancillary land forming part of the Order Land. Heads of Terms have been agreed with Arriva and negotiations are ongoing.

AJS22 Ltd - Keighley Depot (freehold)

7.9.2 Steps have been made to acquire the freehold of Keighley Depot from the freeholder, AJS22 Ltd. An offer was made by WYCA for all of AJS22 Ltd's freehold interest to the property on 20th August 2026 and negotiations are ongoing.

Blazefield Holdings Ltd - Keighley Depot (leasehold)

7.9.3 WYCA has been liaising with Blazefield Holdings Limited (owned by Transdev) in connection with their leasehold title at the Keighley Depot.

7.9.4 Steps have been taken to acquire the leasehold interest to the Keighley Depot from Blazefield Holdings Limited and an offer was made by WYCA on 2nd October 2026 for its leasehold interest and negotiations are ongoing.

Keighley & District Travel Limited - Chapel Lane Car Park (leasehold)

7.9.5 Steps have been taken to acquire the leasehold interest of the Chapel Lane Car Park from Keighley & District Travel Limited and an offer was made by WYCA on 2nd October 2026 for its leasehold interest and negotiations are ongoing.

7.9.6 WYCA has therefore determined that it is necessary to pursue compulsory purchase powers to avoid delay to the implementation of the West Yorkshire Bus Franchising Scheme.

7.9.7 WYCA remains willing and open to reaching a negotiated settlement at any stage, and will continue to seek agreement with the owner alongside the compulsory purchase process, as recommended by national policy.

7.10 **Negotiations with landowners in respect of ancillary land**

7.10.1 In respect of the freehold interest to Castleford car park adjoining the Castleford Depot, this is owned by Arriva and WYCA has been in negotiation in respect of the acquisition of the freehold interest of the Castleford car park as part of the negotiation to acquire the Dewsbury depot, Castleford depot and Heckmondwike depot.

7.10.2 The leasehold interest to the Castleford car park adjoining the Castleford Depot is owned by Yorkshire Bus Company Limited (registered at Companies House as Yorkshire Bus Group Limited) which was dissolved on 25th December 2017. WYCA is not including the leasehold land vested in the Crown as part of the Order Land.

7.11 **Steps taken to assist those affected**

7.11.1 WYCA recognises that the confirmation of the CPO will result in landowners having their land taken from them against their will. As such, WYCA has considered mitigation measures that might alleviate the impact.

7.11.2 During the process of land referencing, WYCA's agents had identified individuals whose land and interests were believed to be affected by the Scheme. A letter was issued to the individuals identified explaining that WYCA is proposing to proceed with the Scheme and that their land and interest may be affected by the Scheme and work was being undertaken to gather information in advance of the making of a CPO.

7.11.3 Since the initial correspondence**,** landowners who have been identified as parties affected by the CPO have received subsequent correspondence from WYCA explaining that WYCA is proceeding with the CPO.

7.11.4 In WYCA's subsequent correspondence, it directed relevant landowners to the Government's Guidance on the Compulsory Purchase Process and highlighted their rights to request an advance payment of compensation pursuant to Section 52 to 52B of the Land Compensation Act 1973. WYCA also confirmed that it will, where appropriate, fund affected parties' reasonable costs of negotiations and other costs and expenses incurred throughout the CPO process.

7.11.5 In addition, during the negotiation, landowners were advised verbally and informally that a Compulsory Purchase Order for the Order Land would be in prospect if WYCA was unable to acquire the land by agreement.

7.11.6 Arriva appointed specialist CPO representatives to assist with the CPO process.

7.12 Impact of the Order on affected parties

7.12.1 WYCA has provided detailed information to the affected landowners about the CPO process and what it involves, including the rights and duties of those affected.

7.12.2 WYCA informed the affected landowners about guidance that is publicly available and professionally published on compulsory purchase and compensation.

7.12.3 WYCA has appointed a main point of contact with whom the affected operators can liaise.

7.12.4 WYCA also made affected operators aware of the professional guidance available to assist them to understand the impact of the scheme on their interests and the compensation available to them.

7.12.5 Given the nature of the franchising scheme being put into place, WYCA did not consider that it was necessary or appropriate to advise affected operators on the possibility of relocation.

7.12.6 WYCA has taken care to keep any delay to a minimum by seeking to complete the statutory process as swiftly as possible and taking care to ensure that the CPO is made correctly and under the terms of the most appropriate enabling power.

7.12.7 WYCA has agreed to fund the operators' reasonable legal costs relating to the acquisition process and has provided full details of compensation offered.

7.12.8 WYCA has ensured that affected parties have been kept informed throughout the process, including in relation to timescales, and has provided appropriate opportunities for engagement and feedback.

8 Human Rights Considerations

8.1 Section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 prohibits public authorities from acting in a way which is incompatible with rights protected by the European Convention on Human Rights ('the Convention'). Furthermore, Compulsory Purchase Guidance states that a compulsory purchase order should only be made where there is a compelling case in the public interest.

8.2 The Guidance also makes it clear that an acquiring authority should be sure that the purposes for which the compulsory purchase order is made justify interfering with the human rights of those with an interest in the land affected.

8.3 In resolving to make the Order, WYCA considered the right of the property owners affected by the Order generally, and particularly, under the following Articles of the Convention:

8.3.1 Article 1, Protocol 1 – Right to Peaceful Enjoyment of Possessions

"Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law. The preceding provisions shall not, however, in any way impair the right of a State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure the payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties."

8.3.2 Article 6 – Right to a Fair Trial

"In the determination of his civil rights and obligations or of any criminal charge against him, everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law. Judgment shall be pronounced publicly but the press and public may be excluded from all or part of the trial in the interest of morals, public order or national security in a democratic society, where the interests of juveniles or the protection of the private life of the parties so require, or to the extent strictly necessary in the opinion of the court in special circumstances where publicity would prejudice the interests of justice."

8.3.3 Article 8 – Right to Respect for Private and Family Life

"Everyone has the right to respect of his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. Interference is justified however, if it is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interest of national security, public safety or the economic wellbeing of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of rights and freedom of others. "

8.4 In relation to Article 8, it should be noted that there are no dwellings within the Order Land. The Order Land comprises solely of commercial premises and land.

8.5 The proposals have been consulted upon widely and those affected by the Order have been informed and will have the right to make representations to the Secretary of State and to be heard at a public inquiry. Those directly affected by the Order will also be entitled to compensation in accordance with the Compensation Code.

8.6 Whilst the current owners of the Order Land will be deprived of their property if the Order is confirmed, this will be done in accordance with the law. The Order is being pursued in the public interest. The public benefits associated with the Scheme are set out earlier in this Statement of Reasons.

8.7 In light of the above, WYCA considers that the Order will strike a fair balance between the public interest in the implementation of the Scheme and those private rights which will be affected by the Order.

9 Equality Act 2010

9.1 In deciding to make the CPO, WYCA has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and, in particular, the need under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9.2 A review of the impacted parties has been undertaken to determine whether the CPO would give rise to differential or disproportionate impacts on those with protected characteristics.

9.3 WYCA has sought to mitigate any differential or disproportionate impact including through ensuring that individuals have been made fully aware of the guidance relating to CPO and the support available to them. This information has been acknowledged by such parties.

9.4 WYCA will continue with ongoing engagement/review throughout the implementation of the wider programme and WYCA will ensure that any future impact of the Scheme can be measured and mitigated against as necessary.

10 Implementation and Funding

10.1 The implementation of the West Yorkshire Bus Franchising Scheme, including the acquisition of the identified bus depots, is supported by a comprehensive funding strategy developed by WYCA.

10.1.1 Source of funding for acquiring the land

The funding for the Scheme will be drawn from a combination of various funding sources including but not limited to the funding being made available to WYCA through Integrated Settlement from April 2026.

The first Integrated Settlement for West Yorkshire was announced in the June 2025 Spending Review, providing a single funding package, providing flexibility and empowering the Mayor and Combined Authority to invest in the region's priorities. This funding includes £2.1 billion Transport for City Regions funding for the region, with over £200 million in the year 2026-27. WYCA has existing delegations in place in respect of funding to acquire the land, with established processes to amend such delegations in line with the outcomes of the CPO Order and accounting for any ultimate settlement costs.

10.1.2 **Source of funding for implementing the Scheme.**

WYCA has a mixed source of capital funding available and ring-fenced for the delivery of the Scheme as well as funding for the acquisition of land. This includes funding from the West Yorkshire Transport Fund and funding from the Integrated Settlement such as Transport for City Regions.

The operation of the franchised network will be supported by a sustainable mix of funding, including farebox revenue, Transport Levy, and revenue funding secured and available to WYCA as part of its Integrated Settlement.

10.1.3 **Availability of funding and timing in the context of the Scheme**

The funding set out in 10.1.1 and 10.1.2 is available to WYCA now and WYCA has approval for the funding of the acquisition of the depot sites.

10.2 WYCA has undertaken a robust financial assessment, including sensitivity testing of revenue and cost assumptions, to ensure that the Scheme is deliverable and sustainable.

10.3 The acquisition of the identified depots is a critical enabler of the franchising model. It ensures that WYCA has direct control over operational infrastructure, reducing long-term costs and dependency on private operators.

10.4 The business case for the overall franchising scheme can be found in the Assessment Report of WYCA.

11 Related Orders

11.1 None

12 Special Considerations

12.1 The Order Land does not include any listed buildings or scheduled monuments.

12.2 There are no known environmental designations or protected species affected by the proposed acquisition.

13 Views of Government Departments

13.1 The Department for Transport has been kept informed of the Scheme and its strategic alignment with national transport policy.

13.2 No objections have been raised by government departments at this stage.

14 Conclusion

14.1 The compulsory acquisition of the Order Land is essential for the successful delivery of the West Yorkshire Bus Franchising Scheme.

14.2 Public ownership of The Order Land will enable WYCA to ensure that service quality, reliability, and value for money are delivered in the public interest.

14.3 The acquisition will remove barriers to entry for new operators, fostering a competitive and dynamic market, and supporting regular re-letting of contracts in line with the franchising model.

14.4 It will facilitate the timely implementation of zero-emission bus (ZEB) infrastructure at specific depots supporting WYCA's decarbonisation and net zero ambitions and ensuring that depot upgrades and electrification can proceed without reliance on private owners.

14.5 The process follows government guidance and best practice, with WYCA having made sustained efforts to acquire the depot by agreement, and compulsory purchase being pursued as a measure of last resort.

14.6 The acquisition is critical to achieving operational readiness from day one of franchising, maintaining programme momentum, and safeguarding public confidence in the delivery of improved bus services.

14.7 The acquisition will also enable WYCA to set and enforce consistent standards for depot use, including safety, environmental compliance, and accessibility, supporting network-wide quality improvements.

14.8 For the above reasons, there is a compelling case in the public interest for the Order to be confirmed.

15 Inspection of Documents

15.1 Copies of the Order, Order Map, and this Statement of Reasons are available for inspection at West Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, Wellington House, 40-50 Wellington Street, Leeds, LS1 2DE and on the WYCA website.