

**Joint meeting - West of England Combined Authority  
Committee and West of England Joint Committee**

**9 October 2020**

**Item 9 – Comments from the Chair of the Combined Authority’s  
Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

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**COMMENTS FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHEN CLARKE,  
CHAIR OF WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**COMMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO:  
JOINT MEETING OF WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE  
AND WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT COMMITTEE – 9 OCTOBER 2020**

Following our meeting on 7 October, I wish to raise the following matters on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

**1. Covid Recovery Plan and Climate Emergency Action Plan (agenda item 11)**

We were pleased to welcome Mayor Bowles to our meeting to discuss these items and would extend an invitation to him to attend future meetings on a reasonably regular basis as we found the engagement helpful.

In broad terms we welcome both the Recovery Plan and the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

**Recovery Plan:**

We welcome the breadth and ambition of the plan, and the specific detail of the actions to be taken forward, as developed through the Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce, with the full involvement of the region's local authorities and the business and other communities.

**Climate Emergency Action Plan:**

We also broadly welcome the Climate Emergency Action Plan and recognise the clear structure of the plan. We particularly welcome the headline ambition to achieve net zero carbon in the region by 2030, which is significantly ahead of the 2050 national target. We also acknowledge the work of officers and the engagement and partnership working that has taken place across the authorities in developing the action plan.

We would though like to draw attention to the following issues that we feel should be fully taken on board in taking actions forward:

\* It will be important to ensure the development of a suite of SMART (Specific; Measurable; Attainable; Relevant; Timed) targets as an integral part of the action plan. It is critical to define goals and establish clear milestones against which progress and success can be measured and demonstrated.

\* There will need to be clarity about how taking forward these actions will be factored into / linked in with the evidence base that will inform the review of key strategies, plans and projects, e.g. the Local Industrial Strategy, the next Joint Local Transport Plan and future investment in sustainable transport.

\* Given the twin 'drivers' of facilitating economic recovery and tackling the climate emergency, it will be essential to build on the region's acknowledged strengths around innovation and technology by maximising investment opportunities (e.g. around the

hydrogen economy and clean technologies) that will bring both economic and environmental benefit.

## **2. Investment Fund (agenda item 15)**

We noted the latest report and the fact that £32.2m of headroom has been identified in the programme to 2022/23 as a result of the detailed review of scheme deliverability. We note that detailed proposals for the reallocation of funding from this headroom are to be presented to the Committee's next meeting in December and are supportive of the proposal that a significant part of this funding, approx. £20-£25m, will be used to create a Development Infrastructure Fund.

## **3. WECA and North Somerset**

We wish to bring to the committee's attention our strong view that it would be beneficial to the region for North Somerset Council to join WECA, as it is clear to us that that the Combined Authority should align with the West of England's functional economic area. We encourage all Mayors and Leaders to do everything possible to bring this about in discussion with government so that these arrangements are in place in advance of the 2021 WECA Mayoral election.

Cllr. Stephen Clarke  
Chair, West of England Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee