

# Public Document Pack

West of England Joint Committee 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Statement and questions

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Statement from David Redgewell – 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022

We note with deep concern plans by Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council to remove the West of England Mayor Dan Norris and the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority from the West of England Joint Committee.

This decision is going in a totally different direction to Central Government and Department for levelling Up and Communities. Michael Gove the Secretary of State in his white paper on regional devolution wanted to see the Local Enterprise Partnership become part of the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority.

Setting up a joint committee without the Mayoral Combined Authority is not in line with Government white paper. The 4 unitary authorities in the West of England should by now be carrying out a governance review to allow North Somerset Council to join the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority.

by the first past the post level 3 Authority Mayoral Elections in 2025. This will require orders in both houses of Parliament.

The Transport user groups and trade unions understand the value of the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority and North Somerset Council becoming a full member subject to a regional devolution deal.

An Integrated transport Authority can plan bus and coach services through advanced quality partnerships or franchising maintenance of bus infrastructure and transport interchanges, can plan the strategic route network, set up a railway executive to manage and build the local railway network, plan and build new stations, integrate public transport services, ie buses, coaches, trains, ferries and mass transit light rail systems.

#### Joint transport plans

All the public transport staff, key transport staff from the 4 unitary authorities should transfer to West of England Mayoral Combined Authority including North Somerset Council. The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority is also the regional planning body and to plan the Bristol Bath City Region it needs to have North Somerset Council to be part of the Combined Authority within the city region.

In the last few months, Mayor Dan Norris and the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority are working in partnership with North Somerset Council

It has been awarded £ 540 million pounds in City Region Transport Plan funding. Just last week, North Somerset Council and the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority were awarded a bus service improvements funding of £105.5 million pounds the biggest bus service improvements plan in South West England and second biggest award in the country. This is money for mobility hubs but the pilot list of sites at Portway Park and Ride site, Ridingleaze

Cheswick, UWE bus and coach station, Southmead hospital bus station, Kingswood town centre, Mangotsfield centre, Lockleaze Gainsborough Square,

Filton Abbey Wood retail park and station is unaffordable at this stage.

Metro West railway project is projected with support from the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority and North Somerset Council and we are awaiting a development consent order for the Bristol Temple meads to Pill and Portishead line from the Secretary of State for Transport.

We ask the unity authorities and the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority to work together with Metro Mayor Dan Norris and not spend time trying to reset the Regional Joint Committee without the Mayoral Combined Authority and The elected mayor. Michael Gove issued a letter about the future of the Local Enterprise Partnership becoming a committee of Mayoral Combined Authorities and to reset the boundaries in line with the Combined Authority with North Somerset Council joining.

With regards to the Western Gateway Partnership, this is an important regional body operating jointly with local government in South Wales but the report fails to mention the Western Gateway Sub Region Transport Board working with the Department for Transport and the South West Peninsula Transport body.

As the Joint Committee report and Michael Gove letter had no scrutiny or public consultation with stakeholders, we would ask for full scrutiny and stakeholder consultation to take place over the future of the Joint Committee.

We need strong regional bodies to work with the Metro Mayor Dan Norris.

such as the Joint Committee and Western Gateway partnership and Transport Board to work together on major investment projects like Bristol Temple Meads station and Temple Quay, a mass transit/light rail system, Metro Bus network and Metro West railway network.

We must have a strong unified regional voice.

We therefore ask you to rethink the current Joint Committee proposals and we note that this report was produced by Bristol City Council and not the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority chief executive. We must work in-line with the Department for Transport and Department for levelling Up and Communities for the people of the Greater Bristol, Bath City Region and North Somerset.

David Redgewell South West Transport Network and Railfuture - Severnside

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## WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT COMMITTEE

8<sup>th</sup> April 2022

### PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following questions were submitted by the deadline:

#### **Q1 – David Redgewell Southwest transport Network and Rail future Severnside**

**In view of level of noncommercial bus service now operating in the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.**

**with 60 plus service reductions and 5 service withdrawals from 24th April 2022 including socially necessary services like the Y2 Bristol bus and coach station Eastville park, Fishponds, Downend, Bromley Heath, winterbourne, and Coalpit heath to Yate park and ride, Railway station, Yate bus station and chipping sodbury. T2 Bristol bus and coach station, Montpellier railway station approach Gloucester Road ,Bishopton, Horfield, Filton, Patchway, cribbs causeway bus and coach station Aztec west, Almondbury, Hortham, Rudgeyay, Alverston, and Thornbury. Y 3 Bristol bus and coach station to Stapleton Road, Eastville park, Stapleton, winterbourne, Frampton cotterell, Coalpit heath and yate Park and ride. no longer serving the Railway station, and Yate Town centre bus station and a 90 minute frequencies. These services had financial support from South Gloucestershire council before being transferred to the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority service x2 only operating Bristol bus and coach station to long Ashton, Backwell and Yatton and no longer serving Worle and Weston super mare.**

**Weston super mare to the chew valley service what action is the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council doing to review the Noncommercial bus Network from August 2020.**

**This would be in line with 1985 Transport act and the Transport act of 2000 to produce a bus and coach Network the support the social needs of communities to access Work, Education, shopping, Heath care and hospitals leisure and Tourism. needs within the bus service improvements plan n including mobility hubs and Transport interchanges, within the enhanced quality partnership with bus and coach operators within the city region.?**

***Bus passenger numbers have not recovered from pre-pandemic levels and currently stand at around 76%, with concessionary travel at around 58%. This has clearly had a knock-on impact on fare revenue.***

***Commercial bus companies run routes where there is a profit and they have taken the decision to withdraw some services such as the T2 and Y2 due to long-standing low passenger numbers. Alternative services are available for passengers to reach to destinations in those areas.***

***There have been driver shortages due to sickness and an overall lack of drivers in the workforce. Training more drivers and some of the latest timetable changes should help improve reliability.***

*The Government have made clear that their latest (very late in the day) support package will be the last one. The Combined Authority will continue to support bus services where possible, within financial means, but it will not be possible to save all services. The Combined Authority will work to encourage bus use.*

*Longer term the Combined Authority is working with bus operators on building a more sustainable and reliable network. This will be helped by the highly successful award of £105m funding won by the Combined Authority and North Somerset for bus improvements. Franchising remains on the table as an option.*

## **Q2 – David Redgewell Southwest transport Network and Rail future Severnside**

**In view Government white paper on leaving up in England and role of Regional mayoral combined Authorities. known as level 3 Authorities. with plans to make the local Enterprise partnerships a committee of the west of England mayoral combined Authority.**

**What progress is being made to setting up proper integrated Transport Authority with precept Powers to transfer the transport and planning staff from the unity councils to the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority to run the Planning and Transport functions of the Mayoral Authority and to set a fully integrated transport Authority.**

**For North Somerset council which is part of the local Enterprise partnership. But not part of the west of England mayoral combined Authority. To fully join the west of England mayoral combined Authority as part of a governance review in time for the 2025 metro mayor Elections.**

*The Levelling Up White Paper raises a number of issues, but the direction of travel is very clear – the Government want to ‘fold in’ Local Enterprise Partnerships into Combined Authorities. The issues arising in relation to North Somerset will be considered over the next few months. Transferring transport staff to the Combined Authority is a sensible move.*