

Council believes joint working is important ~~as a council~~ and that the West of England Combined Authority offers a body through which Government ~~will can~~ engage and invest in our region and ~~allow enables~~ the local authorities to work together better and more effectively across the wider Greater Bristol economic area.

Council believes the decision of North Somerset to not join previously weakened the body and its ability to attract additional funds and powers. We welcome ~~the~~ application by North Somerset to join WECA which could strengthen WECA and the regional economy removing the existing complicated 3+1 governance.

Council notes that all constituent authorities support – in principle – the expansion of WECA to include North Somerset. Council believes together we will be a stronger region able to access additional funding and that the sum and parts will jointly benefit. Council notes that Mayor Rees has stated that a challenge to this progress is due to a lack of financial detail from Westminster on a new devolution deal and clear governance arrangements.

Council calls on the Mayor and Chief Executive to meet urgently with other WECA authority leaders to agree a new financial settlement, review the methodology for distributing WECA funds and a clear governance arrangement and publish the statutory consultation on North Somerset joining WECA, ~~as required within the joint arrangement and ask for this consultation to be published no later than 27th November.~~

Additionally Council calls on the Bristol Mayor to reiterate reverse his support opposition to for the expansion of WECA, ~~noting that if he considers inadequate any negotiated additional funding associated with a proposed expansion of WECA, then he still has the authority to exercise his veto at a later date.~~