

Committee Model Working Group – 28th July – Minutes

Attendees: Councillor Jenny Bartle (Chair), Councillor Geoff Gollop (Vice-Chair), Councillor Marley Bennett, Councillor Mark Bradshaw (substituting for Councillor Holland), Councillor Andrew Brown (substituting for Councillor Kent), Councillor Richard Eddy, Councillor Lorraine Francis, Councillor Gary Hopkins, Councillor Ed Plowden (substituting for Councillor Makawi), Councillor Guy Poultney, and Councillor Tom Renhard (substituting for Councillor Pearce).

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed those present and introductions were made.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from;

- Councillor Holland, substituted by Councillor Bradshaw
- Councillor Makawi, substituted by Councillor Plowden
- Councillor Pearce, substituted by Councillor Renhard
- Councillor Kent, substituted by Councillor Brown
- Councillor Beech.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes from the previous meeting and decisions log

The minutes from the 30th June 2023 were approved as a correct record.

Members noted the decision log.

5. Public Forum

The following public forum statements were received for the meeting.

Statements	
Number	Name
PS01	Clive Stevens
PS02	Dr Ann Kennard, Secretary, Bristol International Twinning Association
PS03	Dianne Francombe, CEO, Bristol & West of England China Bureau
PS04	Mary Page
PS05	Dan Ackroyd

A statement was also received from David Redgewell which was omitted in error but was shared with Members and subsequently published.

RESOLVED: That the public forum be noted.

6. External Partnerships Report

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report and reminded members of the discussion regarding One City that had taken place at the previous meeting of the Committee Model Working Group. The Group went on to consider the report, commenting as follows:

- It was confirmed that 2.6 FTE (full time equivalent) officers had been appointed to the City Office on 12-month fixed term secondments.
- Members were advised that the Council had multiple partnerships in place of varying types. The purpose of the information provided in the report was to set out the arrangements for those partnerships that related to the role of the current Cabinet Members, as well as One City and WECA.
- Officers confirmed that Members who have a company director role received extensive training, including managing conflicts of interest, as well as ongoing officer support.

The Head of the Executive Office provided a detailed [presentation on WECA](#) (West of England Combined Authority) including background information, the current working relationship, and questions that the Committee needed to consider. The Group went on to consider the presentation and report, with officers and Members commenting as follows:

- Officers were working throughout the region to develop proposals for upcoming WECA Committee meetings to request appropriate funding. These proposals were published 28 days in advance via the Forward Plan and scrutinised where appropriate.
- Members raised concerns that not enough time was given between publication of papers to enable meaningful scrutiny. They requested that this be reviewed.
- Clarification was given that although the Green Recovery Fund was currently underspent, there this position may well change significantly before May 2024.
- WECA must undertake a gateway review process every 5 years to unlock the next tranche of funds from central government. The next review would take place in 2025.
- It was noted that Members would like to revisit the possibility of North Somerset joining WECA.
- The Group was advised that decisions agreed by the WECA Committee could be revised under a future Leader, but members of WECA would be notified of any implications this may have, including any penalties from contractual agreements.
- The Committee raised concerns that the WECA Mayor had stood down as Chair of the Joint Committee, given that WECA officers were responsible for leading on major projects.
- Local Authorities would continue to work closely with WECA officers to develop the revised constitution and Economic Industrial Strategy.
- The Secretary of State had written to the UK's 10 Combined Authorities to ask what further powers they would like to be devolved. Before a response was submitted, discussions would take place within each of the WECA unitary authorities.
- The Group discussed whether it was appropriate for a Policy Chair or Vice-Chair to sit on a WECA Scrutiny Committee, given they may have been involved directly in the decision being proposed. Members voted and agreed that Policy Chairs and Vice-Chairs would not be allowed to sit on WECA Scrutiny.
- The Group agreed for the Leader of the Council to represent the Council at formal WECA meetings and Joint Committees but requested a document that outlined the Council's threshold on decisions the Leader could make without sign off from Full Council.

- It was agreed that the relevant Policy Chairs would attend WECA Advisory Boards on behalf of the Council.
- The Group requested that additional detail be added to Appendix 1 (spreadsheet of Cabinet Member meetings) to include functions, remuneration and status of the body.
- Due to the complex nature of external partnerships, it was agreed that officers would return to the next meeting to discuss this further. The Committee agreed to extend the next meeting.

RESOLVED

- Policy Chairs and Vice-Chairs will not be allowed to sit on WECA Scrutiny.
- Leader of the Council to represent the Council at formal WECA meetings and Joint Committees (subject to a clear threshold for decisions needed to report back to Full Council)
- Policy Chairs would attend WECA Advisory Boards on behalf of the Council.

7. Local Decision Making - Verbal update from the Chair of the Area Committees Working Group

Deferred.

8. Work Programme - August to November 23

The Committee approved the Work Programme, subsequent to the addition of the next meeting being extended to revisit External Partnerships.