

**Agenda Item 9 – Report by the Leader of the Council
Leaders Report
December 2023**

Further progress on new Bradford station and connectivity

I was really pleased to welcome Huw Merriman, the Rail Minister to Bradford a few weeks ago when he announced that Government was giving the council the £400,000 promised as part of the West Yorkshire devolution deal to be able to progress our master planning for the new station. Over the next year the Southern Gateway Board chaired by Nigel Foster will develop the business case with the Department for Transport so that a decision can be made on the location for the station within the next year.

At the same time progress is being made on Mass Transit. Our ambition is that a tram will then connect the two stations of Forster Square and the new Bradford mainline station before going on to connect to Leeds as well.

It's the transport system that Bradford should have had 100 years ago and we're pleased that the current plans demonstrate that achieving better connectivity is now more within our reach than ever before.

Bus franchising

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority is currently out to consultation on bus franchising. The deadline for contributions is in the next 4 weeks. This will then be analysed and will be read by the West Yorkshire Mayor who will have to make a decision in March next year about which way to go. Please look at the consultation and engage with it.

Bus franchising in itself is not a panacea, but it does provide more public control over the routes and ticketing so that the transport system in West Yorkshire can be more integrated. We all know that to get a better bus service, we need to have proper sustained funding of public transport. It's the bedrock of our economy and enables people to lead socially active and economically successful lives.

Local Government Boundary Review

The Local Government Boundary Review has now published its own plans for new warding patterns for the district. This is purely an exercise internally within the Bradford district, it happens about once every 20 years to make sure that the number

of electors in each ward are broadly similar in number. The current consultation now runs until 5th February. The final ward plan will be ready in spring next year before implementation at the local elections in 2026.

Business Improvement District successes in the district

I'm delighted that in the last few months we've seen successful ballots of businesses for BIDs. As well as the ongoing Ilkley BID, the two other district BIDs, Keighley and Bradford, have both had recent ballots which have resulted in a continuation of these respective BIDs for the next 5 years. This is very exciting and comes at a great time to complement the City of Culture activities in 2025. BIDs are entirely business run and businesses set the priorities for the spend. Generally speaking, they spend money on things like additional events, animation and street wardens which are on top of the existing services provided by the Council and other partners. I congratulate both teams and look forward to working with them.

Keighley Towns Fund bid – successful after all!

We were delighted to secure an award for up to £19,814,140 for enhancing Keighley's engineering, manufacturing, and economic role in the region as part of the third round of the Fund. We have long championed Keighley's status as a leading manufacturer in Yorkshire & Humber, so it is great to see this bid getting the success it deserves.

150th anniversary of the Bradford Synagogue

I was pleased to attend the Chanukah service last weekend with the Lord Mayor on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Synagogue being established in Bradford. It was a wonderful service where a Bradford resident, Marjorie Black was also given her BEM medal by the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Ed Anderson. Our congratulations to the synagogue for 150 years of continuance worship in Bradford and to Marjorie who has given over 50 years of continuous service as a civilian member of staff in West Yorkshire Police force.