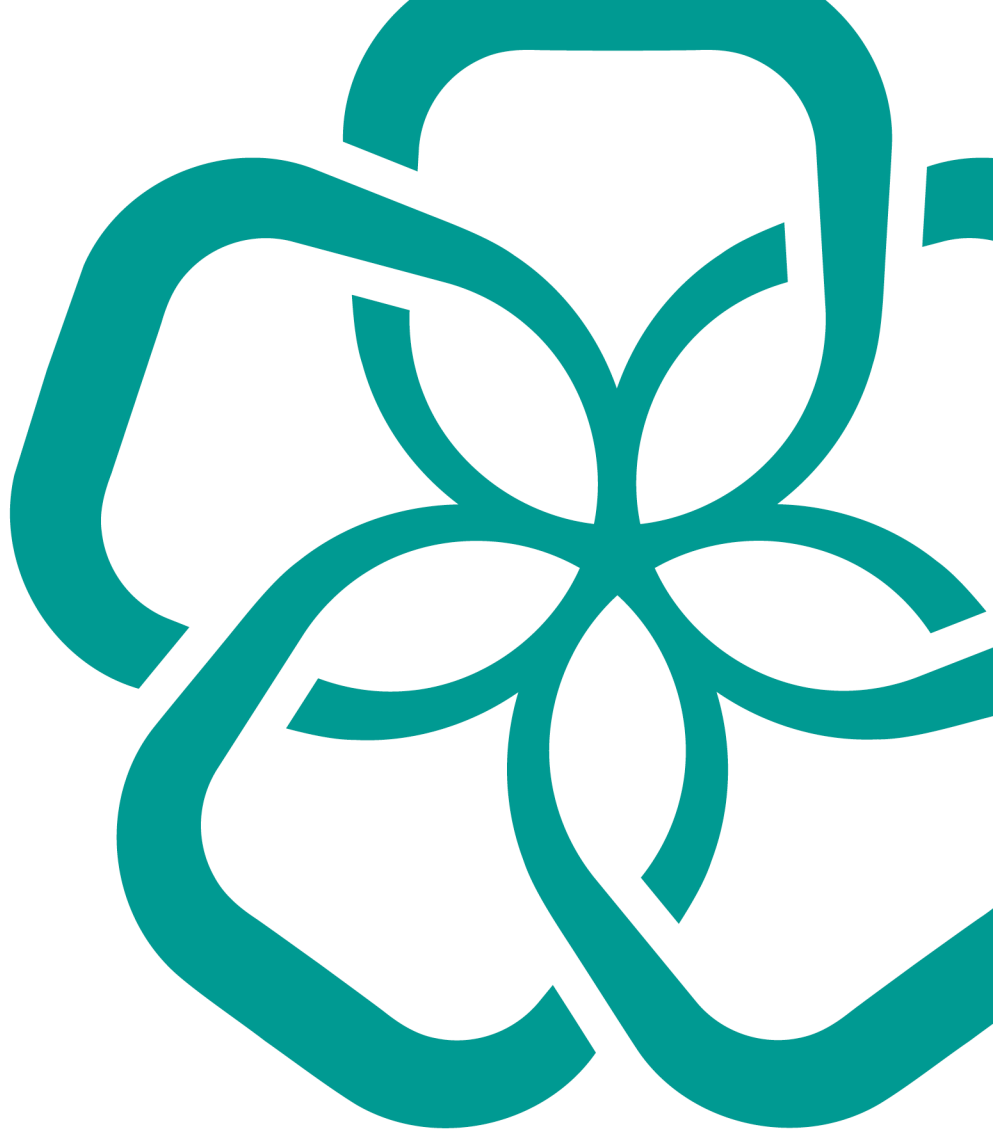




West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority

Tracy
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Mayor of
West Yorkshire



West Yorkshire Service Permit Regime Technical Guidance for Applicants

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Introduction.

This guidance is designed to assist bus operators who wish to apply for a service permit within the West Yorkshire Combined Authority region. This should be read alongside the statutory documents 'West Yorkshire Combined Authority- Service Permit Policy' and 'West Yorkshire Combined Authority- Service Permit Conditions'.

Whilst this document can be used in isolation to guide an applicant to understand the requirements set out in the West Yorkshire Combined Authority policy and Conditions, it is always advisable to contact the Combined Authority at service.permits@westyorks-ca.gov.uk if any questions arise.

Before Applying.

Prior to applying for a service permit an applicant is expected to have a clear understanding of the type of service they would intend to run. This does not have to be a fully developed route and timetable, rather an indication of the level of service and the area it would run.

The Combined Authority welcomes schemes at all levels of development and are keen to work alongside operators who wish to make transport in the region better for passengers.

There is a 21-day pre-application period prior to an application being made[LS3.1]. This is a minimum time as opposed to a maximum time. We welcome discussions at any time prior to application as long as the minimum time is covered. The pre-application period is minimum standard time prior to the application being submitted to the CA where the operator can contact CA staff to discuss their application and consider any feedback provided and make any alterations before submitting the formal application.

To engage with the Combined Authority on a pre-application basis please contact service.permits@westyorks-ca.gov.uk with a summary of your service[LS4.1] ideas and we can arrange a meeting to discuss.

If you have developed a scheme further and wish to share more information during the pre-application period, we welcome this as it will mean we can give more meaningful advice.

When to apply and what to provide.

To be ready to apply for a service permit we require certain information to be able to properly assess your application.

This can be subject to change as the application progresses but as a standard we would require:

- a) A list and map of the full route that the proposed service will serve, this can be the same map as provided previously if this relates to a service which was operated as a tendered service before the introduction of the Scheme*
- b) A full list of the proposed stops, stands, and terminal points (both inside and outside West Yorkshire as applicable)*
- c) The proposed service number or name*
- d) The proposed start date for the service, and if relevant, an expected end date (for short term service permits)*
- e) A timetable, including days of operation, or a relevant TransXchange file that supplies this information*
- f) If applicable, confirmation that any proposed bus station site access and departure slots at a Combined Authority bus station or city centre stop have been reserved with the relevant bus station beforehand*
- g) The commercial fares that will be charged and any operator or other tickets that would be valid or available on the service in addition to the fares and tickets which will be valid or available on franchised services within West Yorkshire*
- h) Details of the vehicle(s) type(s) to be used on the service, including their age, accessibility, seating and total capacity, and emission standards*

If any of the information is not available at time of application this can be rectified later during the application process but could risk the speed at which an application can be granted or potentially risk a permit application being rejected.

It is recommended that an application is not submitted until the full details of the service of the service are certain. The pre-application process is there to address any concerns before the application is submitted.

The Combined Authority will work with applicants to ensure that the correct level of detail can be provided, but it is the responsibility of the operator to submit a proposal for the service that they intend to run.

The fee for applying.

There is a £185 fee to apply for a service permit. This is non-refundable but if an application was advised to be not up to the standard to be approved the Combined Authority will allow amendments to an application during the process without an additional charge.

The fee shall be waived for any services in operation prior to 01 September 2026 for the first application. Additionally, the fee shall be waived for operators who are providing a service under tender from the Combined Authority or running a service on behalf of a charitable or not for profit organisation. Operators will be informed during the pre-application process when a service meets these criteria if applicable.

To pay for an application an operator shall complete the application form held on the www.wymetro.co.uk/servicepermits. Upon completion of the application form the applicant agrees to receive an invoice from the Combined Authority with instructions on how to pay.

Timescales.

The standard application time is 70-calendar days. This comprises of the 28-day application assessment period followed by a 42-mobilisation period for the operator.

The standard time for an application should be adhered to unless extenuating circumstances apply. The Combined Authority will support short notice applications where necessary but the rationale for doing so must be made clear prior to application.

For more information on the timescales refer to the 'West Yorkshire Combined Authority-Service Permit Policy'.

Traffic Commissioner registrations and neighbouring Local Transport Authority permits.

If a permit is sought for a service contained wholly within the West Yorkshire Combined Authority region a Traffic Commissioner registration is not required.

If a service runs outside of the West Yorkshire region, an additional permit or Traffic Commissioner registration may be required depending on the area the service serves.

Where the service runs between two franchised areas a permit would be required on both sides. It is recommended that an application is made for both sides at the same time to ensure that they are concurrent.

Where a service leaves a franchised area and enters a deregulated area the service will be required to hold a Traffic Commissioner registration and this should be applied for at the same time as the service permit for the whole route inside and outside of West Yorkshire as one registration.

The Statutory Test.

The statutory tests are the way the Combined Authority will seek to assess an application to operate a service under permit.

Under the new guidance provided by the Department for Transport for franchising authorities, West Yorkshire Combined Authority is required to show how the statutory tests will be undertaken and provide a standardised approach to assessing revenue and passenger abstraction, operational impacts, and wider social, economic or environmental benefits. This section sets out the approach taken and enables operators to have an understanding of how an application would be assessed, thus improving the chances of a compliant bid and reducing the need to reassess or amend applications post submission.

The Transport Act 2000 as amended by the [Bus Services Act 2025](#), sets out the statutory test for assessing the application of a service permit as set out below.

Statutory Wording – Bus Services Act 2025

The authority or authorities must grant the service permit applied for if they are satisfied that—

- a) the proposed service will benefit persons making journeys on local services which have one or more stopping places in the area to which the scheme relates, and
1. b) the proposed service will not have an adverse effect on any local service that is provided under a local service contract in the area to which the scheme relates.

If the application is for a service permit for a cross-boundary service, the authority or authorities may grant the permit applied for if they are satisfied that—

- a) the benefits to persons making journeys on the proposed service will outweigh any adverse effect on any local service that is provided under a local service contract in the area to which the scheme relates, or
2. b) the benefits of the proposed service to the economy of the relevant area, or to persons living in that area, will outweigh any such adverse effect.

(5B) If the application is for a service permit for a service that is not a cross-boundary service, the authority or authorities may grant the permit applied for if they are satisfied that the benefits of the proposed service to the economy of the area to which the scheme relates, or to persons living in that area, will outweigh any adverse effect on any local service that is provided under a local service contract in that area.

The Combined Authority's Approach to the Statutory Test

The Transport Act 2000 requires the Authority to grant service permits where the service in question will benefit local passengers in the franchising area, and where it will not adversely impact any of the services in the franchised network. This test forms the minimum basis on which the franchising authority must assess service permit applications.

Following changes to the Transport Act 2000 in the Bus Services Act 2025, authorities now have discretion to apply additional tests.

If the service crosses into another authority's area (a "cross-boundary service"), the authority or authorities may, if they wish, consider whether:

- The benefits for passengers using the new service are greater than any negative impact it might have on an existing franchised service(s), or
- The benefits to the local economy or local residents are greater than any negative impact on an existing franchised service(s).

If the service stays within one area (not a cross-boundary service), the authority or authorities may, if they wish, consider whether:

- The benefits to the local economy or local residents outweigh any negative impact on an existing contracted local service.

The Combined Authority intends to make use of these additional tests in administering the Statutory Test and this guidance will set out how we will consider each aspect in turn.

Revenue and Passenger Abstraction

An assessment of the revenue and passenger abstraction of a proposed permitted service forms the 'adverse effect' part of the statutory test. This test is designed to understand if a proposed service will take revenue from franchised services. This is then balanced against the benefits the service provides to residents and passengers.

The Combined Authority has developed a model to assess revenue and passenger abstraction. For abstraction the assessment is calculated using a generalised cost probability assessment as explained:

- A DfT TAG compliant logit model is used to measure the potential abstraction from the existing network towards a new service on any shared corridor. This is calculated using a generalised time cost approach factoring in journey time, headway and fares.
- If necessary, due to the frequency of a proposed service the second step is a timetable wait time approach where patronage abstraction will be measured against the proximity to other existing services. Where a service overlaps or operates shortly before the existing service this could be grounds for rejection of a permit unless mitigating factors come into play.

The revenue assessment follows on from the abstraction assessment:

3. revenue of existing franchised services is assessed against the potential impact of the change in patronage by taking current patronage and applying the standard Weaver network fare of £XX. The potential change in patronage is then calculated as $£XX \times \Delta Pat$. If the revenue change could impact a services viability, then this would be case for rejection, but equally if a franchised service would benefit from a jointly boosted patronage alongside then it would be deemed as a welcomed proposal.

Operational Impacts

Two primary impacts are examined as part of the Operational Impacts section;

- whether there are suitable slots available at bus stations and stops to operate the proposed service
- and whether the application demonstrates that there is sufficient operator resource to deliver the service.

Strategic Benefits

In line with the legislation, the Combined Authority will assess the benefits for:

- passengers (in the case of cross-boundary services),
- the benefits to local residents (in the case of services within the West Yorkshire boundary),
- the benefits to the local economy,
- additionally, the Combined Authority will consider the environmental benefits of a proposed service as part of the Statutory Test.

The Combined Authority will consider these aspects of the Statutory Test holistically as strategic benefits.

The criteria which form part of the test of the strategic benefit are:

- Indices of Multiple Deprivation: a consideration of whether the proposed service is likely to benefit communities of higher deprivation.
- Car Ownership: a consideration of whether the service is likely to provide a benefit to areas with lower levels of car ownership.
- Connectivity: An examination of the extent to which the service provides unique links within or beyond West Yorkshire.
- Accessibility: consideration of how the service enables connections to key amenities and destinations including walking distances to and from the service
- Vehicle Emission Standard: A check against the vehicles the operator proposes to operate against the environmental requirement of the proposed route.

These criteria consider the extent to which the proposed service would provide a benefit to the people, economy, and environment of the relevant area. The strategic benefits aspect of the statutory test will be balanced against the consideration of passenger and revenue abstraction and operational impact criteria to enable the Combined Authority to reach a balanced judgement on whether the application for a service permit passes the Statutory Test and a service permit can be granted.

Making Changes or Withdrawing.

The Combined Authority welcomes punctual and reliable services and where possible it is advisable for operators to make punctuality changes to their timetables in line with the service change dates of West Yorkshire.

There is no charge to alter a services timetable to make it more punctual. The Combined Authority requests that operators give advance notice so we can work with operators to ensure that the service can continue to work effectively within the network.

However, if a service receives multiple punctuality changes within a short period of time, the Combined Authority reserves the right to charge an amendment fee so that the statutory test can be carried out.

Conditions.

Section 123R of the Transport Act 2000 sets out that a franchising authority is able to attach certain conditions to permitted services. The range of conditions that the Combined Authority can attach to a service permit are set out in the Service Permit Conditions on the Combined Authority's [website](#).

Different conditions or descriptions of conditions can be attached for different circumstances, or for different sorts of services. Government guidance ([Setting up a bus franchising scheme - GOV.UK](#)) advises that a franchising authority may apply a 'lighter touch' set of conditions to services which have a limited number of stopping places in the franchising area but may require services which operate wholly within the franchising area to comply with more stringent conditions, to ensure they integrate effectively with the network of franchised services.

The Combined Authority intends to make use of this proportionate approach to the attachment of conditions to permitted services such that services that have a very limited interaction with the franchised network may see a lighter touch approach, while ensuring alignment and integration for permitted services where there is a more significant interaction with the franchised network.

The attachment of conditions to a permit is at the Combined Authority's sole discretion. The Combined Authority will notify operators within 14 days of the conditions to be attached to a service permit.

Contact details.

General information and applications: www.wymetro.co.uk/servicepermits

All other queries: Service.permits@westyorks-ca.gov.uk

Find out more
[**westyorks-ca.gov.uk**](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk)

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All information correct at time of writing