West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

Our Reference: 3275

20/04/2026

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Enquiry: Bus reform future network & vehicle procurement

Thank you for contacting West Yorkshire Combined Authority ('the Combined Authority') with your request for information, which was received on 02/03/2026. Your request was:

"Please supply a list of the routes that will form part of the new franchised network, together with any maps or service descriptions showing the proposed bus network.

Please include details of any routes that are due to be withdrawn, merged, renumbered or newly introduced, alongside the planned peak and off-peak frequencies for each service. I'd also like to request the proposed timetable for the transition from the current operating model to franchising. This should include key milestone dates such as procurement stages, contract awards and the commencement of services, as well as confirmation of whether the changeover will be phased by route or by area.

Additionally, please provide details of the vehicles to be purchased or leased for the new network, including the number and type of buses (for example diesel, hybrid, electric or hydrogen), expected delivery timescales and any depot or infrastructure works required to support the fleet, including charging or refuelling facilities.

Ultimately, I'm seeking information on the overall cost of implementing bus franchising. This should include estimated capital expenditure, projected annual subsidy or net cost to the authority, details of any central government funding awarded and any identified financial risks or contingency provisions. I'd welcome copies of the relevant business case and any associated impact assessments.

If any of this information is already available online, I'd be grateful if you could direct me to the relevant documents."

This request was handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), and I can confirm that the Combined Authority holds some information covered by your request:

- *Please supply a list of the routes that will form part of the new franchised network, together with any maps or service descriptions showing the proposed bus network.*

Routes are located within the annex lists of the West Yorkshire Franchising Scheme for Buses 2024 document, which is in the public domain: https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/zl2f5q41/the-west-yorkshire-bus-franchising-scheme-march-2024.pdf.

A request made under the FoIA covers any recorded information that we hold. Route descriptions are not held in recorded format by the Combined Authority.

Further details, including maps and service specifications, regarding these routes in each round, are held by the Combined Authority but are either 'work in progress' for future contracts or are in the current contract details. We are withholding these under Section 43(2) of the FoIA, which exempts us from the general duty to release information which would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any entity, including the public authority holding the information.

Disclosure under the FoIA is to the world at large. Section 43 is a qualified exemption, and as such, we are required to assess the public interest in withholding this information against that of its release.

The Combined Authority is committed to openness and transparency and recognises the public interest in local government spending and activities; we have therefore taken into consideration the following:

- Contracts are awarded using public money which meets the FoIA 'Public Right to Know' requirements, ensuring transparency in terms of public expenditure.
- Disclosure could promote a better understanding of how the organisation makes use of public resources and how this is reflected in its terms of spending.
- Contractors are aware that commercial information is subject to the FoIA.

However, we also consider that this information is commercially sensitive as:

Implementation of bus franchising is being undertaken in phases, and we are currently in the initial procurement process. Information could yet change due to the live tendering

process, and releasing information at this stage which is subject to change could impact subsequent phases by putting misleading information into the public domain, setting out the Combined Authority's position before market engagement, potentially restricting the market, and/or altering the behaviours of operators in bidding for tenders.

Disclosure would weaken the commercial position of the Combined Authority as a procurer of services using public monies to obtain value for money during such tendering processes. We recognise the public interest in public authorities being able to obtain value for money with regards to the use of public funds.

It should also be noted that once procurement processes are completed, information relating to contracts will be published as part of public communications on the introduction of operational services; we therefore provide a link to the relevant page on our website: Transparency and Freedom of Information

We remain committed to openness and transparency and recognise the public interest in local government spending and activities. However, for the reasons above, we consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs that of disclosure.

- *Please include details of any routes that are due to be withdrawn, merged, renumbered or newly introduced, alongside the planned peak and off-peak frequencies for each service.*

Information regarding any routes that are due to be withdrawn, merged, renumbered or newly introduced is not held by the Combined Authority. Peak and off-peak frequencies for each service have not yet been confirmed as the information is subject to change during the procurement process.

- *I'd also like to request the proposed timetable for the transition from the current operating model to franchising. This should include key milestone dates such as procurement stages, contract awards and the commencement of services, as well as confirmation of whether the changeover will be phased by route or by area.*

Details regarding the proposed timetable are available in the following public documents:

- Combined Authority Board Meeting - Jan-25 – Sets out the three phases in detail
- Combined Authority Board Meeting - Jul-25 – Focuses on the contract procurement approach

- *Additionally, please provide details of the vehicles to be purchased or leased for the new network, including the number and type of buses (for example diesel, hybrid, electric or hydrogen), expected delivery timescales and any depot or infrastructure works required to support the fleet, including charging or refuelling facilities.*

There are several documents regarding this within the public domain – including in Combined Authority Board Meetings which can be found at the following locations:

- Jan 2025 Combined Authority Board Meeting - Jan-25
- May 2025 Combined Authority Board Meeting - May-25
- Oct 2025 Combined Authority Board Meeting - Oct-25
- Jan 2026 Combined Authority Board Meeting - Jan-26
- Mar 2026 Combined Authority Board Meeting - Mar-26

Further documents have been provided to decision makers at the Combined Authority but have been treated as private appendices in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The following papers have been treated as private appendices:

- Fleet Strategy (May 2025)
- Depot Strategy (Jan 2025)
- Fleet Provision OBC (Oct 2025)

There are further documents that are held by the Combined Authority which relate to the ongoing procurement for the acquisition of vehicles:

  - Procurement Statement of Requirements
  - Technical specifications for Lot A acquisition

These are attached for you:
'*Ref 3275 – 'Statement of Requirements Vehicle Spec Lots 1 & 2.pdf*' and
'Ref 3275 - Technical Specifications for Lot A Fleet.pdf'

- *Ultimately, I'm seeking information on the overall cost of implementing bus franchising. This should include estimated capital expenditure, projected annual subsidy or net cost to the authority, details of any central government funding awarded and any identified financial risks or contingency provisions.*

This information is held by the Combined Authority; however, we are withholding this in full under Section 43(2) of the FOIA. Section 43 is a qualified exemption and as such, we are required to assess the public interest in withholding this information against that of its release, which is outlined below:

We consider that the publication of information regarding the cost of implementation is likely to prejudice the Combined Authority's competitive position in any future tendering as a procurer of services using public money; public bodies are obligated to obtain value for money when using public funds.

Disclosure is also likely to prejudice the commercial interests of suppliers. It is in the public's interest to protect the commercial interests of individual companies and to ensure that they can continue to compete fairly. There is a current live tender process regarding contracts for bus franchising and a further two rounds to be undertaken, plus ongoing commercial negotiations relating to bus franchising asset requirements. Information regarding cost is therefore subject to change; releasing information regarding assumed or expected costs would put potentially misleading information into the public domain.

The Combined Authority is committed to openness and transparency and recognises the public interest in local government spending and activities. However, for the reasons above, we consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs that of disclosure.

- *I'd welcome copies of the relevant business case and any associated impact assessments.*

The January 2026 bus franchising paper provides updates on the latest revenue transition budget to implement franchising:
WYCA - Modern Gov Bus Franchising Decision Details - Jan26

Capital approvals for franchising are within the January 2025, May 2025, October 2025, January 2026 and March 2026 papers which are linked above.

The projected net cost of franchising in terms of operating a franchised network moving forward is within the financial case of the assessment, published March 2024:
Combined Authority Board Meeting - Mar-24

Other documents relevant to your request such as these below are published on our website:

WYCA - Modern Gov Equality Impact Assessment - Jul25.pdf
WYCA - Modern Gov Bus Franchising - Mar26.docx.pdf

Information (such as the documents referenced above) which is readily accessible to applicants is exempt from disclosure under S21 (1) of the FoIA; we therefore provide a link to a search function where it is possible to enter key words to locate further information relating to your request from our published committee meetings:

WYCA - Modern Gov - website location where you can search for agendas, decisions, and minutes of Combined Authority committee meetings.

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

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
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