



Committee Model Working Group Update West of England Combined Authority & Devolution 28th July 2023

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A dark red silhouette of the Bristol skyline is visible at the bottom of the slide, featuring various buildings and a hot air balloon.

Overview

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 - Devolution Deal
 - Combined Authority Committee
 - Bristol's Approach
 - How we work with the Combined Authority behind the scenes
 - Advisory Boards
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- Statutory body, established 1 Feb 2017
- As of 2019, there are ten combined authorities in England, eight of which have directly-elected mayors. (Cornwall and West Yorkshire have agreed devolution deals that did not require a directly-elected mayor.)
- WECA builds on the partnership working that already existed in the region
- Enables the delivery of devolved powers
- Single office supporting WECA, Joint Committee and LEP

The Devolution Deal...

- Control of £30 million a year funding allocation over 30 years, to be invested in the West of England Single Investment Fund, to boost growth
Total: £900m.
- Adult Education Budget.
- Enhanced powers to speed up delivery of new housing.
- Responsibility for a consolidated devolved local transport budget.
- Responsibility for a new Key Route Network
- Employment & Skills
- Key document - [WEST OF ENGLAND DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT](#)

“We need WECA to succeed, and for Government to have confidence in West of England working arrangements, to ensure continued access to new funding streams and policy initiatives. We also need to ensure that our priorities are aligned, and Bristol’s has a powerful voice direct to Government on its distinctive needs.”

- The Committee Working Group may want to consider whether this approach needs to be revised post-May 2024.



How we work together behind the scenes...

- We work closely with colleagues at the Combined Authority. There regular meetings between leaders, CEOs, Directors and Heads of Service.
- WECA Advisory Boards: Infrastructure; Business; Skills.
- BCC is part of WECA policy development – officer meet on an informal basis to discuss policy development e.g. Mass Transit, Climate Emergency
- BCC Officers meet regularly to coordinate our approach and to identify risks and opportunities – digital inclusion and connectivity
- Regular Briefing for the Mayor of Bristol, Cabinet Members, OSM Members
- WECA OSM and Audit Committees

Combined Authority Committee

- The West of England Combined Authority Committee is chaired by the Metro Mayor and is made up of the Leaders and Mayor from the three Councils in the region – Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council.
- The Committee principally makes decisions on the allocation of funding and sets the strategic and policy direction of the Combined Authority.
- Items which are considered by the Combined Authority Committee are published on a forward plan 28 days in advance of any committee meeting.
- The business of the committee is usually developed through Advisory Boards and meetings of key officers, Chief Executives ahead of the meeting of the Combined Authority Committee. Such engagement can help to resolve challenges ahead of committee meetings.

Things to think about:

- How will Combined Authority Business be considered by members ahead of any Committee meeting?
- The role of the Leader to negotiate with other Local Authorities and the Combined Authority?
- How will Bristol City Council set its own strategic priorities in regards to the Combined Authority?

Advisory Boards

- Provide strategic guidance and advice to the West of England Combined Authority, Joint West of England Committee and Local Enterprise Partnership on Housing, Planning & Transport, Business and Skills matters.
- The Advisory Boards shall not make decisions and shall operate within the remit approved by the West of England Combined Authority or Joint Committee as appropriate.
- Executive Members from the Unitary Authorities attend advisory boards.

Things to think about:

- Who will attend the Advisory Boards?
- How will business from the Advisory Boards be communicated back to the relevant Committee in Bristol City Council?

Joint Committee

- The Joint Committee is the decision-making body for issues relating to the West of England Combined Authority, Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils, and the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board.
- It oversees the Economic Development Fund and other legacy funding streams such as the Revolving Infrastructure Fund.
- In Joint Committee Governance arrangements are over 7 years old and need to be reviewed. In June 2023 the Metro Mayor withdrew from the JC.

Things to think about:

- Future governance arrangements of the Joint Committee.
- Who will represent the Council at Joint Committee meetings?

West of England Scrutiny

- The West of England Combined Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee is made up of 11 members from across the Combined Authority region.
- It holds powers to review or scrutinise the work of the Combined Authority and the discharge of its functions and make reports or recommendations on these or other matters which affect inhabitants of the Combined Authority area.
- Where the business of the Local Enterprise Partnership relates to the discharge of functions of the Combined Authority, the Committee holds these powers also.
- North Somerset Councillors sit alongside the Committee to consider West of England Joint Committee items.

Things to think about:

- Can Bristol Members of the West of England CA's Overview & Scrutiny Committee be members of one of the Council's decision making committees?

Local Enterprise Partnership

- The Local Enterprise Partnership (or LEP) is a partnership between businesses, universities, the region's councils and Combined Authority.
- Its role is to secure our region's success by promoting an environment in which businesses thrive and communities grow in a sustainable way.
- The LEP worked with the Combined Authority, government, and the business community to develop our region's Local Industrial Strategy, which sets out our priorities to drive long-term growth in our economy.

Things to think about:

- Future devolution arrangements regarding the LEP.
- Who will attend LEP Board meetings on behalf of the Council?

Funding arrangements

Combined Authority	Joint Committee
Investment Fund (£900m over 30 years) – Capital and Revenue	Economic Development Fund (£500m over 25 years)
Adult Education Budget (£15m)	Revolving Infrastructure Fund (£57m)
UK Community Renewal Fund (£2.4m)	
Green Recovery Fund (£60m)	

- For further information please visit the Combined Authority [Website](#)

Learning from Sheffield...

- It is understood that the Leader of Sheffield City Council attends Combined Authority Committee meetings on behalf of the Council.
- The Leader of Sheffield Council is regularly briefed on Combined Authority matters with leaders and deputy leaders of all the groups forming the administration.
- Committee Chairs regularly receive updates from Officers regarding Combined Authority matter concerning matters relating within the remit of their committee.
- Cross cutting matters are considered by the Council's Strategy and Resources Committee



Questions?