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# Agenda Item 4

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

Wednesday, 19 September 2018, 10:30-12:30pm  
Held at The Brunswick Room, Guildhall, High St, Bath BA1 5AW

### Present:

Cllr Stephen Clarke, Bristol City Council (Chair)	Cllr Mark Weston, Bristol City Council
Cllr Steve Pearce, Bristol City Council	Cllr Carole Johnson, Bristol City Council
Cllr Tim Ball, Bath & North East Somerset Council	Cllr Don Alexander, Bristol City Council (as substitute for Cllr Margaret Hickman)
Cllr Liz Richardson, Bath & North East Somerset Council	Cllr Pat Hockey, South Gloucestershire Council
	Cllr Katherine Morris, South Gloucestershire Council (left at 11:15am)
	Councillor Steve Reade, South Gloucestershire Council (as substitute for Cllr Brian Allinson)

### North Somerset Members Present:

Cllr James Tonkin (on behalf of Cllr Donald Davies)  
Cllr Charles Cave  
Cllr Chris Blades

### Apologies:

Cllr Geoff Gollop, Bristol City Council	Cllr Brian Allinson, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Margaret Hickman, Bristol City Council	

## Minutes

1	<b>EVACUATION PROCEDURE</b>  The evacuation procedure for the venue was set out.
2	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Brian Allinson (South Gloucestershire Council)(Cllr Steve Reade attended as substitute), Cllr Margaret Hickman (Bristol City Council)(Cllr Don Alexander attended as substitute) and Cllr Geoff Gollop (Bristol City Council).  Cllr James Tonkin attended in place of Cllr Donald Davies
3	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011</b>  There were no declarations of interest raised.
4	<b>MINUTES</b>  The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2018 were agreed as a correct record.
5	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>  There were no matters arising.
6	<b>ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC</b>  The following items were submitted:  Statements:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. David Redgewell, South West Transport Bus Users UK</li> <li>2. David Redgewell on behalf of Bus Users UK and South West Transport Network</li> <li>3. Christina Biggs, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways</li> </ol> <p>Julie Marsden presented Statement 3 on behalf of Christina Biggs. The statements were published on the Authority's website following the meeting.</p>
7	<p><b>PETITIONS</b></p> <p>No petitions were received.</p>
8	<p><b>LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY (WECA AND JOINT COMMITTEE ITEM - INCLUDES NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL MEMBERS)</b></p> <p>Jessica Lee, Head of Strategy and Policy, provided an update on work to develop the Local Industrial Strategy for the West of England.</p> <p>The report stated that in July 2018 the Government had announced that the West of England would participate in the second wave of regions to develop a Local Industrial Strategy. This offered the opportunity to be a driving force for clean and inclusive economic growth. The Combined Authority was working in partnership with the business community and Local Authorities and others to ensure that the strategy reflected the views and priorities of stakeholders across the region. The formal launch of the Local Industrial Strategy would take place at a business briefing event on 21 September 2018.</p> <p>In response to a question from Cllr Morris, Jessica confirmed that academics from the 4 local universities had identified 'core businesses' using regional strategy data. The Authority was also working with the Health and Care Sectors together with lots of communications with other local businesses and the Authority was looking to spread the net of consultees wider, including through social media platforms. Trades Unions were also part of this.</p> <p>Work had already commenced to develop the evidence base and this work would continue throughout the autumn. Once this work was concluded the Chair asked whether this could come back to the Overview and Scrutiny meeting.</p> <p>In response to further questions, Jess confirmed that the rural dimension of the area had not been overlooked and the Strategy would focus on what was unique about the region, including technology. The video that had been produced to accompany the launch highlighted the strengths that were already known. Although elected members had not been invited to the launch event there was elected member involvement on the Strategy Steering Group.</p> <p>Cllr Weston felt that as the document would be fairly large, a smaller sub-group of members could be chosen to look at the detail rather than the whole Committee. Patricia Greer advised that it may be better for the whole committee to meet in private, maybe in a couple of months' time around November 2018 to discuss the issue. <b>The Chair of the Committee would discuss this with Patricia and report back to the members of the Committee.</b></p>
9	<p><b>WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY BUSINESS PLAN (WECA AND JOINT COMMITTEE ITEM - INCLUDES NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL MEMBERS)</b></p> <p>Lynda Bird, Head of Performance, Planning and Projects, provided an update on progress in delivering the West of England Combined Authority Business Plan.</p> <p>Lynda explained that the West of England Combined Authority 2018/19 business plan had</p>

	<p>been agreed in June 2018 and quarterly reports would be brought to this meeting. This was the first of those quarterly reports. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were requested to note the update.</p> <p>In response to a question it was explained that the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings were all showing amber because none of the activities were wholly green or red. Although Brexit was not explicitly shown as an organisational risk it did affect many of the other themes, although it would always be difficult to anticipate world events. The Chair asked whether WECA had any plans for a Brexit Committee like Bristol City Council. Patricia Greer replied that WECA were invited along to the Bristol Committee.</p> <p>Cllr Weston asked for an update on the Business Case investment for the 5G project and was happy if this update was provided by email outside of the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Carole Johnson stated that she felt that the report could be improved, with greater detail and the straplines being re-worded. Cllr Richardson stated that she felt that there was nothing to show what the objectives were measured against. The Chair felt that the report could have been more 'granular' and use numbers rather than colours to illustrate the overall ratings.</p> <p>Cllr Mark Weston asked for updates on the outline business case for infrastructure transport and the suburban rail study commission by email. These issues would be covered by the Transport Update report being considered by the WECA Committee on 28 September 2018.</p> <p><b>The Business Plan update was noted.</b></p>
10	<p><b>2017/18 CITY REGIONAL DEAL ANNUAL PERFORMANCE (JOINT COMMITTEE ITEM - INCLUDES NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL MEMBERS)</b></p> <p>Mark Anderson, North Somerset Council Finance Officer, introduced a report which provided a summary of the West of England's City Region Deal's pooled Business Rates performance for 2017/18 as used for the Economic Development Fund (EDF). The EDF was being overseen by the Joint Committee with South Gloucestershire Council being the lead pooling authority on behalf of the four West of England Councils. The West of England Combined Authority was not part of the EDF agreement.</p> <p>The Business Rates Pool balance at the close of 2017/18 was shown in Appendix A, analysed by each UA's total contribution. In respect to the comment in paragraph 2.9 of the report it was noted that it was possible that South Gloucestershire, Bath &amp; North East Somerset and North Somerset could see a reduction in their resources under the Fair Funding Review but it was unknown at the moment what the impact would be. It was also stated that a 'letter of comfort' had been received from Government that the City Region Deal would be protected.</p> <p>In response to queries it was stated that in the Appendix to the report it showed more uncommitted/contingency cash than committed cash, it was explained that this was mainly down to projects not being commenced yet and those awaiting approval. Many more projects would be commenced in the next couple of years.</p> <p>Cllr Pearce stated that he would like to see specific commentary on the growth performance and the estimated growth and requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee look further into this issue. Mark Anderson replied that this could be scheduled next year but the apparent poor performance of Bristol and Bath &amp; North East Somerset was down to timing issues with major projects.</p>

	<p><b>The Chair asked whether the report should be considered by the Audit Committee and would speak to the Chair of the Audit Committee directly.</b></p> <p><b>The Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee noted the Business Rates Pool EDF transactions, the available balance at 31 March 2018 and the 2017/18 Pool growth performance.</b></p> <p><b>The Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee noted the progress against the latest EDF programme.</b></p>
11	<p><b>JOINT SPATIAL PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE (JOINT COMMITTEE ITEM - INCLUDES NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL MEMBERS)</b></p> <p>Lisa Bartlett, Joint Spatial Plan Senior Responsible Officer, provided an update on the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) Examination in Public (EiP).</p> <p>The report explained that the JSP was a joint plan of the four authorities of the West of England and was overseen by the West of England Joint Committee. The JSP had been submitted to the Secretary of State on 13 April 2018. There would now follow an examination stage when independent inspectors would review the plan to determine whether the plan was sound and whether the plan can be adopted.</p> <p>Cllr Weston asked about the consultation that the councils would be organising for six weeks during November and December 2018 and whether it would be possible to receive a briefing prior to the next meeting in November 2018. The feedback from the consultation would be passed to the Inspectors as part of their assessment.</p> <p>Cllr Richardson stated that the growth figure should be updated. Also, that the links to the four letters requesting clarification were difficult to find. And additionally, how each local authority was fixed with bringing forward local plans.</p> <p>Cllr Pearce asked whether there was any indication yet of challenges such as development industry wanting further freedom.</p> <p>Cllr Hockey felt that the public could be worried and confused by a joint plan from the four authorities which WECA was not part of, despite being a transport authority. The Chair asked for clarification about what was being consulted upon.</p> <p>In response to these enquiries Lisa stated that she was happy for the matter to come back to the Committee, the best time would probably be after the close of the consultation with time to collate all the response, this would be around February 2019. As the first region to be undertaking such a joint plan the inspectors will judge the plan using the old methodology. The letters and other information was on the LEP website but Lisa would look at ways of making the information clearer. It had always been the intention that the Authorities' individual Local Plans followed closely with the JSP but that it was important to keep the lines of communications clear.</p> <p>In terms of timescales the hearing was likely to take around 3 weeks but it was unknown at the moment where this would take place. The relevant councils would need to defend their own positions but the JSP would be pertinent to the planning appeals especially against predatory applications. Once adopted the JSP would be undergo a review five years later, likely to be in 2024.</p> <p>Councillor Hockey asked whether the West of England Combined Authority's appointed transport officers would be called to give evidence. Lisa replied that it was unknown at this stage who would be called to give evidence but it was likely technical experts would give</p>

	<p>evidence. An appointed QC would guide Councils. It was also stated that the JSP had its own appointed budget which Bath and North East Somerset managed on behalf of the other authorities. The constituent councils had budgeted for about four years and this was open to the usual auditing processes.</p> <p><b>The Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee noted the update report.</b></p>
12	<p><b>ANY OTHER ITEM THE CHAIR DECIDES IS URGENT</b></p> <p>There were no urgent items. The following items were raised as any other business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Morris stated that there seemed to be little correlation between the Overview &amp; Scrutiny agendas and the West of England Combined Authority's Forward Plan meaning that there was little pre-scrutiny happening. She also stated that there did not seem to be any advisory board meeting minutes being fed through. Shahzia Daya, the Monitoring Officer stated that there was an overall review of the decision-making process and as part of this process the aim was to circulate the draft minutes within 5 working days of formal Committee meetings.</li> <li>• Metrobus – at the last meeting concerns had been raised regarding Metrobus and communication with the press. It had been agreed that Peter Mann would provide regular updates on the Metrobus project and attend every third meeting. Peter Mann had agreed to address any concerns in between the formal meetings;</li> <li>• Modern Government – it was noted that Modern Government, an agenda publishing software package, was now being used by the Combined Authority to publish its agenda papers. As some of the members were not familiar with how to use the system some training would be arranged prior to the next meeting;</li> <li>• Cllr Pearce raised an enquiry regarding FutureBright referrals as those in receipt of Universal Credit would be unable to participate. The Combined Authority Mayor had written to the Government on this issue and the response had been circulated to the members of the Committee. It was felt that the eligibility criteria was too narrow, and not inclusive to vulnerable groups such as prisoners or teenage mothers, etc. <b>The Chair was invited to issue a draft response to circulate to the members of the Committee for sign-off;</b></li> <li>• Metrowest – <b>Cllr Weston asked that an update be brought on Metrowest;</b></li> <li>• Cllr Alexander invited the Mayor to a formal question time session at the Scrutiny meetings – Shahzia Daya replied that the decision-making process was under review;</li> <li>• Cllr Cave – North Somerset – stated that now Metrobus Route 2 had replaced the 903 the benefits of this change had not been readily apparent especially for people wishing to access Central Bristol. The fare had been raised from £3-£4 for a single with a group family ticket price doubled from £4-£8 making it cheaper for a family to bring a car into the city centre and park for most of the day. <b>It was requested that any specific questions regarding changes to bus services be sent to the Chair who could raise them with the appropriate operators;</b></li> <li>• Cllr Hockey asked whether the Combined Authority had any plans for a Public Transport Forum as the one at South Gloucestershire had been terminated on the grounds that the Combined Authority was being formed;</li> <li>• Cllr Reade asked that, following comments in the media about problems some passengers had experienced with the fayre system on Metrobus whether any compensation had been paid. Again this could form part of the Chairs questions to Peter Mann;</li> <li>• Cllr Cave – North Somerset – reiterated the need for greater detail in the reports coming before the Committee. Patricia Greer stated that it was important that the balance be right but it may be possible to provide hyperlinks to additional information</li> </ul>

	<p>or occasionally meetings called to look at single issues in more detail. The Chair acknowledged that hyperlinks to the information could be useful for some of the reports;</p>
13	<p><b>METROBUS PROGRESS UPDATE</b></p> <p>The Committee received a report, for information only, provided by Peter Mann and Pete Woodhouse on the progress of the Metrobus Programme.</p> <p>The report was received and noted.</p>
	<p>Wednesday, 28 November 2018, 10.30 am, Guildhall, High St, Bath BA1 5AW</p>