

**West of England Combined Authority
WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Wednesday, 17 July 2019, Times Not Specified
The Space, Keynsham Civic Centre
3 Rivergate, Bristol BS1 6ER

Present:

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| Cllr Brian Allinson, South Gloucestershire Council | Cllr Gary Hopkins, Bristol City Council |
| Cllr James Arrowsmith, South Gloucestershire Council | Cllr Carole Johnson, Bristol City Council |
| Cllr John Ashe, South Gloucestershire Council | Cllr Hal MacFie, Bath and North East Somerset Council |
| Cllr Stephen Clarke, Bristol City Council | Cllr Brenda Massey, Bristol City Council |
| Cllr Winston Duguid, Bath and North East Somerset | Cllr Mhairi Threlfall, Bristol City Council |
| Cllr Geoff Gollop, Bristol City Council | |

Also In attendance:

Cllr Huw James, North Somerset Council
Cllr Mike Bird, North Somerset Council

Officers In Attendance:

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| Patricia Greer, Chief Executive | Ian Hird, Scrutiny Manager |
| Shahzia Daya, Director of Legal & Democratic Services | Tim Milgate, Democratic Services Officer |
| Stephen Bashford, Head of Business and Skills | David Carter, Director of Infrastructure |
| Rachel Pykett, Senior Policy Manager | Jason Humm, Head of Transport |
| | Lynda Bird, Head of Performance, Planning and Projects |

Minutes

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| 1 | Welcome & introductions The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. |
| 2 | Apologies for absence There were no apologies for absence. |
| 3 | Declarations of Interest under the Localism Act 2011 There were no declarations of interest declared. |
| 4 | Minutes of previous meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. |
| 5 | Items from the Public (petitions; statements; questions) The following statements were received. The listed persons were all present at the meeting and submitted their statements orally. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. David Redgewell, Transport Issues 2. Christina Biggs, Transport Issues <p>The Committee stated that the issue raised in the first statement regarding the potential removal of bus lane at Hambrook near the M32 as part of a trial by South Gloucestershire Council to improve air quality raised a concern regarding an impact on bus service reliability at a time when the Combined Authority and all West of England authorities should be taking all possible action to promote bus and public transport use. The Committee therefore asked for reassurance that all authorities have been appropriately involved in discussions on this</p> |

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| | matter. |
| 6 | <p>Chair's business / announcements</p> <p>The Chair informed the meeting that Mayor Bowles had put forward a motion to the WECA Committee on Friday 19 July 2019 calling on the Combined Authority to declare a climate emergency. The wording of the motion had been circulated to the WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>The following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee asked whether there was an accompanying action plan i.e. how would progress be monitored. In response the Chief Executive stated that all actions are monitored through WECA's Business Plan. Each specific project had actions regarding the delivery of that scheme; • Every decision should be assessed against the climate emergency and carbon neutral target. Every project should contribute towards reducing the 2030 carbon neutral goal with the possibility of scrapping projects that did not meet the criteria. Each project could be listed with a 'plus' or 'minus' score; • It was not clear whether the West of England was the first Combined Authority to move such a motion and the Chief Executive would investigate further; • As different declarations had been made in different local authorities (Bristol City Council's for instance spoke about Scope 1 2 & 3) the Committee expected the Mayors and Leaders to reach common ground on the issue; • The Committee also requested that specific plans be brought back within six months and a regular progress report be brought to this Committee; • The Committee asked that its comments be passed to the WECA Committee meeting on Friday 19 July 2019; <p>Agreed: That, while broadly welcoming the motion submitted by Mayor Bowles calling on the Combined Authority to declare a climate emergency at the WECA Committee meeting, the additional comments made be passed onto the WECA Committee ahead of its decision making.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Review of 19 July WECA Committee & Joint Committee reports</p> <p>The Committee considered the reports being submitted for endorsement at the WECA Committee and Joint Committee meeting on 19 July 2019 and made comments thereon. The main points raised are set out below:</p> <p><u>WECA Committee Agenda:</u></p> <p><i>Item 11 - Combined Authority Governance & Constitution</i></p> <p>The WECA Committee was due to consider proposed changes to Combined Authority governance and constitution. There would be an overall reduction in the number of meetings with four boards, the LEP Board and the WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee all advising the main Committees. The following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although broadly welcoming the governance proposals. the Committee expressed concern regarding late amendments sometimes made at the WECA Committee meetings, including at the last WECA Committee regarding Yate Park & Ride site, as this did not allow any proper pre-scrutiny; • There was also concern regarding the public speaking arrangements with no changes proposed regarding allowing supplementary questions at the WECA Committee; • Comments were also made regarding the call-in procedure and how such a 'call-in' was deemed 'reasonable'; • No special urgency arrangements had yet been invoked; |

- It was also mentioned in regards to the pay policy that WECA's pay ratio was around 7:1. This was welcomed by Members;

Item 12 – Combined Authority and Mayoral budget outturn – April - May 2019

The WECA Committee was due to consider the forecast revenue and capital financial outturn budget monitoring information for the Combined Authority and the Mayoral budget for the financial year 2019/20 based on actual data for the period April 2019 to May 2019. The following comments were made:

- Malcolm Coe, Director of Finance stated that due to Treasury Management the Combined Authority's income had been higher than anticipated but as that function was moving in-house a small number of extra staff would now be needed;
- The AEB Budget had been fixed but a marker had been put down for future years, a situation that had also happened at other Combined Authorities;
- It was confirmed that there were no building society holdings and mainly short term investments had been made with local authorities. Other options were always considered but safety ratings were the guiding principle;

Item 13 – Integrated ticketing – Future work

The Combined Authority would receive a report on the proposed next stages of the Integrated Ticketing project. The report asked the committee to note the proposed initial drawdown of £300k to progress with the phase 1 officer support / potential external consultancy support, and delegate approval of the detail of the award through a Feasibility and Development funding application to the West of England Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the West of England Chief Executives.

The report also sought agreement for the Combined Authority's Section 73 officer to lease equipment to small bus operators at less than the market rate as set out in the contactless upgrade Full Business Case and subject to state aid regulation compliance. The following comments were made:

- As London was ahead in the integrated ticketing was the West of England trying to emulate this? In response it was noted that although First Bus was by far the biggest operator in the region a number of other private operators would need to come on board with the scheme and this would have to be done through negotiation;
- What equipment would smaller bus operators need? In response to this question it was stated that the main equipment was smart/bank card readers and the technology existed already. However, it could not be enforced on any company unless the government passed legislation. Transport for London integrated ticketing was moving into the surrounding suburban areas outside London;
- The Authority had to act within the constraints of the Bus Act 2017 so the option was to persuade smaller operators that it was worth their while to join-up with any system (such as by potentially seeing an increase in their passenger numbers);
- It was stated however, that types of integrated tickets already existed locally such as the GWR Freedom Pass. However, this wasn't widely advertised;
- It was also mentioned that any system would have to be mindful of equalities duties and capture those without bank accounts or access to technology;
- The Committee stated that it was supportive of the smart ticketing/integrated ticketing initiative but it was important that the scheme was marketed properly;

Item 14 – Bus Infrastructure Delivery Update

The WECA Committee would receive a report seeking an in-principle agreement for the recruitment of a project management post to support the delivery of the bus infrastructure and complementary schemes. The report also provided an update for members on progress with the West of England bus strategy and the proposed next stages related specifically to bus infrastructure. The following comments were made:

- A trend had seen more bus services coming into the City Centre and fewer cross-city services. It was noted that overall patronage was rising in the region in contrast to some other areas of the country;
- A concern was raised at the amount of time taken at each bus stop. Others were not content about having to use smart cards. It was noted that boarding times had been shown as reducing significantly as there was now far less discussion needed with drivers, for example the First Bus MTicket App helped to reduce customer boarding time. The Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) system would make use of existing technology. It was pointed out that European buses had different exit and entrance points which speeded up boarding and that this should be taken into account when designing new buses;
- A bus programme board would keep track of and integrate the large number of projects. Discussions with BCC regarding train and bus integration were also taking place;

[Councillor Allinson left the meeting at this point]

Item 15 – Investment Fund

The WECA Committee was being asked to note a four-year prioritised Investment Programme for the period up to March 2023. The report was also seeking approval for Investment Fund feasibility, development and delivery funding, and for change requests for schemes within the current approved programme.

- Part of the proposal was to award an additional £1.3m to progress Mass Transit development. It was confirmed that this was for the development of the strategic outline business case to show that the plan was feasible and part of a standard process of any transport scheme. It was possible that the 'green light' given to progress the scheme could be given in around 3-4 years. A document that set out the various stages could be circulated;
- A question was raised regarding strategic Park and Ride sites and how these were prioritised? It was replied that this was all within the Joint Spatial Plan and the underpinning JLTP which set out the key priorities (M32, A38 north/south, etc) but that each individual scheme would have to go through the normal prioritisation process;
- No joint statement had been made on the Bristol Airport planning application received by North Somerset Council although long term improvements to the public transport network was a priority;

Item 16 – Employment and Skills Plan

The WECA Committee would receive a report providing an overview of the Employment and Skills Plan and the process that had taken place to support its development, and seeking approval of the Plan. The following comments were made:

- The Committee would like to see more robust SMART targets/indicators being set so that progress could be measured. It was confirmed that a wide range of partners had been consulted on the Plan and although a number of comments were received the Authority had hoped for a few more;

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| | <p><i>Item 17 – Business Plan 2019/20 – Quarter 1 Progress Report</i></p> <p>The WECA Committee would receive a report providing an update on progress in delivering the West of England Combined Authority business plan for 2019/20 during quarter one (April – June 2019). The following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee would liked to have seen a RAG rating system so that scheme progress could be tracked. It was noted that this would be in the end of year report. An update to the next informal meeting was requested. <p>The WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee also considered the reports being submitted to the Joint Committee on 19 July 2019. No comments were made.</p> <p>Agreed: That the WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee’s comments on the WECA Committee and Joint Committee reports be formally submitted to the WECA Committee and Joint Committee as part of those Committees’ decision making process through the Chair’s report to those meetings.</p> |
| 8 | <p>Overview & Scrutiny work programme & agenda setting</p> <p>The Committee discussed its work programme. Formal meetings would continue to be held just before the main Committee meetings.</p> <p>A query was raised regarding how the WECA Overview & Scrutiny meeting could take a more active role in scrutinise LEP Board activities. It was replied that the Committee’s role included scrutiny of the LEP Board and the four new boards minutes would be submitted to the main Committee meetings.</p> |
| | <p>Wednesday, 2 October 2019, 10.00 am, Council Chamber, Guild Hall, Bath</p> |