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QUESTIONS RECEIVED FOR THE JOINT COMMITTEE
AND RESPONSES ARE ATTACHED

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Agenda Item 5

West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Joint Committee meeting on 6 October 2023

Questions received from the public with responses

JC1	Gavin Smith
JC2	Gavin Smith
JC3	Rosa Kell
JC4	Rosa Kell
JC5	David Redgewell
JC6	David Redgewell

Question 1 received from Gavin Smith

National Highways are said to be proposing to spend £200 million on repairs to the grade-separated structures of junction 2 (Eastgate) of the M32. Does either the West of England Combined Authority or Bristol City Council as Integrated or Combined Authority and Transport and Highways Authority have any influence over National Highways and its policies and plans?

Response:

Officers from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority meet regularly with representatives from National Highways and the Department for Transport. We are aware of proposals to repair structures on the M32. We have requested details of these proposals to manage our own projects and programmes and the expectations of transport users. We await these details from National Highways, which we anticipate will be forthcoming once Central Government confirm funding for the next Road Period (RP3) covering the financial years 2025-26 to 2029-30.

Question 2 received From Gavin Smith

As part of a review of Greater Bristol's road hierarchy, is the West of England Combined Authority or BCC considering the option of the de-motorwaying of the M32, the removal of its grade-separated structures, its conversion to at-grade operation, the provision of surface pedestrian crossings, the retention of its alignment as a main distributor road, but in parallel the provision of a Park & Ride service from the M4 on this route initially by bus with bus-lanes and subsequently by surface trams, with interchange hubs with orbital bus services at the sites of current junctions 1, 2 and 3?

Response:

The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority set out through the Joint Local Transport Plan, the need for improvements relating to the M32 / M4 transport corridors. We were successful in securing funding through the City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement, including delivering the M32 Sustainable Transport Corridor. We are continuing to develop proposals for this project as noted in the Transport Paper to the West of England Committee in June 2023.

Question 3 received from Rosa Kell

What discussion are taking place between the West of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council bus service improvement plan area and Somerset council bus service improvement plan

Over the bus service 126 Between Wells bus and coach station station , Easton Draycott ,Cheddar Axbridge winscombe Banwell ,locking, Hutton ,Weston super mare bus and coach station. Have discussed now taken place between Mayor Dan Norris Leader of North Somerset council Transport executive councillor Hannah young and leader of North Somerset council Councillor Mike Bell and councillor Mike Rigby Transport executive of Somerset council and officers to put this service out to Tender to start this service to weston super mare Hospital Weston super mare Hospital Railway stations bus and coach station.

Is there a date for the service to start?

Response:

Any new or revised service 126 between Weston-Super-Mare and Wells is the responsibility of Somerset County council and North Somerset Council as the route does not serve any area of the West of England Combined Authority.

Questions regarding the tender of service 126 and start date need to be asked to these local authorities.

Question 4 received from Rosa Kell

What discussion are the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council Having with Somerset council on a joint Zebra funding bid in the Rural area around the cheddar valley, Chew valley and weston super mare and Bridgwater for a Electrification or hydrogen fuel bid with First group plc South buses & Wales and West buses and big lemon buses.

Response:

The Combined Authority is currently reviewing the Zebra 2 bid requirements and are in discussion with North Somerset Council and operators regarding opportunities in the area.

Question 5 received from David Redgewell

With the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council. Having to reset the boundary of the westlink Demand responsive bus services Due to the western Traffic commissioner Kevin Rooney making sure the bus operator under UK government regulations not EU.

What are the effects on the westlink Demand responsive bus services Zones in North Somerset council area and especially in the Chew valley and Blagdon area the cheddar valley around Axbridge and cheddar

Weston Super mare ,Clevedon Portishead and Nalisea

And services to Weston super mare station Worle parkway, Yatton for clevedon Nalisea and Backwell,

Parson street Bedminster and long Ashton park and ride.

Response:

We are currently working with WESTlink providers to address some of the problems highlighted by the public. As it is a new service of its kind, teething problems were anticipated, and they continued to be address once identified.

We have recently undertaken a 3-month review and will soon be initiating a 6-month review, which has a greater scope and will further develop on the findings of the 3-month review. Such reviews, where feedback is sought from a number of stakeholders, and operating data analysed, will be used to inform ongoing improvements to the service.

As part the 3-month review, boundary extensions, were proposed and are subject to final sign-off. We anticipate that further improvements will come from the 6-month review including further zone changes to improve service availability.

Question 6 received from David Redgewell

What progress is being made of passengers lifts at weston super mare railway station to make the station fully accessible on wheelchair access at Nailsea and Backwell, Parson street and Bedminster Station and making new station at Ashton Gate pill and Portishead fully accessible

Response:

The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority has supported a Network Rail and Great Western Railways bid to government for 'Access for All CP7' funding. The funding is available between 2024-2029. Although there is no guarantee of funding at this point, project specific funding allocations from this national funding pot are expected to be announced by April 2024. The bid includes a prioritised list of stations in the Combined Authority and wider western region which have been scored against a pre-defined set of criteria. Parsons Street, Bedminster and Nailsea and Backwell stations are included.

Network Rail have confirmed that their project to introduce lifts to the existing footbridge at Western Super Mare station is at the end of the concept design stage. They are in the process of seeking listed building consent and once approved they will move into the detailed design phase. Their current programme shows them starting on site by the end of 2024 / early 2025.