

WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 2 December 2020

Item 5 – Items from the public (statements; questions)

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WECA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 DECEMBER 2020

Agenda item 5 – Items from the public

Statements (full details set out in following pages):

1. David Redgewell - Regional governance; transport issues
2. Lucy Travis - Regional governance; transport issues
3. Kim Hicks - Spatial Development Strategy engagement
4. Gavin Smith / Martin Garrett - Integrated Transport Authority
5. Cllr Clive Stevens – WECA governance
6. Tony Lloyd – Rail issues

Questions received (full details set out in following pages)

1. Question from: Tony Lloyd – Rail projects

STATEMENT 1 – David Redgewell

Firstly, it's very important that progress is made with the secretary of state Robert Jenrick MP and local government minister Luke Hall MP to respond for the request by Bristol City Council mayor, Banes council and South Gloucestershire council and North Somerset council to join the West of England combined authority.

And to bring forward some idea of the money available in a second devolution deal to improve public transport in WECA mayoral transport authority area and to fund public transport schemes in North Somerset and the regeneration project in Weston Super Mare, Clevedon, Portishead, Backwell, Nailsea, Banwell, Winscombe and Locking.

The motion passed by Bristol City Full Council and proposed by Councillor Mhairi Threlfall on negotiations to take place urgently for North Somerset council to join WECA mayoral combined authority in 2021 and for public consultation to take place and the orders to be laid in the House of Commons and Lords to set up a new Authority by May 2021. These negotiations are very important to improve public transport network and to bid for investment in the light rail system mass transit system which will serve the Airport and south Bristol, the main rapid transit route for travel to develop a light rail system to Cribbs Causeway to East Bristol and Bath, Keynsham and Bath. Through North Somerset council area in fact Long Ashton park and ride is in North Somerset council area and the building needs to be covid secure 19 cleaning.

The metro west project includes in its first phase the Portishead Railway line with stations at Bedminster and Parson Street, Ashton Gate new station, Pill and Portishead.

And the commuter route to Weston super mare and Taunton.

The Bus network into Bristol area of Ashton Vale and Hotwell all start in North Somerset Towns of Weston super mare x1 x2 Clevedon x6 x7 Nailsea x8 and x9 .
Portishead x4 x5

The Airport and half the port of Bristol are in North Somerset.

The Health Authority covers North Somerset Bristol and south Gloucestershire Clinical commissioning Group.

The city and county of Bristol boundary of 1974 does not cover much of the Bristol built up area with the east and the North of the city in South Gloucestershire council area. The south east of the city in Banes and south west Bristol in North Somerset. This is why its very important to have strong regional government and for the Bristol Bath city region.

We need to set up integrated transport authority for provision of the main and Strategic road network.

We need all these functions under transferred from the 4 unity authorities to WECA mayoral transport and Planning authority the main staff to provide this service.

Not just to run the bus network to manage service delivery under covid 19 bus operators grant and bus service tendering passengers information.

Providing bus infrastructure shelter and Interchanges. To build and design light rail systems and to set up.

We need a Railway Executive to work with Network rail and the Department for transport and its management contractor First group Great western railway, south western railway and cross country trains.

We cannot wait 4 years to bring in North Somerset council and set up a regional transport authority.

Whist the regional bodies are in place in Greater Manchester, Sheffield city region, West Midlands, Liverpool city Region and Cambridge Peterborough.

We want to see progress on this issue. In Somerset region we also Bath and North East Somerset and North Somerset councils also being part of the Government reorganisation of Somerset councils into unitary authorities.

There is a proposal to deal Somerset council elections to 2022, this of course could include the WECA mayoral combined authority as well.

This may allow local government reorganisation to take place in Somerset and for North Somerset council to join WECA mayoral combined authority.

The strong WECA city Regional combined authority will also allow progress on metro west Railway reopening of the Portishead line the Henbury loop line services to Gloucester and Cheltenham spa, Bath spa and Westbury, Frome and Warminster. and the reopening of station at Ashley Down, Pill, Portishead, Ashley Down, Horfield, Filton North, Henbury, Portbury, Parkway, Charfield, Stonehouse, Bristol Road, St Anne's park, Saltford.

We would still like to see the Bus services restored on the following routes Bristol to Thornbury T2 via Gloucester road, Bishopton, Horfield Filton and Cribbs Causeway bus station Evening and Sunday services.

Y2 Bristol bus station to Fishponds, Downend, Yate bus station and Chipping Sodbury evening service restored.

Service 37 Bristol bus and coach station, Lawrence Hill station, St George Park, Hanham, Longwell Green, Bitton, Kelston, Weston, RuH and Bath spa bus and coach station.

We would like to see an hourly service restored Monday to Saturday and Sunday services.

We also wish to see later service on the 19 Bath spa bus and coach station to Weston, RuH back entrance, Kelston, Bitton, Cadbury Heath, Warmley, Kingswood, Hillfields, Staple Hill, Downend, UWE Bristol Parkway station and Cribbs Causeway bus station.

There needs to be extra evening and service due to nightingale hospital being brought into use as an out patient hospital.

The late journeys restored on service 60 Gloucester bus station to Dursley and Cam station, Dursey bus station, Wootton under Edge, Charfield and Thornbury.

Covid 19 issues - we need to see urgently safety screen urgently fitted to Hct group of London fit to fit Bristol Parson Street depot fleet that runs service 505 Long Ashton park and ride to Clifton Down and Southmead hospital bus station.

506 Bristol city centre to Easton Eastville and Southmead hospital. bus station.

515 Stockwood to south Bristol hospital via Hengrove.

62 Bristol bus station to Dursley bus station via Dursley hospital.

There are a number of local services in south Bristol, Keynsham and the chew valley that do not have screens.

Bristol city council Director of public health team has now written to the company and sent a report to the HSE. Its very important screen are fitted to protect the staff.

On the covid 19 tier 3 for North Somerset, Bristol city and county of Bristol, South Gloucestershire council covered by North Somerset Bristol and south Gloucestershire clinical commissioning group Health Authority.

With Bath and North east Somerset in tier 2, there is a problem that people will leave Bristol and North Somerset and travel to Bath spa, Whitchurch, Kelston, Saltford and Keynsham.

What plans are in place to prevent travel on the public transport network to Bath - will covid marshals be travelling on bus service from Bristol bus station and the city to advise passengers not to travel - will note be put up on Railway stations in the Bristol area Bristol Temple meads and Bristol parkway and Weston super mare to

advise on travel restrictions to Bath spa from zone 1 also similar from Zone 2 into Zones station on the local First group Great western railway network and local bus stations and interchanges.

We agree with the metro mayor that the city region for Bristol and Bath city region should all have been in the same tiers. WECA mayoral combined authority should be able to oversee health provision similar to Greater Manchester.

There will need to be a robust policing plan to prevent travel from tier 1 to 2 with the Avon and Somerset police, port police and the British transport police.

Otherwise the virus will spread into Bath and North east Somerset and Wiltshire. And Gloucestershire.

We hope that first group Great western railway stop all travel by train advertising campaign on west country tv to prevent travel and the western daily press western morning news visit Bristol and Bath tourist board.

And the Department for transport will support passengers information as it should be essential work journeys only.

And key shopping health care.

These issues need urgently addressing before the 3rd of December 2020.

Addendum – points from Tracey Harding (to be presented at the meeting by David Redgewell on her behalf):

In the view of the offer by Somerset County Council to fund the afternoon school bus on the D2s via Rode as offered by Councillor John Woodman, Cabinet member for Transport for Somerset County Council, can you provide an update on what progress is being made between Somerset County Council and WECA. (The D2s school bus currently doesn't go via Rode meaning school children have to walk along single track country lanes or over muddy fields and will soon be doing this in the dark).

Also can you look at the at the number of buses that call at Rode on the Frome to Bath bus corridor. The Rode village has seen over half it's bus services cut since the withdrawal of the Faresaver Buses x67 in March 2020 and also First Bus has also withdrawn services this year too. The last day time service to Bath from Rode is 845am. Rode needs a day time and weekend bus service to ensure people get to work, schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, retail and leisure.

Would both authorities meet with First Bus to discuss the D2s school service and the service via the villages of Beckington, Rode, Norton St Philip, Hinton Charterhouse and Midford. Plus also look into establishing a express D2x double decker bus from Frome to Bath.

What progress is being made to insure bus connections to Frome railway station? Frome station has trains to London Waterloo, London Paddington, Bath, Bristol and the South West. Frome train service compliments the First Bus D2 as this bus route services different parts of Frome and the villages.

What progress is being made on making sure there is coach, bus and train connections to take the students home from Bath and Bristol and Weston-Super-Mare from Bristol University, Western College, University of the West of England, Bath University and Bath Spa University for the Christmas period.

Addendum – additional points from David Redgewell and Gordon Richardson Bristol Disabilities and Equalities forum

On WECA mayoral transport authority and North Somerset council.

We are very concerned to make sure the Department for Transport is working with National Express Coaches and megabus and the Facon coach service to provide adequate Coaches services for Christmas and New Year 2020

From Weston super mare coach terminal ,Bristol bus and coach station Bath spa bus and coach station and uwe bus and coach station.

Firstly to get university and college students home from Weston super mare college and university college, Bath spa university, Bath university, Bristol university and Uwe university Bristol.

We need to be sure that coach service provision is in Sir Peters Hendy plan for the Department for transport.

On Railway services we wish to ensure that the Department for transport is commissioning adequate Train service and capacity from The south west of England Through Taunton, Weston super mare, Weston, Worle, Parkway, Yatton for Clevedon, Bristol Temple Meads, Keynsham, Oldfield Park, Bath Spa to Chippenham and Swindon to London Paddington and London Waterloo.

From Bristol Parkway and Swindon to London Paddington.

From Taunton, Weston super Mare, Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol parkway to Birmingham New Street and the North east via Leeds, York and Newcastle upon Tyne to Scotland.

North west to Manchester.

Bristol Parkway and Bristol Temple Meads, Weston super Mare, Taunton to Exeter St David, Newton Abbot, Plymouth North Road to Penzance.

Bristol Temple Meads, Keynsham, Oldfield Park Bath spa and Freshford, Avoncliffe, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Westbury to Southampton and Portsmouth harbour for Brighton and the Isle of Wight. And Channel islands.

Westbury also to Dorchester west, Dorchester south for Bournemouth and Poole Weymouth.

Bristol Temple meads and Bristol parkway to Newport, Cardiff, central Swansea and west Wales and ferries to Ireland.

The need for additional carriage and trains over the Christmas and New year period

On covid 19 Weston super mare clevedon, portishead, Bristol Kingswood , yate and Thornbury.

We are concerned that North Somerset council, City and County of Bristol and south Gloucestershire Clinical are in tier 1 commission group Heath authority and Bath and North East Somerset in tier 2 .

What action is being taken to prevent people cross into Bath and North east Somerset against government guidance and regulations. to Whitchurch, Pensford , Keynsham, Saltford, Kelson and Bath .

What key notices are being put up at Bristol Bus and coach station.

Bath spa bus and coach station, uwe bus station, Cribbs causeway bus station.

Keynsham town centre, Kingswood town centre, Thornbury town centre, Yate bus station ,Weston super Mare, Clevedon, Portishead, Backwell and Nailsea. Main bus interchanges on key Railway station at Bristol Temple meads, Bristol parkway, Bath spa, Weston super mare. And local rail station and the Severn beach line advising people not to travel unless it's an essential journey for work, education, health visit or shopping.

What work is happening with the British transport police, Avon and Somerset police and Bristol port police and the covid 19 marshals in Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Banes and North Somerset on enforcement and advice.

The number of covid cases are dropping

But we must take action to prevent covid 19 cases by people travelling to Whitchurch, Pensford, Keynsham, Paulton, Midsomer Norton. Radstock, Peasedown St John, Saltford, Kelston, Chew Valley and Bath .

The Bristol Evening post and Bristol live run a guide to public houses open in Bath and North Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wotton under edge and Gloucester and Cheltenham.

In Somerset Highbridge and Burnham on Sea.

The metro mayor is right. Bristol city and Bath city region should have been the same tier.

This is going to make enforcement very difficult the Bristol Bath city region.

Metro west railway project.

While we welcome the progress with 9 months delays on the Portishead line

reopening and The Development Consent order public inquiry

This will allow the Severn Beach to Clifton down Bristol Temple meads and station to Bath spa and Westbury line to move forward.

We would like to see a start date for Portway parkway at Shirehampton with Bus interchange and park and ride.

The progress on the passengers lifts at Patchway station and new car park.

I am very concerned about the lack of progress on the Henbury line .

Ashley Down ,Filton North and Henbury station for Cribbs causeway bus station and shopping centre.

The recent Government infrastructure plan does not mention the Gloucester line and no station development is being funded at Charfield for Wootton under edge by central government and of course Stonehouse Bristol road is only at concept stage.

We welcome the study of St Anne's park station and the track capacity on the Bristol Temple meads station to Bath spa Westbury line .

But we note the Government projects approved in south west England in the Railway reopening programme including the Exeter central, Exeter St David to Okehampton station. Opening May 2021.

Progress on Wellington and Cullompton stations on the Devon metro.

Devizes parkway station, Somerton and Langport parkway

The Falmouth and Newquay line improvements.

The Wareham to Swanage railway through service to south western railway.

We are very concerned about the lack of a Railway executive similar to Greater Manchester combined authority and West Midlands combined authority.

We note the south west transport board is speaking to ministers and the secretary of state for Transport Grant Shapps with one voice .

We have got to sort out one clear voice with North Somerset council joining WECA mayoral combined authority.

And a clear voice from the western gateway transport board.

The main priority is developing the A350 from Poole Harbour to Chippenham m4 with the Melksham proposed bypass.

We hope that further progress can also be from the Government National infrastructure Plan on going modernisation of the city region Buses with bids for new vehicles and for WECA combined authority to set up a equalities panel to look at planning and transport. On the regional plan we will need to move on social inclusion and policy on regeneration of Areas like Southmead, Knowle west Lockleaze and Cheswick ,Lawrence Weston, Hartcliffe and Withywood, Patchway, Filton Kingswood ,Cadbury Heath ,Twerton and Morelands in Bath and Bournville in Weston super Mare and affordable and rented housing for disabled people. We also note the need for more rural policy on affordable housing, shops, Employment land and farming, village schools and public transport.

STATEMENT 2 – Lucy Travis

We would like to support North Somerset council joining the West of England Mayor combined authority.

We feel that by North Somerset council joining this will improve bus and coach services across city region and into Somerset.

We need to put together a strong integrated transport authority with all the staff move from North Somerset council, Banes, South Gloucestershire council and Bristol city council to WECA mayoral combined authority.

With staff to plan bus and service contract service maintenance of bus stops information shelters, bus stations and interchanges.

To maintain metro bus infrastructure and i points. provide new routes to Yate Thornbury and Clevedon via Nailsea and Backwell.

The Authority need to take responsibility for the main road bus lanes and priority measures and bus interchanges.

We also need to set up a railway executive to work with the Department for Transport and Network Rail western routes to oversee existing railway management contracts and to develop Metro west railway services from Bristol Temple meads to Ashton Gate, Pill and Portishead, to the Henbury loop.

From Bristol Temple Meads to Ashley Down, Horfield, Filton North and Henbury for Cribbs Causeway.

The improvements on the Bristol Temple Meads to Gloucester and Cheltenham line with new stations at Charfield and Stonehouse Bristol road.

Bristol Temple Meads to Bath spa, Westbury, Frome and Warminster.

With new stations at St Anne's park and Saltford.

As a passenger transport campaign, we welcome the plans by WECA mayoral transport authority and Bristol City Council, Network Rail western routes and First group to provide bus rail interchange facilities for bus connection in the city region and Somerset towns of Keynsham 178 349 39 to Paulton, Midsomer Norton and Radstock 178. 376 to Wells bus station, change for Cheddar 126 and 174 to Shepton Mallet, Glastonbury and Street for Taunton 29 77 Yeovil bus station.

With North Somerset council, money needs to be spent on a metro bus route to Bristol Airport or light rail system.

Improve bus services or a fixed link between Yatton station and Clevedon.

Improvements in the bus service 126 Between Weston super Mare and Wells bus station via Locking, Banwell and Winscombe.

New bus rail interchange at Weston super Mare railway station and the bus station.

Park and ride site at Weston super Mare.

And a light rail system in the Bristol Bath city region.

By having an effective city region for Bristol and Bath city region and with North Somerset joining the Authority, we hope the government will invest more money in the region.

We would like to see regional bodies like The Northern powerhouse and Transport for the North and the Midland Engine.

In the future we would like to see Gloucestershire county council, Wiltshire county council, Swindon and Somerset county council or the new unitary councils all join a merged western gateway partnership and WECA mayoral combined authority. With one region transport board for the south west transport Authority.

With the Government supporting devolution and the Labour and Liberal Democrats and Green parties all look to see powers and service transferred from London we need a strong planning and transport authority for the city region and a metro mayor to fight for this part of the south west.

Please submit our statement to WECA scrutiny commission 2nd December 2020 and the committee meeting on the 4th of December.

We need to get the parliament order for North Somerset council to join the west of England combined authority.

And for the secretary of state to carry out community consultation in the west of England combined authority area at the same time he carries out public consultation in the Somerset region about local government reorganisation involving Banes, North Somerset and Mendip district council.

We would ask Bristol city council and the city mayor to support North Somerset council joining WECA mayoral combined authority.

One of the urgent cross boundary issues is the provision of a better service with Somerset county council and First group on D2 Bath spa bus and coach station to Frome Sainsbury's and extra buses to ride especially for school and college students in the afternoon and more links to Bath spa bus and coach station.

And a better service hourly on bus routes 37 from Bath spa bus and coach station to Weston RuH back entrance , Kelston ,Bitton, Longwell Green, Hanham, St George, Lawrence Hill station and Bristol bus and coach station, Mondays to Saturdays.

Thank you

Lucy Travis for Somerset catch the bus campaign.

STATEMENT 3

Statement from Kim Hicks on behalf of the SOUTH BRISTOL WRONG ROAD GROUP

I am really concerned that WECA is excluding non-digital residents from the current 'planning for the future' survey. i.e. non-digital folk who are not online, do not use the internet or have a smart phone etc.

The survey ends on 14th December during a time when the vast majority of the people who live in the WECA region are in Tier 3 (very high alert level). <https://consultation.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/infrastructure/the-spatial-development-strategy/consultation/subpage.2020-10-16.9459552114/>

The survey is gathering views/opinions that will shape the Spatial Development Strategy which will impact on all of us where we live, work and play. The SDS will impact on us all **for 10's of years to come**.

By ending the survey on 14th December, WECA are excluding SO many people, particularly those who are not 'digital' and 'online'. Even those who are digital on a basic level, have not had the opportunity ask questions in 'real life' public meetings etc. If they need help and support to complete the survey, even in hard copy form, others cannot currently help them under the current Tier restrictions. This does not seem morally right when the feedback asked for will feed into plans that will impact on us ALL of us for many years ahead. The SDS will lead the way to planning many things that can't be undone. It is SO important to get the SDS right.

It is appreciated that WECA are now offering to send hard copies in the post. BUT you have to be online in the first place to be aware of survey taking place! I am not aware of WECA contacting anyone, non-digitally, to make them aware of the survey in the first place. And I am a person who has been actively looking out for it!

We are assured that there is light at the end of the tunnel and that things will be in a much better place in the coming weeks and months. A short delay now will ensure that the plans are right for us all for ALL of our futures.

I urge the Overview & Scrutiny Committee ensure that the WECA survey will you reach all residents and not just those who have online access. Please ensure that WECA explores the option to delay the closing date of the survey to tie in with a time when they can confidently be sure that they have allowed the majority of 'non digital' residents to actively and constructively be included.

Thank you for your time reading this.

STATEMENT 4

TfGB ITA Statement

We ask you again to set up an Integrated Transport Authority for the West of England. An ITA is a way to promote business efficiency, social justice and opportunity, as well as environmental stewardship.

- It is vital that public transport is organised regionally and by an ITA, This would have to include North Somerset. Travel patterns in our region cross city borders, many existing bus services serve more than one authority, and a local rail network should be organised on a regional scale. This lack of co-ordinated planning is also one of the reasons why our networks are so poor.
- Three examples out of many: an Ashton Gate station is far less likely without a full WECA with an ITA. Unless you have a credible organization, funding for the rail spur to Henbury and North Filton is at risk. These are but 2 of countless examples, with lots of small simple improvements possibly lost.
- One tiny example: why hasn't the now redundant bus stop on Southmead Avenue been moved 10 yards to allow the 76 bus (re-routed via the Hospital Bus Hub) to use it again? An ITA would sort that.

* The Local Transport Act (2008) offers an opportunity through an ITA to effect control, organise and promote local passenger transport, including bus and rail, where this city region is renowned nationally for failing to provide what is required to reduce reliance on the car and reduce carbon emissions from road transport. The latter point is important for both Bath and Bristol as they implement Clean Air Zones to reduce pollution and carbon levels.

* We recognise that the LTA (2008) makes no provision to fund the establishment of an ITA . However, with the application of some imaginative thinking, some costs of setting up an ITA can be found through the transfer of transport staff from existing councils. This also allows for perspectives from each of the councils that WECA encompasses to be represented in the decision-making process. Further, approaches could be made to local MPs, most of whom support an ITA, for ongoing funding from central government. Elsewhere the PTE's and ITA's have a proven track record of their funding applications being well received by central government. Administrative overheads in those budgets might be used to help fund the ITA organization.

- Any investment would be money well spent and could lead to much needed public transport and long term well thought active travel improvements, which would make this region attractive to commercial investment, particularly as we emerge from Covid based recession.

* The bus operators, the transport campaign groups, the environment campaigners, and some local MPs recognise the necessity of an ITA. This opportunity has been dismissed before due to the old adage 'but we are doing alright', which in itself is not true. Transport services in the West of England have barely improved in efficiency, lowering carbon emissions, etc. since TfGB last presented this idea. It remains easy to envision the continued demise of public transport and the consequential increase in traffic congestion where road building is now proved as no solution.

We still have a transport system widely described as “rubbish”, as an absurdity, an insult to the passengers and not fit for purpose. Our Combined Authority still focuses on transport solutions that prioritise road building and car ownership, rather than public transit solutions which have already shown to improve transport systems in Manchester, West Midlands, and elsewhere.

This is borne out by the evidence in our region

- a) It has the slowest-moving urban traffic;
- b) This congestion increases the running costs of buses which is the main cause of high fares, a vicious circle thwarting modal shift.
- c) People have worse access to buses than in any other urban part of Great Britain. (Though this has improved recently from a very low base);
- d) Much of the rail infrastructure is life expired and underused;
- e) Greater use of cars is made in the region than elsewhere.

We expect better, on the issue of public transport which is the key to a sustainable and healthy economic future in the region.

If you to preside over these dysfunctional arrangements without reaching for the organisational solutions available for the whole of the West of England, the transport and environment problems seen today will continue and will likely force you or your successors to implement an ITA or its future equivalent in the end. That is, if you wish to maintain the environmental, economic and social well-being of the region and its citizens. We ask you once again to have the vision to start that process now and use the post Covid situation to truly Build Back Better for the West of England’s people, environment and economy.

Please take a look at the ITA Note submitted.

Martin Garrett

on behalf of - Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance

Integrated Transport Authority/Passenger Transport Executives. Explanatory Notes

Many ITA's started out as PTE's , Passenger Transport Executives, in the late 1960's before widening their powers to become Integrated Transport Authorities which might cover more than passenger services.

Generally this long history has promoted a level of co-ordination and co-operation between local authorities and transport providers which means that there is a capacity and tradition of organization and co-operation that has weathered various changes in the political climate including the impact of deregulation. Their transport culture and their approach can be very different to that found in the West of England and they achieve significant results.

It has been suggested that the West of England, especially Bristol, has recently witnessed unusual growth in public transport use (pre-Covid) achieved without an ITA but this is because it had to come from a very low base. This was largely precipitated by the introduction in the 2000's of a fragmentary network of bus lanes in Bristol (GBBN) combined with a special focus by First Bus Group to promote its ailing bus services. It was also the result of demographic changes especially the growth of the student market. It unlocked a potential untapped source of demand. Comparable evidence comes from the growth in the local rail sector, engendered by early efforts by local lobbyists to defend and promote rail services, as well as a national resurgence of rail travel. This catching up is not likely to be repeated without serious interventions. Recent local development has been lacklustre and there is no equivalence to the pro-public transport culture and progress found in ITA's.

Some cities have achieved a progressive attitude to public transport without an ITA, notably Nottingham, but its history since at least the 1960's of positive action on environment and transport has developed the first class services we see today. Again the reasons are not straightforward. Though about 65% of its superb buses are still operated by an arm's length (largely) municipal undertaking, Nottingham City Transport, a further 30% approx. of services are private, notably Trent Barton, who are also award winning. Others include Community Transport. However Nottingham City Council have managed to weave a web of co-operation and co-ordination across providers and neighbouring local authorities without a formal ITA. Nottingham is a Unitary surrounded by suburbs which are in District Councils as part of Nottingham County Council. The fact that its major suburbs are in different local authorities is similar to Bristol. Nottingham's excellent buses and fast developing tram network reach out to those districts. They all share a culture of co-operation for progressive public transport, and for ancillary developments such as local transport hubs going back many decades. One result is that Nottingham City Council has not been required to produce a Clean Air Plan.

The West of England does not share the history or transport culture found in places like Greater Manchester, and West Midlands, or even Nottingham. Unfortunately Bristol does not have Nottingham's 60 year history of single minded modern transport development. To have a hope of catching up we require the mechanism of an ITA, the legal structure for organising transport across a region like ours. An ITA requires a dedicated team of specialist transport professionals of various disciplines combined under a single management. Here are some answers to help us to achieve this.

1. When were ITA's created?

First created by the 1968 Transport Act to coordinate transport services in the UK's largest urban areas (West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Tyneside and Glasgow). The 1974 local government act reorganised the boundaries of these ITA's to match the newly created metropolitan counties. Additionally, South and West Yorkshire ITA's were created. The Local Transport Act 2008 granted ITA's capacity to take power over roads, rails and local highways. This also allowed for the creation of new ITA's, given it will improve efficiency and effectiveness in transport.

2. How are ITA's funded?

Funded by council tax and national grants. PTE's are governed by councilors representing the areas served by the ITA. These councilors are responsible for funding and making policies for ITA's/PTE's.

3. What does an ITA do?

- contribute to the planning of local rail services (in partnership with the Department for Transport);
- plan and fund (via subsidies) socially necessary bus routes;
- work in partnership with private operators to improve bus services - for example through bus priority schemes;
- run concessionary travel schemes - including those for older, disabled and young people;
- invest in local public transport networks - including new rail and bus stations;
- develop and promote new public transport schemes - like light rail and guided bus networks;
- provide impartial and comprehensive public transport information services - including by phone and internet;
- manage and maintain bus interchanges, bus stops and shelters.

4. Are they responsible for running the public transport/highway services?

They might also run the public transport services, but in most cases this is done by a private company. Similarly, they are not always highway authorities, with this responsibility often given to district councils.

5. How are ITA's organized?

Each ITA is made up of representatives from the local councils in the areas they serve. Each ITA has Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) made up of officers under a Chief Executive to undertake the actual work.

6. Where are there currently ITA's?

Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire

7. What if any is the formal legal relationship between an ITA and a Combined Authority. Do they exist separately? Can they be together in the same legal entity?

In West Yorkshire and the West Midlands, the ITA has been absorbed into the Combined Authority. Making the authority itself the executive. Other ITA's exist separately from the Combined Authority.

8. What are the potential benefits of creating an ITA?

- Provide robust governance for planning, delivery and management of transport in the area.
- Transport for London style 'Overground' with ITA setting rail fares, timetables and quality standards.
- One brand for both rail and bus services with integrated ticketing, smartcards and London style 'Oyster' cards.
- Take over strategic roads as well as rail.
- Extend ITA into neighbouring authorities to cover full travel to work areas at District or County level. Note this would mean the whole area of a county or district or unitary.
- Powers over traffic management measures and maintenance.
- Franchised bus network through Quality Contracts – specify and regulate bus services across the whole of the West of England.
- Set bus fares and frequencies through Quality Partnerships.

9. What are the potential disbenefits?

- Costs of setting up, operation and funding.
- Additional tier of administration.
- Loss of some local authority highway powers.
- Weaker geographical and transport links if ITA covers too great an area.

Important resources:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/26/notes/division/8/5> 2008 Local Transport Bill

http://www.westofengland.org/media/67030/meetings_pteg_29-02-08_itapaper.pdf WECA Paper on ITA's

<https://www.urbantransportgroup.org/about-us/who-does-what-transport>

STATEMENT 5 – Cllr Clive Stevens

Statement to WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2 December – Green Councillor Clive Stevens

I support a better financial settlement, better governance, and more determined action to tackle the pressing issues that our Combined Authority is best placed to solve. And specifically affordable housing and sustainable transport.

WECA is the only game in town to solve the crisis in affordable housing and sustainable transport. But WECA lacks many democratic checks and balances. When do we have a Full Council of WECA (the LA councillors) holding the Metro Mayor to task? What about call-in of decisions? There is so much more.

I think the best way to start this is via Overview and Scrutiny – your committee. I have rarely seen leaders themselves drive openness, scrutiny and accountability. Understandably so, as that puts them under more pressure. As WECA's oversight and scrutiny body, I believe you are uniquely placed to do this.

So may I suggest you use some of the possible delay before North Somerset joins to actively work on improving the governance of our Combined Authority. That should include injecting more democratic accountability and processes into the way WECA works.

Perhaps, as a Scrutiny Body, you might suggest something like the following:

- 1) Suggest to WECA that officers commission a study of the democratic accountability of other combined authorities around the country.
- 2) That then goes out to consultation WECA wide and you consider holding a review or panel, or citizens' assembly or commission to receive input and make specific recommendations to the WECA leadership.

Thanks, stay well and have a good break, you have deserved it.

Cllr Clive Stevens, Clifton Down ward, Bristol

Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FoSBR)

Statement to WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 2nd December 2020 at 10.30 am via Zoom



1. Strategic Rail Investment Programme and Covid-19

FoSBR welcomes the 10 year delivery plan for Strategic Rail Investment that will be considered by the Joint Committee on 4th December. Obviously public finances in the future will be challenged by the large national debt being built up as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but FoSBR considers it essential that public transport, including rail, is improved and that investment in infrastructure is essential for the future. Thus we commend the statement in the SRI report that 'The infrastructure works referenced within this report will contribute positively to the post-Covid-19 economic recovery'.

2. MetroWest Phase 1a - Severn Beach and Westbury lines

We are pleased to see continuing support for this service enhancement and that money from the Investment Fund is to be released for infrastructure improvements to accomplish this. FoSBR has called for a half hourly service on the Severn Beach (and other) lines for many years and at last there is a firm date for this to be delivered - by the end of 2021.

3. New Stations

We welcome mention of new (re-opened) stations such as Charfield, St Anne's Park, Saltford and Ashton Gate. However we are concerned that there is no reference at all to stations Constable Road, Thornbury or Coalpit Heath.

4. MetroWest Phase 2

The Henbury Spur line forms part of MetroWest Phase 2. Although mentioned in the SRI, FoSBR would welcome some clarity on when this might be delivered - particularly as we suggest it needs to be in place before substantial housing development has taken place at Filton airfield.

5. Ashley Down station

The 10 Year Rail Plan suggests that the proposed Ashley Down station could be delivered early, before the Henbury Line MetroWest Phase 2 works, and could be served by existing services on the Filton Bank route. The Henbury line is initially proposed to be an hourly service whereas the Temple Meads to Filton Abbey Wood

and onwards has a half hourly service. This raises the possibility of a half hour frequency at Ashley Down station from the time that it opens.

6. Henbury Loop

There is mention in the Rail Plan for a 'double junction at Holesmouth' and the 'remodelling of Holesmouth Junction'. This suggests that there are plans for opening up the route beyond Henbury station - which could form the basis for the Henbury Loop. However further works, to allow vehicle access to the docks, would still be needed for a Henbury Loop service to be created. FoSBR once again urges WECA to consider how this could be accomplished, including further negotiations with the Port Company.

7. Westerleigh Junction

We are pleased that there is reference to enhancement of Westerleigh Junction, to be developed by 2030 and delivered by 2045. The junction, as presently configured, restricts the number of trains that can travel on the Gloucester to Bristol line and impacts MetroWest Phase 2 which intends to increase the frequency of the Yate service. FoSBR also has a long term ambition for re-opening the Thornbury branch line, trains for which also pass through Westerleigh Junction and Yate. Use of the singled Westerleigh oil depot line should be considered.

Tony Lloyd, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FoSBR) www.fosbr.org.uk

WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 DECEMBER 2020

PUBLIC QUESTIONS & REPLIES

The following questions were submitted by the deadline:

Questions from: Tony Lloyd (Friends of Bristol Suburban Railways)

Subject: Rail projects

Question 1:

The coronavirus pandemic has led to a delay in the Development Consent Order (DCO) examination for the re-opening of the Ashton Gate to Portishead rail link. We are led to believe this delay is anything from 4-10 months. Do you have any further update on this delay and its effect on project completion date - and, crucially, is there any cost implication for this rail project?

REPLY:

As noted, the start of the DCO examination was delayed due to the impact of Covid-19 and the DCO decision is now anticipated late 2021. WECA and North Somerset Council are working with our partners at Network Rail and the Department for Transport to mitigate the effect of this delay on the project.

Question 2:

Network Rail Chief Andy Haines has announced that the much criticised GRIP (Government for Rail Investment Projects) protocol for assessment of rail projects is to be replaced. We have been told that its replacement will be called PACE (Project Acceleration in a Controlled Environment) which will be rolled out from the beginning of 2021 – although many existing projects will still continue under the GRIP process. Are any of the MetroWest phases likely to be impacted by this – and is there any indication that it will lead to a better and more efficient roll out of other potential rail improvements, such as the opening of Charfield station?

REPLY:

For over ten years, Network Rail has used the GRIP project lifecycle framework to govern its capital delivery projects. GRIP was structured in order to manage Network Rail's corporate risk, but its traditional eight stage linear nature has played a part in causing some projects to take longer and cost more than they might otherwise have done. Network Rail are replacing GRIP with a new project lifecycle framework called PACE "Project Acceleration in a Controlled Environment". PACE is designed to be part of Network Rail's overall approach to delivering projects potentially more quickly, at lower cost and at higher quality. PACE is about creating a more tailorable framework to meet the varied needs of the portfolio with a reduction in non-value add governance activity combined with more effective but less restrictive assurance regimes.

WECA will continue to work with Network Rail to confirm the most appropriate governance and assurance frameworks for its projects.

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