West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

CONFIDENTIAL

Depot Strategy

Exempt Appendix due to Commercial Sensitivity

Bus Reform Programme

S.40 Personal Information / 30 January 2025

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Background

Strategic background

Buses play a vital role in West Yorkshire, connecting communities and helping to level up our economy. Over 1.7 million journeys are taken by bus each week, making it the most used form of public transport in West Yorkshire.

Despite playing such a key role across West Yorkshire, the number of people travelling by bus is in long–term decline, the bus network is also getting smaller, the Combined Authority are having to contribute more to the running of bus services and customer satisfaction with local bus services is falling[1].

Improving buses is a key commitment for the Combined Authority as set out in the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy 2040, Bus Service Improvement Plan and the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan. The Combined Authority set out its ambition for better local buses, and how this would help achieve our goals for the region, in our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The BSIP acknowledged challenges facing local buses and set out a vision for a safe and inclusive bus system, better connected communities, decarbonisation, and integrated, sustainable travel. The BSIP also included a plan of interventions to transform the local bus market for the people of West Yorkshire.

In West Yorkshire there is a history of partnership working between the public sector and local bus operators. This was first formalised through the Bus18 Partnership, established in 2017, which was later developed into the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance (the Alliance). The Alliance was initially overseen by a legal agreement called a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), which is a written agreement entered into between the Combined Authority, Local Authorities and bus operators which sets out shared commitments for bus in West Yorkshire.

In April 2022, an Enhanced Partnership (EP) was made replacing the VPA, which included a commitment from the Combined Authority, Local Authorities and bus operators to work together to deliver the BSIP.

Whilst all of these partnerships aimed to deliver better outcomes for bus customers, the Combined Authority believe that these partnerships have not delivered the anticipated benefits. They have fallen short of the expected outcomes when the partnerships were first established, particularly around improving the bus network for customers, and encouraging more people to travel by bus.

On March 14 2024 the West Yorkshire Mayor, Tracy Brabin, took the decision on behalf of the Combined Authority to make a Franchising Scheme. The assessment of the proposed franchising scheme undertaken by the Combined Authority as required by section 123B of the Transport Act 2000 (as amended) (the Act) (the Assessment) included a depot position paper[2] which set out the proposed assumptions and approach of the Combined Authority in relation to depots and their acquisition for the purposes of the Assessment, and acknowledged that this remained subject to detailed business case analysis if the decision was taken to pursue franchising. It considered whether depots should be provided to franchisees, and if so, the mechanism for how they would be provided.

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Franchising Assessment

Franchising objectives and Commercial Success Factors

The Strategic Case of the Assessment set out the strategic drivers for franchising and concluded that it demonstrated the greatest strategic benefits across the bus reform objectives related to network, fares and ticketing, and customer service and information. The Strategic Case concluded that franchising brings greater opportunity to achieve the Combined Authority's wider objectives and ambitions for West Yorkshire.

A list of the strategic objectives can be seen in the table below.

1: The whole journey, enhancing the contribution of the bus system towards the Combined Authority's Transport Strategy 2040 and wider policies.	
Objective	
Economy	Supporting an integrated transport system which provides reliable and improved connectivity to the places where customers need to travel to for work, education, leisure and access to services.
Environment	Establishing a transport network that helps to reduce the overall impact of transport on carbon emissions and air quality, and increases our resilience against climate change, including via zero-emission buses.
People and place	Enabling a transport system that increases access in a safe, inclusive way that encourages use of bus as part of a multi-modal network.

2: Improved travel experience for citizens maximising deliverability of the Combined Authority's Bus Service Improvement Plan by 2030.	
Objective	
Network	Taking people where they need to go, when they need to go, and catering for the complexity of modern travel patterns.
Fares and ticketing	Making paying for bus travel more affordable, easier, convenient and flexible.
Customer service and information	Providing passengers with the right tools to travel with confidence and help should their journey not go to plan.
Bus priority	Journeying by bus is quicker, and a viable alternative to the private car.
Green and better vehicles	Improving the onboard experience and making bus a sustainable choice for travel in West Yorkshire.

In addition a number of Commercial Success Factors (CSFs) were determined through the Commercial Case of the Assessment which sought to determine the best option for the delivery of bus services and also take into account the need to balance objectives against affordability, deliverability and value for money. The CSFs can be seen in the table below.

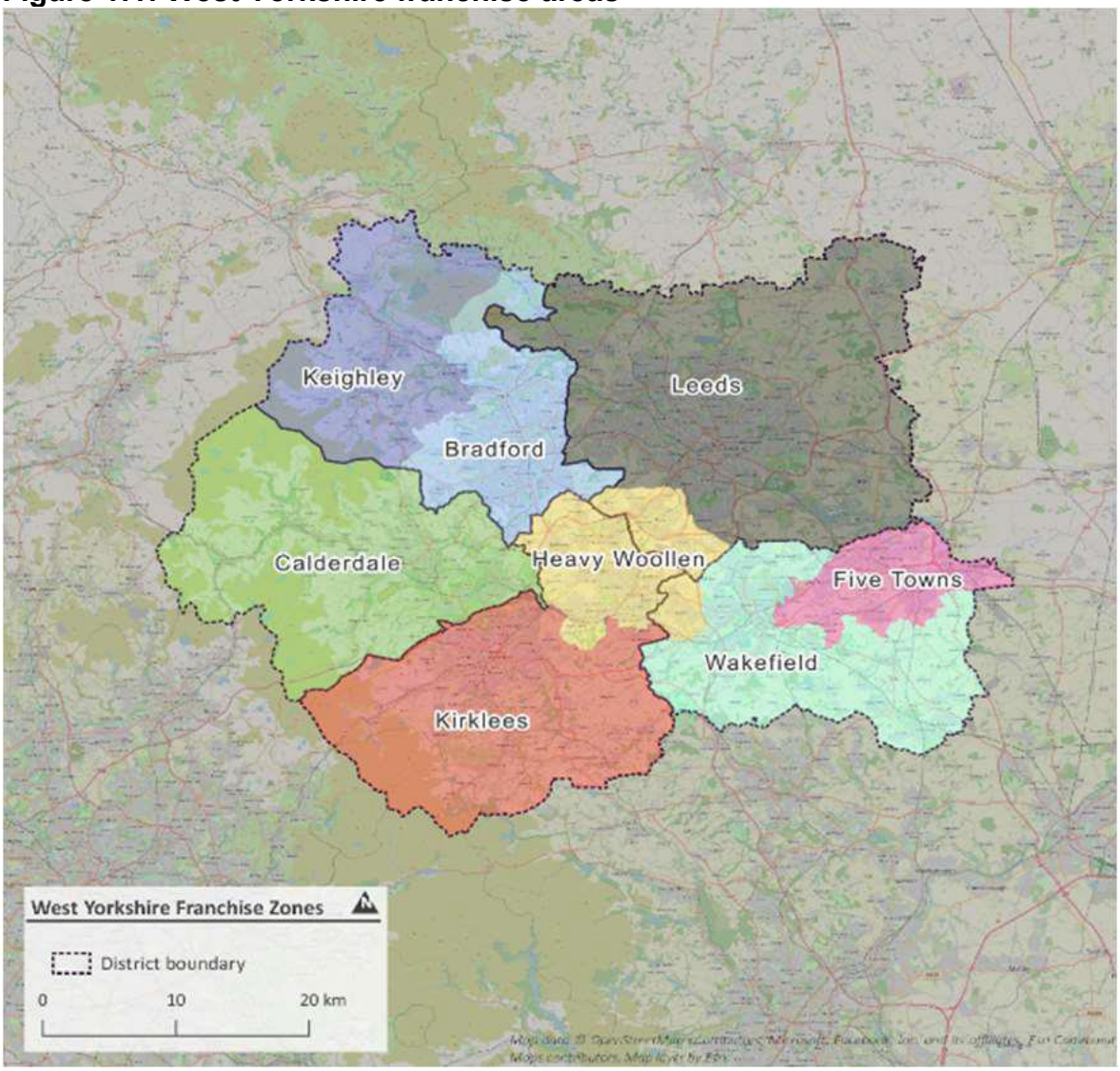
Commercial Success Factor	Definition
Transport authority influence	Combined Authority investment results in the intended bus network outcomes.
Best value	The option balances price and quality impacting affordability for bus customers.
Driver of competition between operators	There should be good competition between operators and all operators (including SMOs and new entrants) should be able to participate, leading to better quality and value for the Combined Authority.

Appropriate risk allocation	Risks should be the responsibility of either the public or private sector and should be managed by those most capable of doing so
Ease of implementation	The option needs to be practical and sustainable.

Franchise zones

The Assessment proposed that if franchising was selected, West Yorkshire would be split into 10 strategic zones as set out below, with Leeds being split into 3. However, due to the network, the Leeds zones would be split on direction of route rather than geographically like the remainder of West Yorkshire:

Figure 1:1: West Yorkshire franchise areas



These 10 strategic zones would be comprised of Leeds 1, Leeds 2, Leeds 3, Five Towns, Wakefield, Heavy Woollen, Kirklees, Calderdale, Bradford and Keighley.

Lotting Strategy

An initial lotting strategy[3] was produced as part of the Commercial Case of the Assessment which separated zones into different sizes and scopes or 'Lots'. A definition of each of these can be seen in the table below.

Category	Description	Indicative Peak Vehicle Requirement range	Depot requirement
A	Large number of services grouped together, requiring large depot per Lot	45 - 100	Strategic depot provided by the Combined Authority
B	Low frequency services; aimed at SMOs	1 - 45	Operator provided depot
C	Single (am & pm paired) school contracts; aimed at SMOs	1	Operator provided depot

The lotting strategy set out which routes would be run from each strategic zone and therefore how many buses would be required by requesting the peak vehicle requirement (PVR) for each route from the operators currently running them. PVR refers to the minimum number of buses required to run a service.

The lotting strategy also set out how the strategic zones would be grouped and franchised through setting out the following principles:

- A three round approach was adopted - (i.e. procuring 3-4 zones in parallel, a “round”)
- Heavy Woollen was included within the first round, due to its central WY location and multi-district (Kirklees/Leeds/Wakefield) impact.
- One “above WY average” operating efficiency zone was included within each round, allowing a balancing of the likely commercial impact – that is aiming for neither WYCA nor operators to be left with the best/worst performers in any one round
- Grouping geographically located zones was considered across West Yorkshire, aiming to reduce unintended impacts on bus services which cross between these zones and supporting clearer messaging around the introduction of franchising

Following this a proposed list of options were presented to the Bus Reform Board on 08/03/2023, and the agreed ordering was:

- Round 1 – Heavy Woollen, Kirklees, Leeds 3
- Round 2 – Five Towns, Leeds 1, Wakefield
- Round 3 - Bradford, Calderdale, Keighley, Leeds 2

The ordering of rounds also takes into account sourcing of any additional depots. In the Assessment this was applicable to the solution for Leeds Lots 1 and 2 as they are currently run from the same depot (Hunslet), but the Assessment set out that they will not be run from the same depot once franchising is introduced. Therefore, if a new build depot was required it would need to be delivered before the current depot is franchised otherwise there would be nowhere from which to run the services intended to operate from the new build depot.

This agreed ordering therefore defines when each depot must be acquired by so that it can be leased to the franchisee. The depot must be in a position where the Combined Authority has the legal right to lease it to a franchisee as part of the franchise contract.

Approach to depots

The approach to depots defined in the Assessment included a requirement for the Combined Authority to provide depots for the largest, Lot A, contracts only. The Combined Authority undertook a desktop-based assessment of the existing depots that would be large enough to run the 'Lot A' routes. This identified strategic depots for 9 of the 10 zones. However, as there was no existing depot for the remaining strategic zone it was proposed that this could be delivered through a new build depot.

The recommendation that the Combined Authority provide depots to franchisees that will be running the 'Lot A' routes across West Yorkshire was to remove barriers to entry for new operators not currently operating a sufficiently sized depot in an appropriate location within West Yorkshire, or not currently operating within West Yorkshire at all. This is because depots are an illiquid and fixed asset which, unlike fleet, cannot be moved or developed easily. Lack of access to depot facilities could mean that operators are unable to enter or compete in the market. This would also mean smaller operators currently operating in West Yorkshire are unable to grow without access to appropriate depot facilities. Franchising moves competition in the market, to competition for the market. Therefore, to achieve the Commercial Success Factors, regarding driving competition between bus operators it is likely that the Combined Authority will need to intervene to ensure that both incumbent and new entrants are able to bid effectively for franchise contracts. This will not be possible for larger contracts if operators do not have access to appropriate depots.

Otherwise, the incumbent operators would have a large advantage as they currently own 8 of the 10 identified strategic depots (it should be noted that 1 of the 10 identified strategic depots does not currently exist and would need to be built on land purchased by the Combined Authority, the remaining 1 depot is leased). The smaller and medium sized depots would remain in their current ownership rather than being acquired by the Combined Authority.

The 10 strategic depots need to be capable of providing zero-emission bus fuelling/charging depending on whether the buses operating from that depot will be powered by hydrogen or electric, in line with the target of a zero-emission fleet by 2036 included within the Bus Service Improvement Plan and the Combined Authority's 2038 net-zero region ambition, as well as functioning as a bus depot capable of maintaining the bus numbers set out in the lotting strategy.

Strategy Development

Depot/Lotting Strategy development

It was set out in the Assessment that the Combined Authority's proposed depot strategy assumes the acquisition of a strategically located depot in each Zone for A Lots. Each depot is proposed to have sufficient capacity to exceed the PVR requirements for the Lot A contract for each Zone. However, it was not determined how much capacity is required, and when a certain level of capacity would be deemed excessive.

In order to progress with the acquisition of the strategic depots a project team was set up to manage this process up to delivery and the start of the franchising contracts, where the depots would then be handed over to the Combined Authority's Assets team to manage along with the rest of the Combined Authority's estate.

This project team is comprised of a Depot Infrastructure Project Manager to manage the overall engagement with districts and operators; and ultimate acquisition of the depots and a Project Officer to lead on several of the work packages associated with the acquisition of the depots. There is also a dedicated Commercial Category Lead - Land and Property to lead commercial discussions and the negotiation process, and an Asset Manager to review designs, condition surveys, and act as a client. Finally, there is support provided by the remainder of the Combined Authority's programme and policy team including in respect of stakeholder management and administration.

Each West Yorkshire district's estates officers, and representatives from the NHS and ambulance service, met with the project team individually to discuss their Local Plan and whether there would be any available land to provide an alternative location to the current depot, or a 'plan b' for each strategic depot. The 'plan a' would be to acquire the current depot. This was more critical in the case of Leeds, as a site for the 'Leeds 2' new build depot was required.

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The Assessment set out anticipated costs of depot acquisitions based on desk-based surveys and calculating the approximate cost of zero-emission bus infrastructure by multiplying the number of buses required to run the bus services by XXX (this figure was based on submitted business cases for ZEB investment around the time of the Assessment). However, in order to determine the actual costs including any refurbishment requirements, condition surveys including valuations and estimated maintenance costs over the next 10 years were required and therefore the Combined Authority ran a procurement exercise using a Crown Commercial Services framework to appoint a surveyor/valuer. XXX were the successful tenderer and have been retained to carry out any future land and/or property valuations for other depots and/or ancillary accommodation.

The lotting strategy was updated in line with the latest services and routes and will continue to be updated as a live document.

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Strategic Assessment of depots

Case for change – the opportunity that owning depots brings
Across West Yorkshire there are currently 29 depots which are owned and operated by existing bus operators. The three major commercial operators have control of the larger depots which includes 13 depots each with a capacity in excess of 50 PVR.

Depots are essential in supporting the delivery of bus services across West Yorkshire, playing an important role in managing and maintaining fleet, alongside the granting of and adherence to operator licences.

The Assessment set out the need to reform the way buses are run in order to better deliver services for customers and provide more control of decisions impacting services to the Combined Authority. As discussed above, the Assessment set out the approach to delivering services which included an approach to the allocation of assets. Within the depot position paper two options were proposed:

- Option 1 – no intervention
- Option 2 – intervention for the Combined Authority to purchase depots

There is a strong case for intervention in depots and the Assessment concluded on Combined Authority ownership of strategic depots for Lot A contracts as the preferred option. It was acknowledged that this would require large capital investment but would allow for improved market competition allowing for more operators to bid for contracts and encourage new entrants, and small and medium operators (SMOs) to bid for contracts that may have previously been out of scope due to access to depots.

Strategic objective alignment
The following section shows how the approach to depot acquisition, as outlined in the Assessment, delivers against the strategic objectives and links to the Commercial Success Factors.

It is acknowledged that ownership of depots does not impact on the delivery of all objectives within the Assessment and contributes mostly to those that concern the economy, environment and some elements of customer service/customer offer.

The greatest benefits in strategic depot ownership are largely in the ability it gives the Combined Authority to coordinate investment and lead the transition to zero emission buses and support the transition to greener depot facilities through investment and development to achieve reduction in carbon emissions through the assets. Through a linked plan for gradual investment in fleet, depot ownership can allow for the Combined Authority to ensure suitability of infrastructure for a zero-emission fleet and reduced emissions from depot facilities, and can better plan and control this. This has an indirect impact on the customer offer through allowing greater consistency for customers through the ability to set fleet and depot standards.

In addition, there are economic and network impacts resulting from the ownership of strategic depots with benefits of depot ownership relating to consistent network provision and the ability to introduce greater competition for contracts by reducing barriers to entry through the provision of assets. This could have an indirect impact on customer outcomes including the potential to impact value for money across contracts which could lead to positive impacts on fares and ticketing interventions for customers.

Further there is a benefit to the Combined Authority of depot ownership through investment and development of the facilities either through existing identified locations or by transitioning to more appropriate locations where investment in the depot creates benefits to the economy and environment in the medium and long term. The development of depots and transitioning to new locations over time also supports the Combined Authority key missions of A prosperous West Yorkshire; A happy West Yorkshire; Making lives greener and A region where everyone can flourish in addition to the foundation of A well-connected West Yorkshire.

The table below sets out the objectives for bus franchising across two areas; the whole journey, and an improved travel experience for citizens, and considers how the depot strategy could help to achieve these aims.

1: The whole journey, enhancing the contribution of the bus system towards the Combined Authority's Transport Strategy 2040 and wider policies.			
Objective		**Impact of depot strategy**	**Links to wider programme**
Economy	Supporting an integrated transport system which provides reliable and improved connectivity to the places where customers need to travel to for work, education, leisure and access to services.	Greater control over strategic depots can provide consistency to bus customers across network provision and allow for greater competition within the market by reducing barriers to competition.	
Environment	Establishing a transport network that helps to reduce the overall impact of transport on carbon emissions and air quality, and increases our resilience against climate change, including via zero-emission buses.	Ownership over strategic depots will allow for leadership over the transition to zero emission buses and the wider decarbonisation strategy, bringing additional benefits to fleet specification and delivering greater customer consistency in respect of fleet provision.	Greater ability to influence fleet strategy and achieve zero-emission ambitions in wider organisational policy.
People and place	Enabling a transport system that increases access in a safe, inclusive way that encourages use of bus as part of a multi-modal network.	Depots need to be strategically located in order to facilitate multi-modal and network efficiencies.	

2: Improved travel experience for citizens maximising deliverability of the Combined Authority's Bus Service Improvement Plan by 2030.			
Objective		**Impact of depot strategy**	**Wider programme**
Network	Taking people where they need to go, when they need to go, and catering	Greater control over strategic depots can provide consistency to bus	Providing consistency can lead to improvements in customer offer and

	for the complexity of modern travel patterns.	customers across network provision.	could encourage more people to travel by bus.
Fares and ticketing	Making paying for bus travel more affordable, easier, convenient and flexible.	Greater competition in the market through the reduction of barriers to competition could result in better value for money across contracts, therefore positively impacting fares and ticketing for customers.	
Customer service and information	Providing passengers with the right tools to travel with confidence and help should their journey not go to plan.	N/A	Integrating the depot strategy with the data workstream will allow for improved data that can inform network decisions.
Bus priority	Journeying by bus is quicker, and a viable alternative to the private car.	N/A	Linked to operational issues including timetabling.
Green and better vehicles	Improving the onboard experience and making bus a sustainable choice for travel in West Yorkshire.	Ownership over strategic depots will lead to better coordination over transition to zero emission buses, bringing additional benefits to fleet specification and delivering greater customer consistency in respect of fleet provision.	

Commercial Success Factor alignment

On developing the depot position paper, as part of the Assessment, the Commercial Success Factors were taken into account to understand how different depot options would impact the commercial model. The Commercial Success Factors also take into account the need to balance objectives against affordability, deliverability and value for money.

Now the decision has been taken to introduce franchising, it is important to ensure our depot strategy continues to deliver against our Commercial Success Factors which are set out in the table below and build on the content included within the original depot position paper published at Appendix 3.3 to the Assessment.

Commercial Success Factor	Definition	Impact on depot strategy	Wider programme
Transport authority influence	Combined Authority investment results in the intended bus network outcomes.	Ownership of depots allows for greatest Combined Authority influence with the control of depot assets under Combined Authority	There is a strong link to Fleet Strategy to consider within the depot strategy.

		control supporting the fleet strategy and mitigating barriers to entry for operators.	The network is likely to be impacted by the approach to depots taking into account issues such as space for expansion and access to infrastructure.
Best value	The option balances price and quality impacting affordability for bus customers.	Investment in depot allows the potential to deliver value for public sector over the long term.	Ensuring value for money is realised and ensuring programme finances remain affordable.
Driver of competition between operators	There should be good competition between operators and all operators (including SMOs and new entrants) should be able to participate, leading to better quality and value for the Combined Authority.	Ownership of strategic depots will allow more competition for contracts as a barrier to entry (access to depots) is removed for new operators or smaller operators looking to grow.	Improvements in competition may impact the customer offer such as the ticketing price.
Appropriate risk allocation	The public and private sector should each be allocated the risks that they are most capable of managing.	The risk of depot ownership will lie with the Combined Authority. There are additional risks in financial exposure for acquiring/developing depots.	Ensuring the approach is deliverable and affordable in terms of risk allocation. Consideration of resourcing to manage new responsibilities.
Ease of implementation	The option needs to be practical and sustainable.	Investing in depots requires the Combined Authority to acquire, develop and prepare depots for operational deployment which is complex, large scale and carries significant risk.	Ensuring the approach is deliverable and provides the anticipated benefits.

Benefits and risks

Through assessing the alignment of strategic objectives and the Commercial Success Factors across the Assessment the suggested approach can deliver benefits and improvements compared to the reference case in the delivery of depots. These benefits can be summarised as:

- Control benefit – ownership of depots brings greater control and certainty for the Combined Authority alongside the ability to influence outcomes over the bus network.
- Competition benefit – through removing the barrier associated with access to depots and provision of depots for larger contracts, it is more likely that a greater range of operators will bid for contracts.
- Environmental benefit – the control offered by depot ownership allows the Combined Authority to have greater oversight and planning over the transition to a zero-emission

bus fleet, gives the Combined Authority greater power over the fleet investment plan and puts control of the emissions from the depot facilities with the Combined Authority.

- Customer consistency benefit – indirect impacts of the above benefits could assist in delivering consistency for customers through greater Combined Authority influence on the network

The approach to depot ownership also has wider links to the strategic outcomes of the wider franchising programme.

The approach presented in the Assessment and discussed in this section also presents a number of strategic risks:

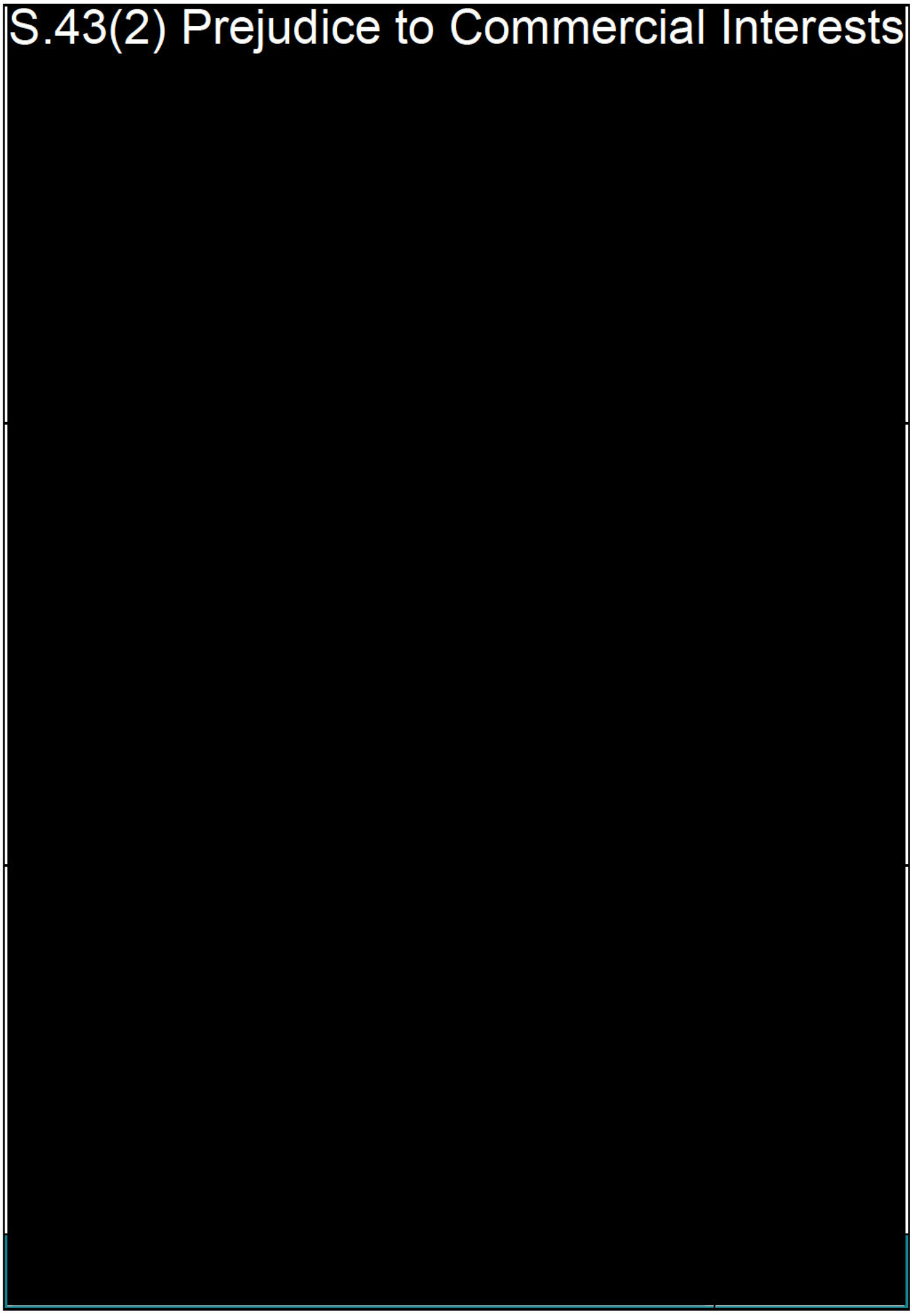
- Governance and ease of delivery – the programme is complex and could delay the delivery of intended strategic outcomes if not managed appropriately.
- Integration – ensuring that the most strategic benefits are realised needs to acknowledge dependencies across workstreams.
- Competition – if depots are not delivered in the anticipated way or they do not meet operator expectations the anticipated increase in competition may not occur,
- Reputational – outcomes of franchising seek to bring benefits for customers, any failure to deliver assets could impact consistency of customer delivery.
- Political risk – changes in political priorities could alter strategic outcomes,

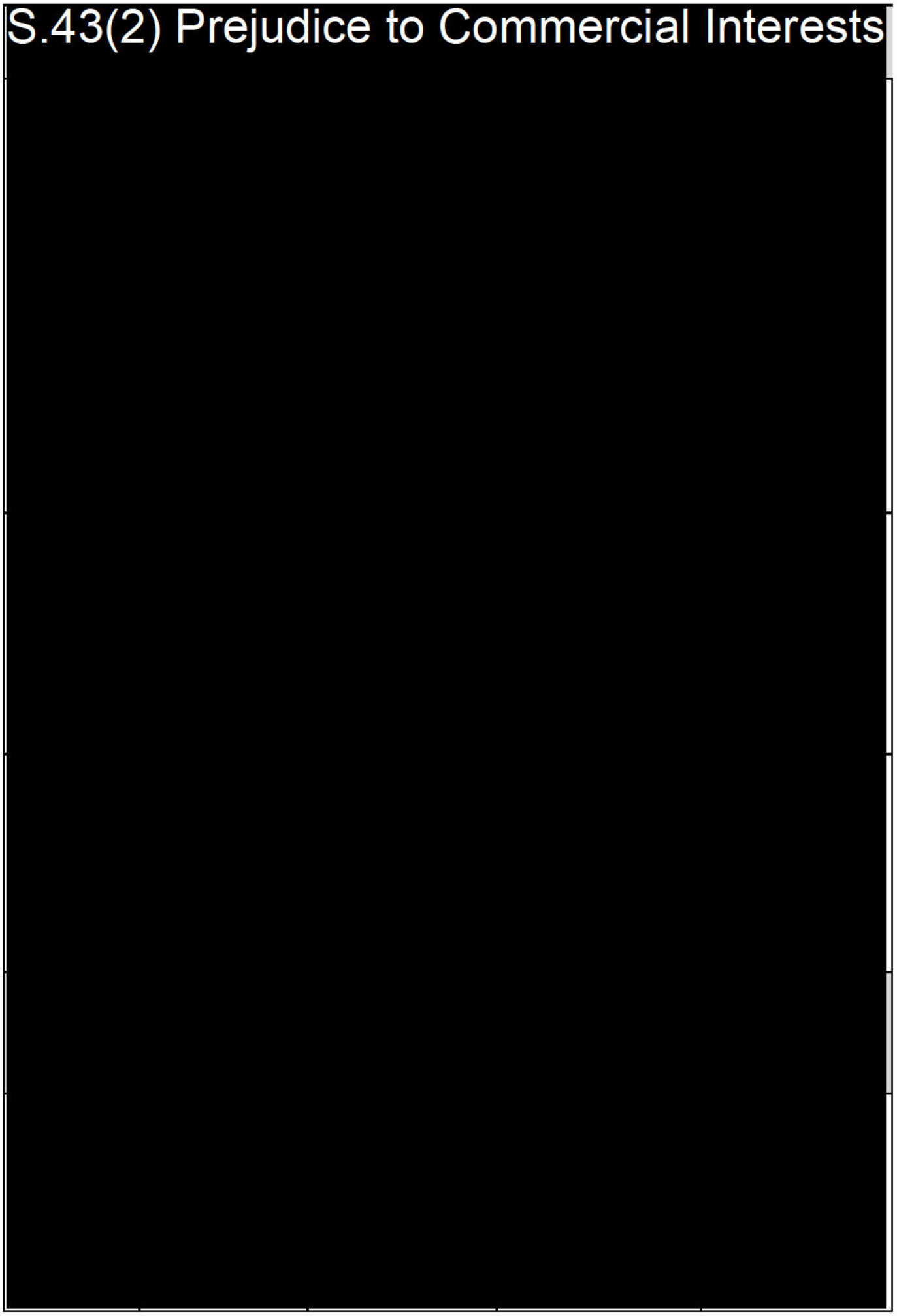


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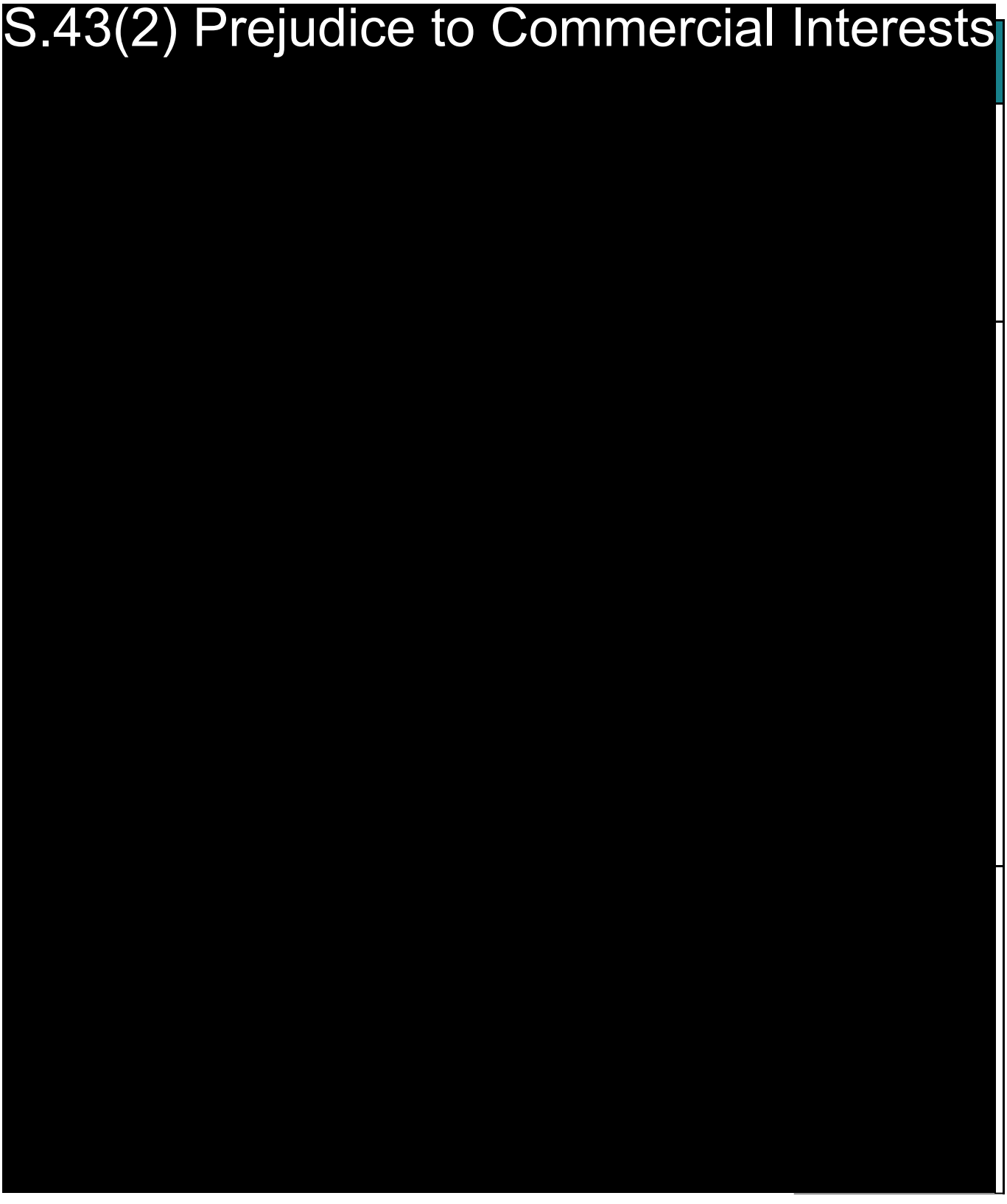
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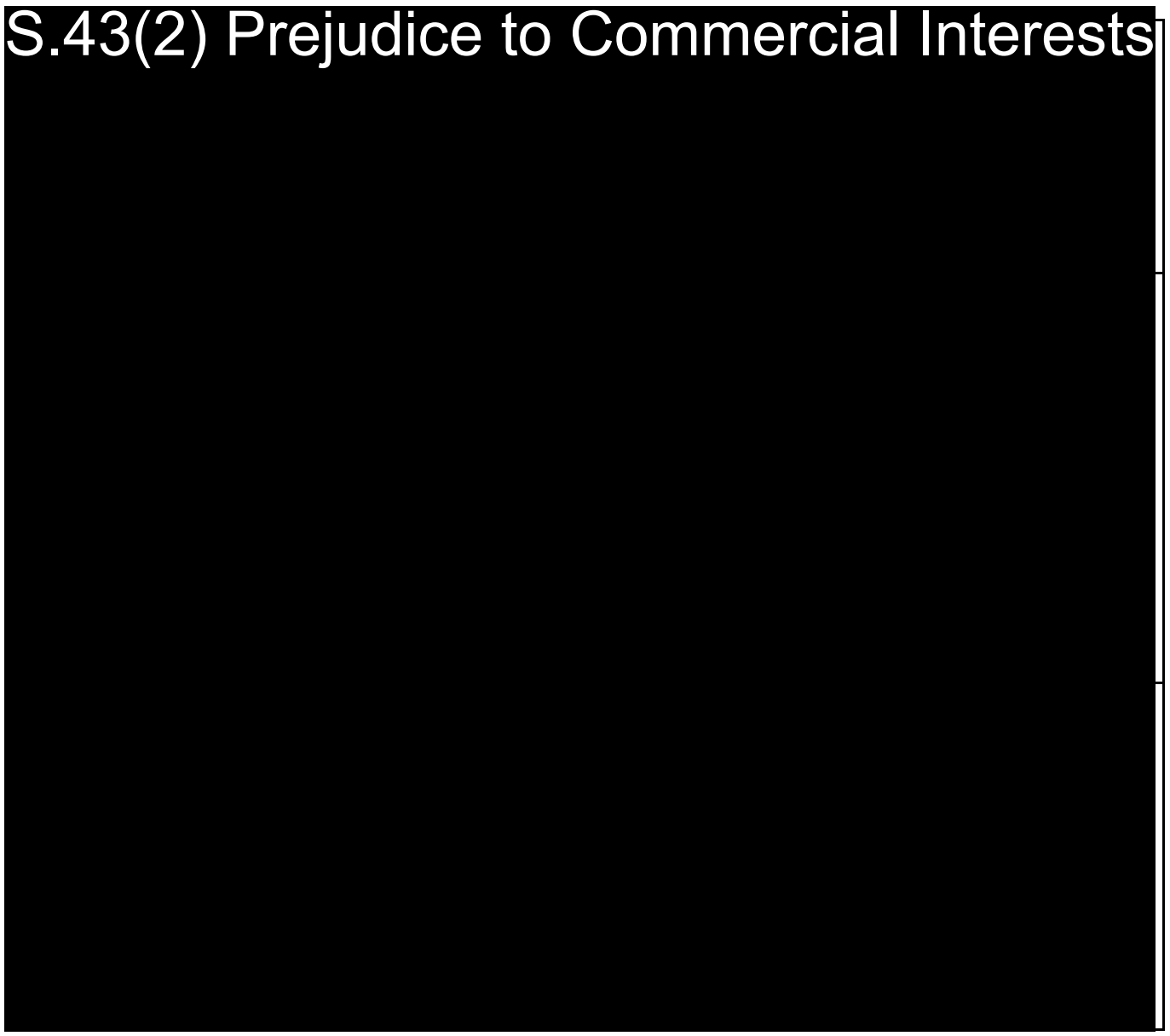

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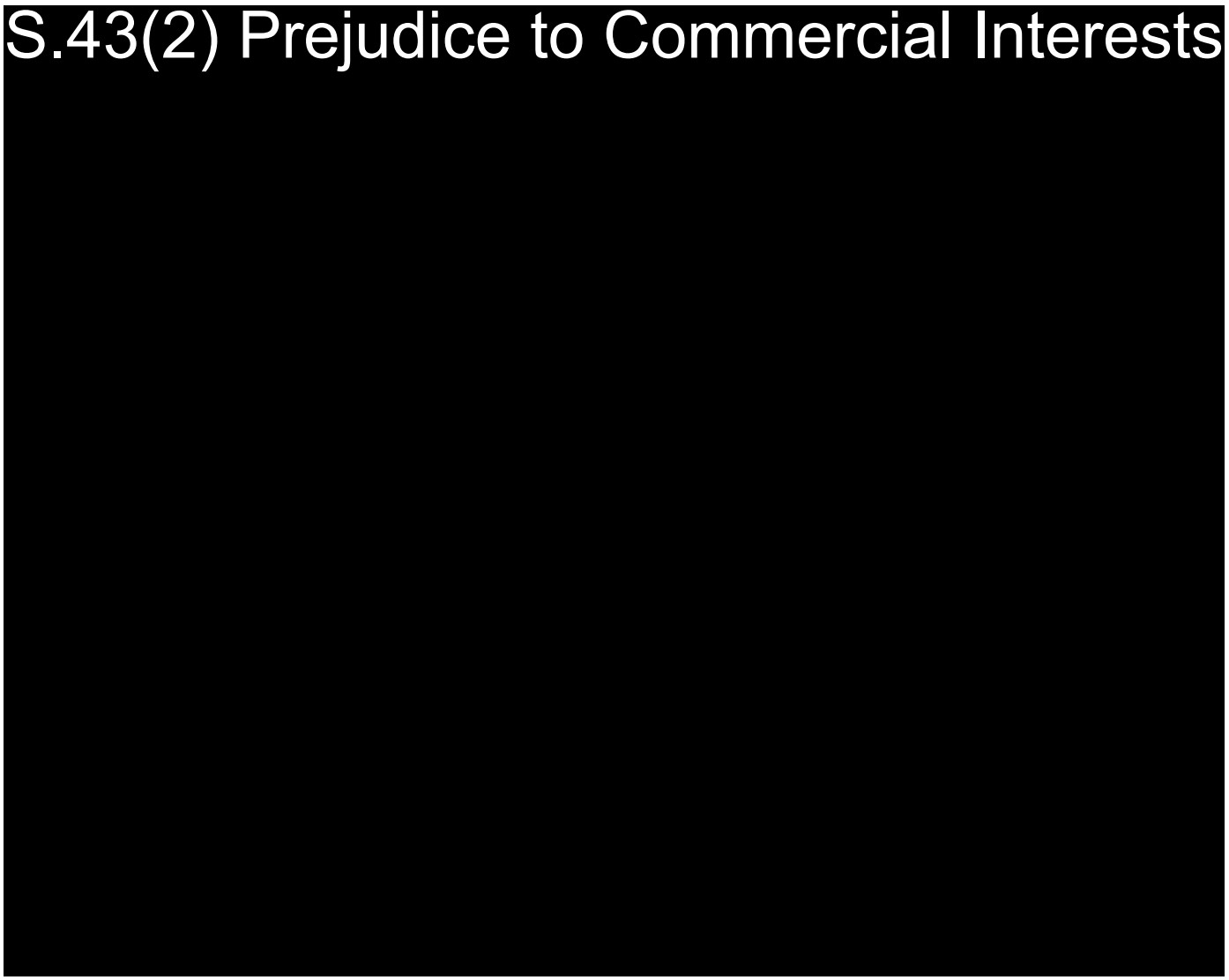
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Depot Information

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XXX were also instructed to produce draft energy performance certificates (EPCs). A draft EPC for each depot provides an indication of how energy efficient the buildings are and is relevant to the Combined Authority's overall due diligence. It is a requirement that a seller or renter of a building produces an EPC as part of the sale or rental process therefore the Combined Authority will (unless a valid exemption applies) receive final versions from the operators as part of the sale/purchase process. The depots (including any connected office buildings) must meet minimum energy efficiency standards to be leasable. If a sub-standard building was leased, it would expose the owner to enforcement action. The current minimum EPC rating is E. Should the EPC ratings be such that the depots fall below this minimum standard and should not therefore be leased in their current condition the Combined Authority will need to understand what works are required to increase the energy efficiency of the depots. In addition, the Combined Authority would need to consider, with appropriate legal input, the available options for ensuring any required works are completed to allow for the depots to be leased to a sufficient energy efficiency standard. For example, arranging for any required betterment works to be completed by the operators before the completion of the Combined Authority's acquisition (which may be unattractive to operators) or arranging for the Combined Authority to carry out the works under license between exchange of contracts and completion. There are exemptions to the requirement for an EPC which apply to, for example, a workshop that doesn't use much energy The Combined Authority can seek specialist advice as to whether any of the proposed depot buildings would fall within the workshop, or any other, exemption. A further consideration to note is that the current minimum energy efficiency requirement is set to change from E to C by 2028. The Combined Authority needs to be aware of this due to the likelihood of additional betterment works being required to further improve energy efficiency.

For further due diligence of the depots, the title register and plans have been reviewed by an external legal firm, XXX, who also worked on the Assessment and are to provide advice on the franchise contracts. XXX have produced reports on title for each depot that have been

reviewed by the project team and the Combined Authority's Principal Lawyer for Transport Projects. Any depot or land that is considered will have a report on title produced (or the necessary due diligence) to ensure the Combined Authority is aware of any title entries (such as restrictive covenants) or other issues revealed in property searches that may affect the Combined Authority from acquiring the sites and using for the intended purpose. Legal advice will continue to be sought as part of the depot and land acquisition process to, for example, further consider and investigate matters identified as part of the reports on title.

All depots have a location plan which shows the red line boundary over a Google Map image to demonstrate the extent of the land that could be leased/purchased.

Finally, XXX were requested to carry out dead mileage calculations to aid the decision around the preferred depot in the Heavy Woollen, Leeds 1 and Wakefield depots. The analysis was carried out through a high-level scheduling exercise undertaken on the existing timetable for each route for each of the three zones as identified in the Lotting Strategy S.43(2) Prejudice to Co to estimate the number of potential deadhead trips and start/end locations of vehicle schedules during the a typical weekday. In the absence of a full scheduling exercise or having access to operators vehicle schedules, a high forecast of number of deadhead trips for each depot to help account for interworking between routes and refuelling requirements was used. The high forecast assumes no interworking and an assumption that vehicles on the road for more 12 hours require refuelling and hence generate additional deadhead trips. Once the start/end locations were identified they calculated the distance between the preferred and alternative depot sites and the start / end of each vehicle schedule. The daily mileage was then calculated by multiplying the distance between each start/end locations and the forecasted number of deadhead trips per day. An annual mileage was calculated using an annualisation factor of 305 days.

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The following section considers the options for each of the strategic depots, structured by the Round in which the depot would be required to deliver the Lot A contract for that particular zone.

Round 1

Round 1 depots will need to be acquired as a priority. Due to the short amount of time until the franchisees would need to start mobilising into the new depots, it is proposed that this round will be acquired from the existing available depots.

This approach strongly aligns to our strategic objectives in providing consistency to bus customers across network provision in the transition to franchising, whilst the provision of depots to Lot A contracts will reduce barriers to entry which is hoped to create more competition for contracts.

Heavy Woollen

Current Depot

There are two depots that would be suitable for use within the Heavy Woollen area; Dewsbury and Heckmondwike. They are currently both owned and operated by the same bus operator to deliver the bus services in the area.

Figure 2:1: Location Plan - Dewsbury Depot



Dewsbury depot is in a good location, however it has a river running to the North of the site so a flood risk assessment should be undertaken.

Alternative Location

Figure 2:2: Location Plan - Heckmondwike Depot



Heckmondwike depot is spread over two sites with a public road going down the middle of it. There are no vacant lots or buildings for sale either side of the depot. The dividing public road is part of a one-way network and so it would be challenging, if it is possible, to close it to enable expansion and/or the joining of the two sites.

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Discussions with Kirklees Council have highlighted that there may be some alternative locations S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests The optioneering work is still progressing by Kirklees Council, however if a suitable site is found it would be appraised to see if it would be a preferable 'Plan B' or an option for a future replacement.

Options Appraisal

Current Depot or Alternative Location

Heckmondwike is the depot with the larger bus capacity of the two as it is able to hold XXX buses compared to Dewsbury that can hold XXX. However, Dewsbury has a larger footprint than Heckmondwike. Therefore, it is likely that the capacity is lower due to the configuration of the site. This would need to be determined by a feasibility design to ensure there is capacity within the preferred depot to deliver the required Lot A bus services. S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

It was considered whether both depots should be purchased to run the Lot A services, however this would mean the Combined Authority would own the only two depots in the strategic zone and would restrict the ability of anyone to provide the Lot B services from an operator owned depot. There would also be increased costs on the franchisee from having to run two separate depots, through staff costs, insurance, business rates, utilities, security etc. There would also be additional costs to the Combined Authority to acquire both sites, refurbish them and maintain them.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Finally, a dead mileage calculation has been undertaken to determine which depot has the least dead mileage to inform which depot should be the preferred option.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The depot is not part of a local plan allocation.

Capacity

The current spare capacity within Heckmondwike is quite low, and there is no room for expansion. If it was understood that the PVR requirements were going to increase through franchising, BSIP and/or increased patronage then the depot project team would seek a new location within the area for a new build depot. This would need to have sufficient capacity for the projected increase in PVR for a ZEB fleet, plus associated infrastructure.

The depot at Dewsbury does have scope for expansion into the unit to the East of it. However, this would have to be through negotiation with the current third party owner.

Suitability for ZEB

Both the Dewsbury and Heckmondwike depots are in an area that is suitable for either hydrogen or electric buses.

Initial conversations with Northern Power Grid (NPG) indicate that there is enough capacity in the supply to the area to enable electric vehicle charging.

There are no close buildings that house vulnerable people (such as schools, care homes, hospitals etc) or a large number of people (such as stadiums etc), which indicate that either depot would be suitable for hydrogen. The proximity to these types of buildings would prevent hydrogen being stored on site due to the impact if it was to explode.

Dead Mileage
The dead mileage calculation demonstrates that Heavy Woollen Lot A services would have XXX dead miles every year if they were run from Heckmondwike, and XXX dead miles every year if they were run from Dewsbury. It would therefore generate XXX dead mileage if the services were run from Heckmondwike.

Strategic alignment
Ownership of a depot can also lead to greater control over the network, providing consistency to bus customer across network provision and contributing to objectives based around the economy and the network. In addition, there are strategic environmental benefits to both sites, with the ability to introduce zero emission buses to either depot, allow the Combined Authority the ability to influence fleet strategy and achieve ambitions around a zero-emission fleet by 2036.

The options for Dewsbury and Heckmondwike are based around owning a depot, strategically aligned to the customer success factor of promoting competition for operators through reducing barriers for new entrants and smaller operators to grow. In addition there are benefits to Combined Authority influence with the control of assets under control of the authority, further influencing impact on the fleet strategy. Ease of implementation for the first round of franchise contracts and depot provision is an important factor to consider, ensuring that the recommended option is practical, deliverable and sustainable. The Heavy Woollen area presents a challenge to the Commercial Success Factor relating to driving competition between operators as both the Dewsbury and Heckmondwike depots are of a similar size. S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Recommendation
It is recommended that the preferred depot is Dewsbury due to the size, refurbishment requirements, parking and lease complications, and price. It is recommended Dewsbury is progressed and negotiations begin on the acquisition of it.

Kirklees

Current Depot
There are two depots within the Kirklees strategic zone, both of which are in Huddersfield. One is a medium sized depot that is currently leased, and one is a large depot that is currently owned by the operator.

The large depot is the only one which has the capacity to hold and maintain the numbers required to deliver the Lot A services for Kirklees.

Figure 2:3: Location Plan - Huddersfield Depot, Old Fieldhouse Lane, Huddersfield



Huddersfield depot is in an industrial area with Huddersfield Broad Canal to the North of it. As this is a canal rather than a river the risk of flooding is very low. However, the canal is managed by the Canal and Rivers Trust (CRT), which means that any changes to the site or planning requirements would need to include them as statutory consultees.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Alternative Location

Figure 2:4: Location Plan – Old Leeds Road Carpark



The alternative could be the Kirklees owned Old Leeds Road carpark, S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests This is pictured above.

There is also the potential of the former Borough's Parks Dept Nursery site to the North of the existing First Depot Huddersfield site which would also provide additional employment land. This is owned by Kirklees. However, this option requires the construction of a bridge over the Canal as the existing bridge accessed by Peace Pit Lane to the East of the site is a single carriageway and has a weight restriction. If this were to be considered a joint proposal should be developed with Kirklees Council.

Options Appraisal

Current Depot or Alternative Location
The current depot is ideally placed to run the Lot A services for Kirklees from. S.43(2) Prejudice to Co [redacted] It is in a commercial land area and so would be unlikely to be suitable for residential development.

The alternative location would require planning permission, design and construction costs which would be substantial and much greater than purchasing the current depot.

The alternative location is on a site which has been cleared so may have some ground contamination or existing utility connections that may need to be moved. It is approximately 1.5 miles from the current site so dead mileage may be a factor.

The alternative location should not be pursued as the preferred option, however if the preferred option becomes unviable than the alternative option will be pursued. The current and preferred location is in a suitable condition, there are no legal impacts and no future alternative requirements for the current site.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests [redacted]

The depot is not part of a local plan allocation.

Capacity
The current depot has sufficient capacity and spare capacity to park and maintain the number of buses required to run the lot A services in Kirklees.

There are no expansion opportunities at the current site without acquiring part of the business park that has units on it. However, there may be opportunities through redesign of the current site.

The alternative location is a large site that would be capable of holding more buses than the current site. However, this is likely to be surplus to requirements.

Strategic alignment
Using the existing depot site would enable the Combined Authority to invest in electric or hydrogen buses helping to achieve our ambitions to deliver a zero-emission bus fleet by 2036. Additionally, ownership of the depot would allow for greater impact on network and the customer offer through providing stability and consistency. It is also the option which best meets our network objectives as it has the capacity to hold and maintain the numbers required to deliver the Lot A services for Kirklees. There are additional risks in delivering the strategic objectives

when considering the alternative depot site which could delay the delivery of franchising and therefore achieving strategic objectives.

The use of the existing site would have good alignment with the Combined Authority's Commercial Success Factors as ownership of a depot would allow for the realisation of Transport Authority influence. S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests [redacted] The use of the alternative site brings risks against the ease of implementation and achieving best value due to the need to develop a new depot and issues associated with possible land contamination resulting in delays in delivery and increased costs.

Suitability for ZEB
The Huddersfield depot is an area that is suitable for either hydrogen or electric buses.

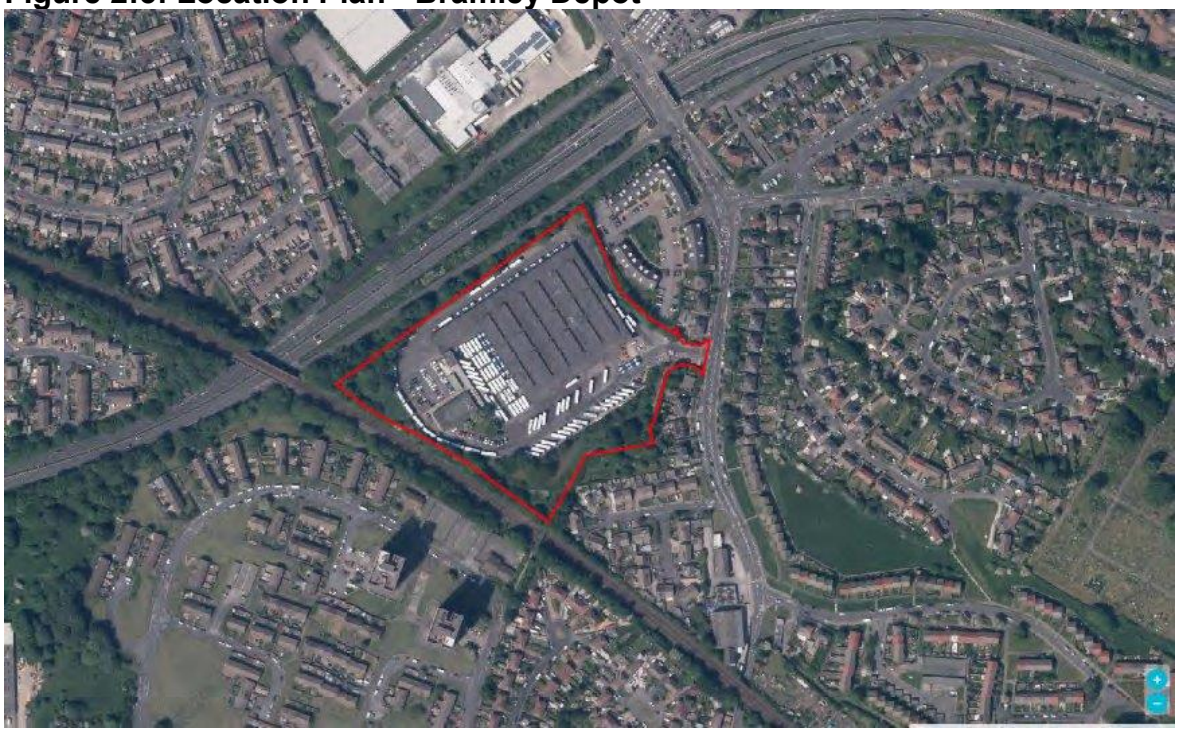
Initial conversations with Northern Power Grid (NPG) indicate that there is enough capacity in the supply to the area to enable electric vehicle charging.

There are no close buildings that house vulnerable people (such as schools, care homes, hospitals etc) or a large number of people (such as stadiums etc), which indicate that this depot would be suitable for hydrogen.

Recommendation
It is recommended that the preferred depot, the current depot in Huddersfield, is approved and negotiations begin on the acquisition of it.

Leeds 3

Current Depot
Figure 2:5: Location Plan - Bramley Depot



Bramley depot is within a residential area as shown in the image above. It is ideally located and has recently been upgraded through ZEBRA funding to increase the power grid connection, install EV chargers and runs EV buses.

The depot has green space within the red line boundary. It is bordered by houses to the East and South, a railway line to the South West and a road to the North West.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Alternative Location

Figure 2:6: Location Plan – Garnet Road Site



The former metal and waste recycling site on Garnet Road, Leeds, is an industrial site and ideally located for a Depot alternative. It is a large site and has the option to fit more on than just a depot – it could S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests or provide space to store/charge additional buses to be used in other lotting areas such as Heavy Woollen/Calderdale. This has been identified as the alternative option for all the Leeds sites due to its size, availability and location.

Options Appraisal

Current Depot or Alternative Location

The current depot is ideally placed and has a large capacity for buses. It has also recently had XXX ZEBRA bid. The depot is the largest of all the current strategic depots and is on the largest footprint. However, as it is within a residential area it could be developed into residential, and this would need to be considered for the market value and potential other interest in the site.

As the current depot has been upgraded with EV chargers it would need the minimum amount of investment in electricity infrastructure. S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The alternative site has been selected as the alternative option for all the Leeds sites, however if it is required for more than one site this could cause deliverability issues. It is located within industrial land; however, it is near to residential land and so there may be public opposition to develop the site into a bus depot. This could make planning more challenging, and there would need to be a road safety audit and engagement with Chief Highways Officers (CHOs) to ensure the access road was suitable for the number of buses associated with a depot.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The depot is not part of a local plan allocation.

If the alternative option is pursued to develop and build a new depot, then the site should be purchased to enable the Combined Authority to have control over the development and due to the scale of investment required.

Capacity
The current depot has sufficient capacity and spare capacity to park and maintain the number of buses required to run the Lot A services in Leeds 3.

There are minimal expansion options within the site, however there is some green space that may be developed. It is likely the site can be redesigned to accommodate more buses and EV chargers through the demolition of some of the unused buildings.

Strategic alignment

As with other depots in round 1, purchasing a depot provides more certainty and control over the network within this Lot area with a potential benefit in delivering network consistency for customers. The Bramley depot also offers strategic environmental benefits through the provision of electric charging allowing the Combined Authority to achieve its ambition in delivering a zero-emission fleet by 2036.

There are also several Commercial Success Factors associated with the depot, including allowing for transport authority influence over ownership of assets and mitigating barriers to competition. In addition, the Bramley depot acquisition could have additional benefits in the ease of implementation, with electric charging already established, although refurbishment of elements of the depot may count against this. With some charging infrastructure already in place it could also be argued to deliver better value in depot investment.

Suitability for ZEB
The Leeds 3 (Bramley) depot is an area that is suitable for either hydrogen or electric buses.

Bramley depot benefits from a major power grid upgrade delivered as part of the operator's ZEBRA project in 2023. A complex civil engineering project was undertaken by NPG and First Bus's contractors to bring an additional 5,000kVA through underground high voltage cables to the site from a sub-station over 2km away. First Bus delivered 79 ZEBs through ZEBRA (around half of Bramley's fleet) but wanted to future proof the site for EV fleet expansion, so this additional capacity is enough for the depot to accommodate 100% EV in its current layout.

There are no close buildings that house vulnerable people (such as schools, care homes, hospitals etc) or a large number of people (such as stadiums etc), which indicate that this depot would be suitable for hydrogen.

However, as this depot has recently been upgraded as part of the ZEBRA funding with 37 EV chargers, 79 EV buses and the power capacity for more, it is proposed this depot would continue to be EV. There is further work that can be done to scale up the depot, excluding the power grid upgrade saving time and money, so it can exclusively run EV buses.

Recommendation
It is recommended that the preferred depot, the current depot in Bramley, is approved and negotiations begin on the acquisition of it.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Round 2

Round 2 depots will need to be acquired quickly, particularly where there is a requirement to deliver a new build depot before the start of franchising. Due to the short amount of time until the franchisees would need to start mobilising into the new depots, it is proposed that this round will be acquired from the existing available depots where possible. Any land purchases will be prioritised and surveys to assess remediation works begun as soon as possible.

This approach strongly aligns to our strategic objectives in providing consistency to bus customers across network provision in the transition to franchising, whilst the provision of depots to Lot A contracts will reduce barriers to entry which is hoped to create more competition for contracts.

Five Towns

Current Depot
Figure 2:7: Location Plan - Castleford Depot



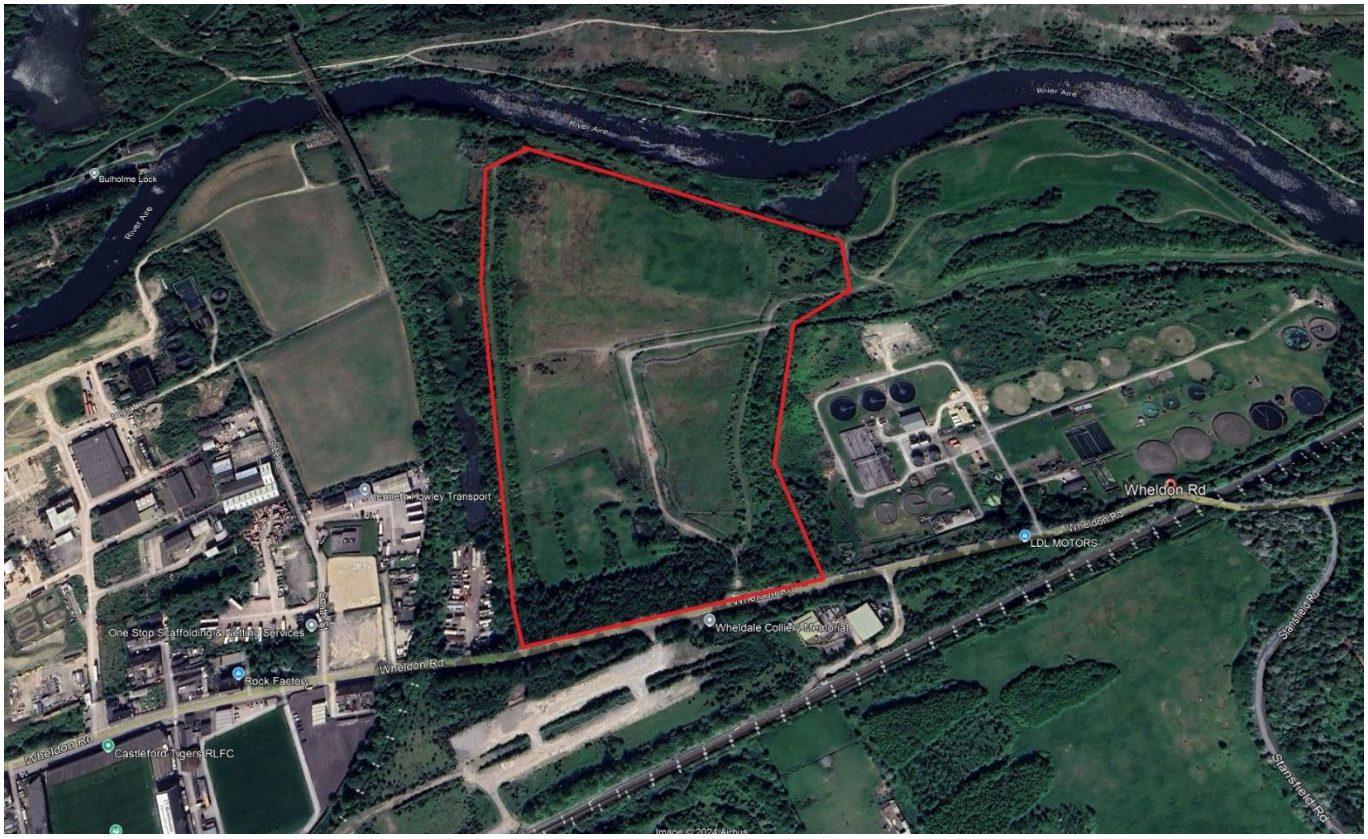
Castleford depot is relatively small and is located between a school, river, railway line and a field that has been allocated for housing. It is also within the Aire River Growth Corridor (ARGC) Masterplan and had been considered for housing and/or for school expansion.

The site is within a flood zone which means there would need to be careful management of the site and a flood risk assessment would need to be undertaken to see what the current impact is. The ARGC will likely include flood defences, however these may not be installed before the site is required for franchising.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Alternative Location

Figure 2:8: Location Plan – Wheldale Colliery Site



The Castleford site has varying issues regarding its future and further due diligence is required. There is vacant land being marketed for development at the former Wheldale Colliery site, and although there is over 30 acres of development land available a master plan is not yet in place. This could be a perfect opportunity to influence the regeneration site in conjunction with Wakefield Council, and to determine if this could be agreed through negotiation.

Wakefield Council have been consulted on other possible alternative locations however the current land supply is set out as residential in the land allocation and local plan. Any alternative sites would be a distance away and would be likely to have an impact on dead mileage.

Options Appraisal
Current Depot or Alternative Location
The current depot is in an area that is due to undergo redevelopment including a change to the road network. This may impact on bus timings. The depot is also in an area that suggests it would be more suitable for residential or education, rather than as a depot.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The current depot is also not suitable for ZEB infrastructure, and so it would need to be replaced before 2036 in line with the net-zero ambitions of the Combined Authority for buses.

The alternative location is approximately 0.6miles East of the current depot and so there should be minimal dead mileage. It is a large enough site to deliver the required number of buses, however it would likely need a masterplan and engagement with Wakefield Council as it is within the ARGC as potential employment land.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

If the alternative option is pursued to develop and build a new depot, then the new site should be purchased to enable the Combined Authority to have control over the development and due to the scale of investment required.

Capacity
The current depot has sufficient capacity and spare capacity to park and maintain the number of buses required to run the Lot A services in Five Towns.

The current depot is located in between a primary school and a field that has been allocated for housing. There is a railway line to the South of the site and a river to the North which means it would not be able to expand.

The current depot is relatively small and appears to have a small capacity of buses, however this may be due to the layout and the staff car parking at the front of the depot.

Suitability for ZEB
The Five Towns (Castleford) depot is in an area that is not suitable for either hydrogen or electric buses.

Initial conversations with Northern Power Grid (NPG) indicate that there is enough capacity in the supply to the area to enable electric vehicle charging, however it is in a flood zone which the incumbent operator has stated would make it unsuitable for EV charging. This is because the operator undertook an assessment of the depot sites they owned before submitting a ZEBRA bid.

As this site is in the ARGC and there is residential allocations to the East of the site the flood risk may have changed and/or been mitigated by works done upstream. It is therefore recommended there is a flood risk assessment carried out before this is discounted.

There is a primary school immediately to the West. This is a close building that houses vulnerable people (such as schools, care homes, hospitals etc), which indicate that this would not be suitable for hydrogen.

Strategic alignment
There are several strategic elements to consider in the case of the Castleford depot. The lack of potential for the development of ZEB infrastructure would create difficulties in achieving our aim around transition to zero emission buses by 2036. This impacts on our fleet strategy, potentially impacting the ambition of offering consistency across the customer offer and creating geographical disparity in the provision of buses which could be reputationally challenging. It is acknowledged that ownership of a depot could provide strategic advantages to consistency of the network.

The Castleford depot options also raise important questions over the alignment over Commercial Success Factors. In particular issues around best value could be flagged, if there is a need to develop a new depot or if the existing depot is used whilst an alternative site is found. It may also be less appealing to operators who wish to provide a higher specification of fleet. Issues around the ease of implementation could also be raised as this option may require complex arrangements in order to achieve strategic ambitions.

Recommendation

There are advantages to retaining the current depot for a short time, S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The current depot is also next to a development area and would likely be better suited as housing and/or an expansion site for the primary school located immediately to the West of it.

The recommendation is that the alternative location is pursued to build a new depot as part of a longer-term strategy due to the constraints with and suitability of the current site. This will future proof the zone and ensure the depot can provide driver facilities and enough buses for Castleford.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Leeds 1

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Current Depot

Figure 2:9: Location Plan – Hunslet Depot



S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The Leeds 1 depot capacity is currently 100 as even though there is no depot identified, it was set out in the assessment to be a new build and would have capacity for 100 buses based on the Combined Authority's outline depot designs.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

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S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Alternative Location

Figure 2:10: Location Plan – Garnet Road Site



The former metal and waste recycling site on Garnet Road, Leeds, is an industrial site and ideally located for a Depot alternative. It is a large site and has the option to fit more on than just a depot – it could S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests provide space to store/charge additional buses to be used in other lotting areas such as Heavy Woollen/Calderdale. This has been identified as the alternative option for all the Leeds sites due to its size, availability and location.

Options Appraisal

Current Depot or Alternative Location

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The alternative site has been selected as the alternative option for all the Leeds sites, however if it is required for more than one site this could cause deliverability issues. It is located within

industrial land, however it is near to residential land and so there may be public opposition to develop the site into a bus depot. This could make planning more challenging, and there would need to be a road safety audit and engagement with Chief Highways Officers (CHOs) to ensure the access road was suitable for the number of buses associated with a depot.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

If the alternative option is pursued to develop and build a new depot, then the new site should be purchased to enable the Combined Authority to have control over the development and due to the scale of investment required.

Capacity
The Hunslet depot has sufficient capacity and spare capacity to park and maintain the number of buses required to also run the Lot A services in Leeds 1. However, if a new depot was built it would be at a size and capacity sufficient to run the Lot A services in Leeds 1 with spare capacity.

Suitability for ZEB
The Hunslet depot and alternative location are both in an area that is suitable for either hydrogen or electric buses.

Initial conversations with Northern Power Grid (NPG) indicate that there is enough capacity in the supply to the area to enable additional electric vehicle charging. The incumbent operator has installed 14 EV chargers and has upgraded the power supply to enable 100% EV capacity at the site.

There are no close buildings that house vulnerable people (such as schools, care homes, hospitals etc) or a large number of people (such as stadiums etc), which indicate that this would be suitable for hydrogen.

However, if the decision is taken to utilise the Hunslet depot then as this depot has been upgraded with EV chargers and EV buses, it is proposed this depot would continue to be EV and further EV chargers installed. There is further work that can be done to scale up the depot, excluding the power grid upgrade saving time and money, so it can exclusively run EV buses.

Dead Mileage
The dead mileage calculation sets out that Leeds 1 Lot A services would have XXX dead miles every year if they were run from Hunslet, and XXX dead miles every year if they were run from Garnet Road. It would therefore generate less dead mileage if the services were run from the Hunslet depot.

Strategic alignment
There are a variety of strategic objectives that could be impacted through the Combined Authority's approach to the Leeds 1 depot. In particular the options both allow for the realisation of strategic environmental objectives as they are suitable for both hydrogen and electric buses. In addition the Hunslet depot has existing connection for installation of electric chargers. As with other depot options, ownership of the depot would allow for greater impact on network and the customer offer through offering stability and consistency.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

It is important to consider best value, noting that refurbishment or new build options would both require significant cost. Development of a new site may not help achieve the Commercial Success Factor around best value due to the timescales associated with this.

Recommendation

The depot at Hunslet represents the best value for money as it would not require a land purchase and a new build depot. S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Wakefield

Current Depot

Figure 2:11: Location Plan - Wakefield Depot



The Wakefield depot was closed in September 2024 following structural surveys due to Health and Safety concerns. It is unable to reopen and would require demolition and rebuild. S.43(2) Prejudice to Commer

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The Combined Authority have held discussions with Wakefield Council and the officers have indicated that the current location for the depot is ideal and fits in with their long term vision for Wakefield city centre.

Alternative Location

Figure 2:12: Location Plan – Site in City Fields



The development site City Fields development off the A6194, Wakefield East Relief Road currently has two viable sites available. These are commercial sites and may come at that premium and with the added constraint of dead mileage.

Options Appraisal

Current Depot or Alternative Location

It is proposed that the current Wakefield depot is pursued over the development sites because it already has planning permission for a 24hr bus depot S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests There is also the concern that changing the location could result in increased costs due to dead mileage and a lot of the area in and around Wakefield city centre has been allocated as residential within the Council's local plan.

The current depot site is partially within a conservation area, so consideration would need to be given as to how the site is developed. S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests The site may also require flood defences developing

as it is within a flood zone and next to a river. This will be crucial if the site is to include charging infrastructure and EV buses. The site will also require full demolition and levelling of the site as it is currently on different levels. This may require retaining walls to reinforce the structure.

The alternative location is likely to have a higher land value as it is currently undeveloped, however there would be no remediation works required. It has however been allocated as commercial/employment land as part of the City Fields development and may already have interested parties that the Council would prefer to occupy that land.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The depot is not part of a local plan allocation.

Capacity
The Wakefield depot will be purpose built whichever site is selected. A feasibility design was commissioned for the current site assuming it had been cleared and levelled. This demonstrated that the site could hold a fully EV bus depot capable of parking and maintaining 100 EV buses. There was also around 2.3acres left over for wider development.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Suitability for ZEB
The Wakefield depot site was previously identified XXX.

The Wakefield depot is an area that is suitable for either hydrogen or electric buses.

There are no close buildings that house vulnerable people (such as schools, care homes, hospitals etc) or a large number of people (such as stadiums etc), which indicate that this would be suitable for hydrogen.

Given the previous ZEBRA funding progression it is likely that this site would be more suitable for EV rather than hydrogen.

Dead Mileage
The dead mileage calculation sets out that Wakefield Lot A services would have XXX dead miles every year if they were run from Wakefield depot, and XXX dead miles every year if they were run from City Fields. It would therefore generate less dead mileage if the services were run from Wakefield.

Strategic alignment
The existing Wakefield depot needs particular consideration to the strategic objective around the Environment noting issues relating to flooding and therefore impacting climate resilience. Positively, the existing depot site would allow for installation of electric vehicles allowing greater influence on fleet strategy and the ability to achieve our ambition of a zero-emission fleet by 2036.

Some of the challenges around the existing depot site relate strongly to achieving Commercial Success Factors. In particular, redevelopment and best value will be impacted by the need to build a new depot site which may come with additional costs due to some of the land being

within a conservation area. Either option would involve building new depot facilities and therefore both present complex, large scale and high-risk options.

Recommendation

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests [redacted] Therefore, the Combined Authority should acquire the depot and take on all demolition, repair and rebuild obligations.

If the Combined Authority is unable to agree in principle by January 2025 to acquire Wakefield depot, then the Combined Authority should look to acquire the alternative location to enable a bus depot to be delivered in time for the January 2028 round 2 deadline.

The new build depot should be designed to be fully EV in line with previous aspirations through the ZEBRA fund and Wakefield Council.

Round 3

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests [redacted] Due to the amount of time until the franchisees would need to start mobilising into the new depots, it is proposed that this round will be acquired from the existing available depots. However, there may be a need to build a new depot, in which case the land required for the purchase will be acquired as a priority to enable any investigations into the condition of the land and any remediation work to begin as soon as possible.

This approach strongly aligns to our strategic objectives in providing consistency to bus customers across network provision in the transition to franchising, whilst the provision of depots to Lot A contracts will reduce barriers to entry which is hoped to create more competition for contracts.

Bradford

Current Depot

Figure 2:13: Location Plan - Bradford Depot



Bradford depot is a large depot that is within an industrial area. There are businesses to the East and West, a railway line to the North and a road to the South.

There is a hydrogen production facility that is being developed in conjunction with Hygen and Ryze that is proposed to be located on Bowling Back Lane close to the depot. Bradford Council have also indicated that they have a preference for hydrogen fuelling in the city.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Alternative Location

Figure 2:14: Location Plan – Parry Lane Site



The Bradford site operates at a lower level than its capacity and therefore it is not unreasonable to look for a smaller more compact and economically viable alternative. Such a site exists along Parry Lane, Bradford which is adjacent to the existing site. It has a lapsed Commercial planning approval and is owned by Bradford MDC. S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Options Appraisal

Current Depot or Alternative Location

The current depot is in a good location and is currently used by the operator to run school services as well as the main bus services. Therefore, there is plenty of capacity within the depot to deliver the franchised lot A services and additional services.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

As the current depot site is the most suitable and there is no definitive long term alternative use for the site then the current site should be pursued.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The depot is not part of a local plan allocation.

If the alternative option is pursued to develop and build a new depot, then the site should be purchased to enable the Combined Authority to have control over the development and due to the scale of investment required.

Capacity
The current depot has sufficient capacity and spare capacity to park and maintain the number of buses required to run the lot A services in Bradford.

Suitability for ZEB
The Bradford depot is an area that is suitable for either hydrogen or electric buses.

Initial conversations with Northern Power Grid (NPG) indicate that there is not enough capacity in the supply to the area to enable electric vehicle charging, and so reinforcement and/or upgrade works would need to take place. This is however possible.

There are no close buildings that house vulnerable people (such as schools, care homes, hospitals etc) or a large number of people (such as stadiums etc), which indicate that this would be suitable for hydrogen.

It should also be noted that there is a plan to build a green hydrogen production facility on Bowling Back Lane which is in close proximity to both the current and proposed depot. The hydrogen production facility is being promoted by Bradford Council, who believe that hydrogen fuelled ZEBs are the most suitable for routes in Bradford owing to their typically longer range than EV. However, there are other potential users of this hydrogen from the manufacturing sector. There have also been issues with hydrogen buses used in other areas and there would need to be significant refurbishment requirements to enable the depot to be converted for the maintenance of hydrogen buses.

It is proposed the final decision on whether hydrogen is pursued is determined in the fleet strategy.

Strategic alignment
Using the existing depot site would enable the Combined Authority to invest in electric, noting the point around the need for reinforcement/upgrade works from Northern Power Grid, or hydrogen buses which would help to achieve our ambitions to deliver a zero-emission bus fleet by 2036. It is also able to meet our network objectives as it has plenty of capacity to hold and maintain the numbers required to deliver the Lot A services for Bradford.

The use of the existing site would have good alignment with the Combined Authority's Commercial Success Factors as ownership of a depot would allow for the realisation of Transport Authority influence. On the question of best value and ease of implementation, the existing depot site aligns better with these Commercial Success Factors as it is currently operational and in good condition, requiring some expenditure owing to age, whereas the alternate site would require the development and construction of a new depot

Recommendation
It is recommended that the preferred depot, the current depot in Bradford, is approved and negotiations begin on the acquisition of it.

Calderdale

Current Depot

Figure 2:15: Location Plan – Halifax Elmwood Depot



When the Assessment was undertaken the current depot included the Skircoat site to the West of the red line boundary. However, the operator has been attempting to sell the Skircoat site for a number of years. In order to do this some of the essential facilities that are located at Skircoat, namely a bus wash and a fuelling station, will need to be moved to the Elmwood site. A planning application has been approved for this work to take place and it is due to be completed by March 2025.

The removal of the Skircoat site and the addition of a bus wash and fuelling facility to the Elmwood site means that the Combined Authority will need to re-configure the assumed capacity as set out in the Assessment Depot Position Paper, where both sites were treated as one (maintenance is carried out on one site and offices are on the other so there would have been no increase in staffing etc). S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The Elmwood depot is in an ideal location, however it should be noted that the operator makes use of a small depot at Todmorden to support some of the bus services. The depot strategy set out in the Assessment that only one strategic depot would be provided for each zone, and so careful consideration and planning has been undertaken to determine which services should be run from Elmwood.

The Elmwood depot has no expansion options as it is boarded by a railway line and houses to the East, a road to the North and West and a school to the South.

There is also a smaller depot at Elland that was considered, however this does not have the capacity to deliver the required number of Lot A bus services.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Alternative Location

Figure 2:16: Location Plan – West End Works



The potential redevelopment industrial site at West End Works, Parkinson Lane, Halifax, could serve as a good replacement as very few level sites exist within Calderdale.

Options Appraisal

Current Depot or Alternative Location

The current Elmwood depot is in an ideal location and currently runs the required number of services. The operator will be continuing to run bus services for Halifax from only that site and has provided outline plans that demonstrate the capacity could be retained even with EV charging infrastructure installed.

Calderdale Council have been consulted on other viable locations for a bus depot, however there were not any suitable sites either on the current disposal list or on a future list that they were aware of. Discussions will continue to be held to determine if the situation changes as the Elmwood depot has no expansion opportunities.

The alternative site would need demolition, design, planning and rebuild works which would be at a greater cost that the purchase of Elmwood. The alternative site is also near residential land and so there may be public opposition to develop the site into a bus depot. This could make planning more challenging, and there would need to be a road safety audit and engagement with Chief Highways Officers (CHOs) to ensure the access road was suitable for the number of buses associated with a depot.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The depot is not part of a local plan allocation.

If the alternative option is pursued to develop and build a new depot, then the site should be purchased to enable the Combined Authority to have control over the development and due to the scale of investment required.

Capacity
The current depot has sufficient capacity and spare capacity to park and maintain the number of buses required to run the lot A services in Calderdale. However, there are no expansion opportunities so any increase to the network would likely have to be a lot B/C or run from another depot.

Suitability for ZEB
The Halifax depot is an area that is suitable only for electric zero emission buses.

Initial conversations with Northern Power Grid (NPG) indicate that there is enough capacity in the supply to the area to enable electric vehicle charging.

There is a nearby school and the Shay stadium which means that there are buildings that house vulnerable people (such as schools, care homes, hospitals etc) or a large number of people (such as stadiums etc) in close proximity. These mean that hydrogen would not be suitable.

Strategic alignment
Using the existing depot site would enable the Combined Authority to work towards our vision of a stabilised customer network whilst allowing investment in electric buses helping to achieve our ambitions to deliver a zero-emission bus fleet by 2036. There are drawbacks in the existing site if we wanted to expand services from the depot due to limited expansion opportunities which could impact on network objectives within the locality.

Several Commercial Success Factors need due consideration, largely around best value with significant costs involved in both options, although lesser in using the existing depot. Use of an existing depot could also make franchised services easier to deliver, although redevelopment requirements have the potential to impact on timelines. The alternative site identified looks to present a complex project that brings significant risk to deliverability and the scale of costs. However, there are positives in the development of a new purpose-built site to long term sustainability and the ability to design a depot around our net zero and climate resilience commitments.

Recommendation
It is recommended that the preferred depot, the current Elmwood depot in Halifax, is approved and negotiations begin on the acquisition of it.

Keighley

Current Depot
Figure 2:17: Location Plan - Keighley Depot



The current Keighley depot is leased by the operator from the freehold owner. S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests [redacted]

The depot has minimal outside space, with the majority of the site being under cover. It is also heavily constrained with no possible expansion due to nearby housing and public roads. The on-site diesel fuelling station is also used to fuel school buses that are maintained and run from another depot leased by the operator on Marriners Road. S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests [redacted]

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests [redacted]

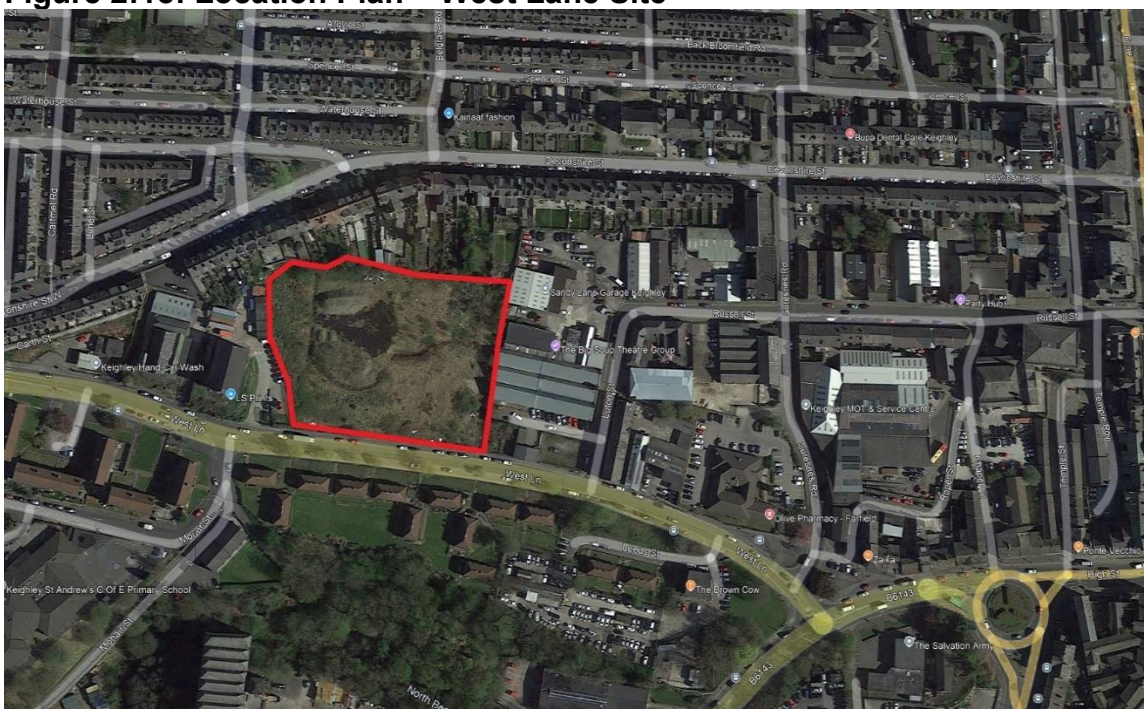
The depot has also benefitted from recent investment through the ZEBRA fund where zero emission bus infrastructure was installed comprising of a substation, ceiling mounted cable holders and floor mounted EV chargers. The substation is subject to a separate agreement between the operator and the landlord.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests [redacted]

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests [redacted]

Alternative Location

Figure 2:18: Location Plan – West Lane Site



The alternative is in close proximity to the existing depot. The site is within an industrial land allocation, albeit vacant and overgrown. This raises biodiversity net gain (BNG) implications as part of the planning application process requires a 10% BNG increase. That said the site is larger than required therefore site gradient and BNG increases could likely be accommodated and overcome. This would have to be verified through a feasibility design.

Options Appraisal

Current Depot or Alternative Location

The Combined Authority's acquisition of the Keighley depot is dependent on negotiations between both the freehold owner and the operator who holds the leasehold title.

The alternative location would need to have due diligence carried out to ensure it could be purchased and delivered as a new build site. However, there would be enough space to include driver accommodation which would negate the requirement to lease space at the driver facility or incur further costs trying to find a suitable alternative.

The other consideration is the investment into the current site for EV infrastructure, as this may become a wasted investment if the site is not required as a bus depot in future. However, it could also be used to build resilience into the network as an additional bus depot to cover the lot B/C routes.

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If the alternative option is pursued to develop and build a new depot, then the site should be purchased to enable the Combined Authority to have control over the development and due to the scale of investment required.

Capacity
The current depot has sufficient capacity and spare capacity to park and maintain the number of buses required to run the lot A services in Keighley. However, there are no expansion opportunities so any increase to the network would likely have to be a lot B/C or run from another depot.

Suitability for ZEB
The Keighley depot is an area that is suitable for either hydrogen or electric buses.

Initial conversations with Northern Power Grid (NPG) indicate that there is enough capacity in the supply to the area to enable further electric vehicle charging.

There are no close buildings that house vulnerable people (such as schools, care homes, hospitals etc) or a large number of people (such as stadiums etc), which indicate that this would be suitable for hydrogen.

However, as this depot has recently been upgraded as part of the ZEBRA funding with EV chargers and EV buses, it is proposed this depot would continue to be EV. The depot has

already been updated to include 9 dual headed EV chargers, to charge up to 18 EV buses. The power supply has been upgraded and there is a substation on site.

Strategic Alignment
The Keighley depot presents a range of opportunities and challenges to the strategic objectives. Key opportunities include those around the environment and green and better vehicles with the existing or alternative location offering opportunities for zero emission buses. There is an added benefit that the existing depot has ZEBRA funding which means existing infrastructure is in place. The locations of both sites also serve the network objective well, however lack of expansion at the current depot mean that new services could not be introduced to this Lot A contract.

There are several potential impacts on Commercial Success Factors, notably around the driver facilities and whether the lack of these / current arrangements may deter bidders and therefore not create the competition for this contract. The redevelopment costs or costs associated with building a new depot would be costly and would impact the value for money of both options. In addition, the current ownership and lease presents a risk that could impact the ease of implementation of the option.

Recommendation

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The recommendation is that the alternative location is pursued to build a new depot as part of a longer-term strategy due to the constraints with the current site. This will future proof the zone and ensure the depot can provide driver facilities and enough buses for Keighley.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The ZEBRA investment in the current depot may not be wasted as the depot could be used to run lot B or lot C services. It could also potentially run cross boundary services. However, this would be at the discretion of the land owner and any operators who may seek to pursue this lease option.

Leeds 2

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Current Depot
Figure 2:19: Location Plan - Hunslet Depot



The depot at Hunslet is within an industrial area and is the second largest depot out of the proposed strategic depots. S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Hunslet depot has 14 EV chargers and so it has only partial EV capability. The site is suitable for upgrade to deliver full EV charging infrastructure, however it is within a designated flood zone and so any EV charging needs to be carefully managed. Due to flood defence upgrades in the area and the proximity to the river it would be worth carrying out a new flood risk assessment.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Alternative Location

Figure 2:20: Location Plan - Garnet Road Site



The former metal and waste recycling site on Garnet Road, Leeds, is an industrial site and ideally located for a Depot alternative. It is a large site and has the option to fit more on than just a depot – it could be used to provide space to store/charge additional buses to be used in other lotting areas such as Heavy Woollen/Calderdale. This has been identified as the alternative option for all the Leeds sites due to its size, availability and location, S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Inter [redacted]

Options Appraisal

Current Depot or Alternative Location

The current depot site is in an ideal location, however it is also used as the operator's head offices and so there may be more office space that required.

The current depot has partial EV charging, so it currently runs and maintains both diesel and electric buses. Hunslet also runs the majority of the Leeds park and ride bus services (some of which are electric buses), although some need to be charged at alternative depots due to the number of chargers at Hunslet. It would therefore be worth investing further in EV chargers, depending on where the park and ride services are run from, especially considering the power supply has already been sufficiently upgraded.

The alternative site has been selected as the alternative option for all the Leeds site, however if it is required for more than one site this could cause deliverability issues. It is located within industrial land, however it is near to residential land and so there may be public opposition to develop the site into a bus depot. This could make planning more challenging, and there would need to be a road safety audit and engagement with Chief Highways Officers (CHOs) to ensure the access road was suitable for the number of buses associated with a depot.

[redacted]

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

The depot is not part of a local plan allocation.

Capacity
The current depot has sufficient capacity and spare capacity to park and maintain the number of buses required to run the lot A services in Leeds 2. There is also sufficient capacity and spare capacity if the Lot A services from Leeds 1 were also run from Hunslet depot.

Suitability for ZEB
The Hunslet depot is an area that is suitable for either hydrogen or electric buses.

The bus depot has an upgraded electricity supply to enable the depot to have 100% EV buses.

There are no close buildings that house vulnerable people (such as schools, care homes, hospitals etc) or a large number of people (such as stadiums etc), which indicate that this would be suitable for hydrogen.

However, as this depot has been upgraded with EV chargers and EV buses, it is proposed this depot would continue to be EV.

Strategic alignment
There are variety of strategic objectives that could be impacted through the Combined Authority's approach to the Leeds 2 depot. In particular the options both allow for the realisation of strategic environmental objectives as they are suitable for both hydrogen and electric buses. In addition the Hunslet depot has existing connection for installation of electric chargers. As with other depot options, ownership of the depot would allow for greater impact on network and the customer offer through offering stability and consistency. It is also important to note the strategic benefits this site offers in being able to provide capacity for Leeds 1 and 2.

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

It is important to consider best value, noting that refurbishment or new build options would both require significant cost. Development of a new site may not help achieve the commercial success factor around best value due to the timescales associated with this.

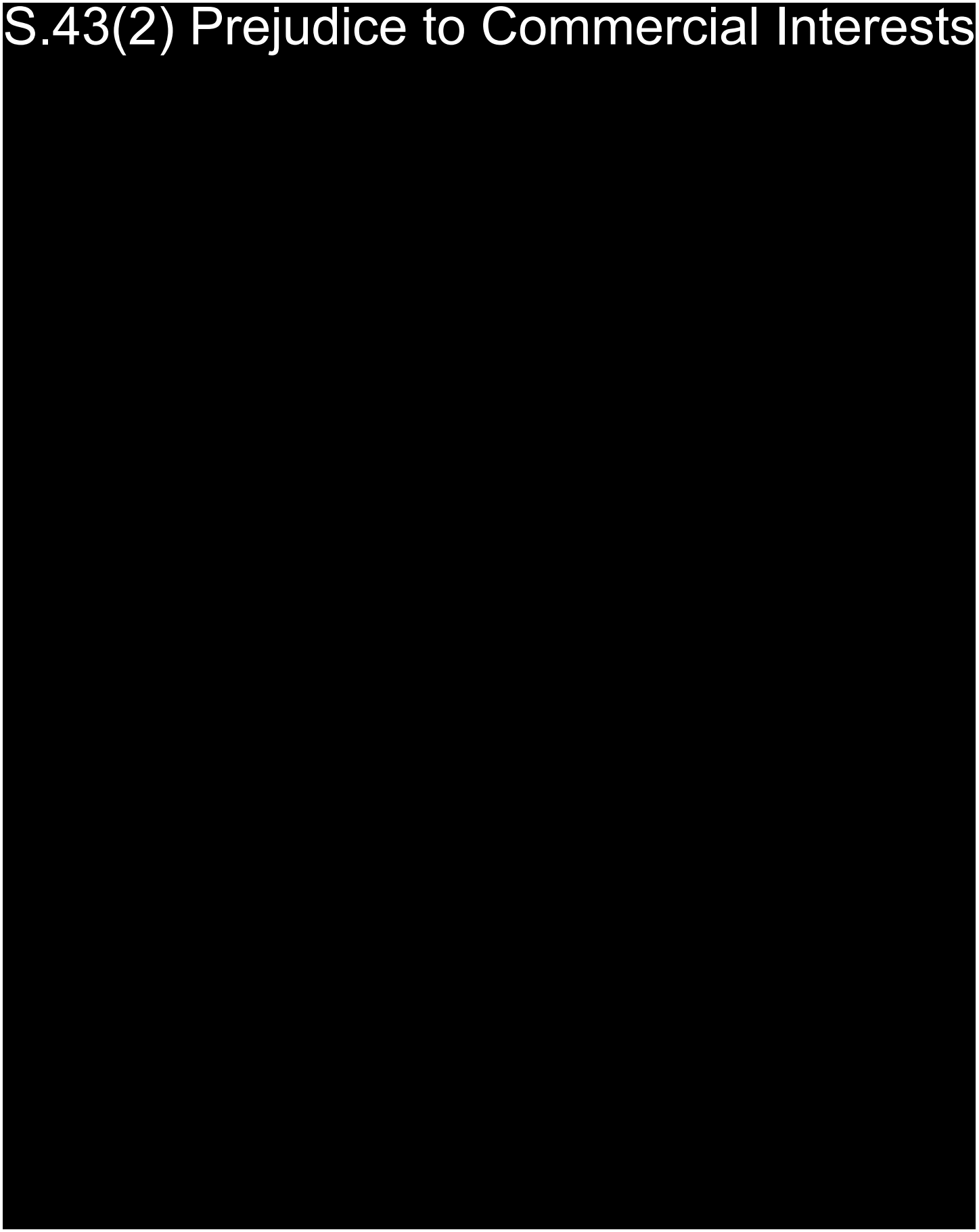
Recommendation
It is recommended that the preferred depot, the current depot in Hunslet, is approved and negotiations begin on the acquisition of it.

Depot Information Summary

In order to summarise the depot information set out above, the below table has been collated to demonstrate the preferred approach to the depot for each area. Where there is further due diligence to take place before the decision is finalised, this has been highlighted.

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Additional Requirements

S.43(2) Prejudice to Commercial Interests

Zero Emission Bus Infrastructure

Zero Emission bus infrastructure comprises the chargers and substations required for EV charging, or the fuelling section and blast walls required for hydrogen fuelling. There may also be associated upgrades required in the depot, such as a platform for maintaining single decker electric buses as there would need to be roof access available. Hydrogen depots would require a detection and venting system in the event of a hydrogen leak, and bonding and grounding of all electrical equipment to prevent sparks and electrostatic discharges. Due to the requirement to include blast walls and the specific safety management of any hydrogen stored on site, these are not currently recommended for sites near to vulnerable populations or areas where large concentrations of people may gather. There can be planning permission challenges particularly around the granting of a hazardous substances consent.

Where electrical charging infrastructure is required the district network operator (DNO) will need to be liaised with to ensure there is grid capacity in the network and any upgrades to the network are carried out. For all sites in West Yorkshire this is NPG. This can be a lengthy process depending on the capacity and level of network upgrades required, and therefore the appropriate time should be built in to the programme and managed in conjunction with the fleet strategy to ensure there are sufficient chargers for the EV buses as they are delivered.

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