

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS

7. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

3 - 10

Members of the public can speak for up to 3 minutes each. The total time for this session is 30 minutes so speaking time will be reduced if more than 10 people wish to speak.

If you wish to present a petition or make a statement and speak at the meeting, you are required to give notice of your intention by noon on the working day before the meeting by e-mail to democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk. **The deadline is 12pm on Thursday 27 September 2018.**

If you wish to ask a question at the meeting, you are required to submit the question in writing to democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk no later than 3 working days before the meeting. **The deadline is 5pm on Monday 24 September 2018.**

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Public Forum

Questions Received

1	David Kernek, Camden Media 6/7 First Bus Services in Bath & North East.
2	Dave Redgewell Bus and Rail Services
3	Andy Burkitt Metrowest
4.	Gary Hopkins, Bristol City Councillor EU Funding
5.	Cllr Dine Romero, Bath & NE Somerset Western Gateway Shadow Sub-national Transport Body benefits
6.	Cllr Claire Young Regional approach to marketing

Question 1

David Kernek, Camden Media

Dear Sir or Madam,

Further to Mr Bowles's e-mail to me of August 8, I am writing to submit a question in advance of the WECA meeting scheduled for September 28, 2018.

My question is: Having received a telephone message earlier this year from Councillor Tim Warren, who told me that a) WECA was looking at the 6/7 First Bus service in NE Bath and b) he hoped there would be a development by July, what consideration has been given, and what decision has been made, regarding the problem caused by the termination of the looped 6/7 route, following the withdrawal by Bath & NE Somerset Council of the £39,000 subsidy, as outlined in my statement to your authority at its April meeting in Bath?

I would be obliged if I could be informed as to the time and venue of your authority's September 28 meeting, as I've been unable to find those details on the WECA website.

Regards,

David Kernek

Answer:

The 6/7 bus services were commercial services supported with £39,000 'de minimis' support provided by Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Council to augment their frequency.

These services were then replaced by First with two new services, also numbered 6 and 7 but with slightly amended routes from their predecessors.

The 'de minimis' arrangement ended when the new routes were launched, and B&NES' decision (following a review of its impact) was to leave the new services as a wholly commercial operation. The decision by First to revise the route did not, therefore, follow the withdrawal of a subsidy by B&NES Council.

B&NES's review noted that, whilst the new services operate an improved combined frequency on some sections of the route, the proportion of passengers for which a direct journey is no longer possible is only around 4% of the total numbers of passengers carried. For these passengers it is still possible to make the same journey by changing bus or, if eligible, by becoming members of Bath Dial-a-Ride.

The WECA Committee in July 2018 agreed to increase the transport levy to the three councils covered by the combined authority. This funding is being used to continue to support subsidised services and to award a new contract for the evening bus service 6A to Fairfield Park and Larkhall.

Questions from Dave Redgewell (Formed part of statement)

1. Bus Related Questions

- a) WECA be making a submission to the Transport Select Committee Inquiry into buses in England, which closes on 24 September, if so will they be pressing the need for extra funding to support services that are vital for linking people to employment and services?

A: West of England officers provided a joint response to the Transport Select Committee's recent request for information on the Health of the Bus Market. It is expected that the submission will be published in due course on the Transport Committee Inquiry's website. The submission covered a range of issues including availability of funding, factors and trends affecting bus use in the West of England, links to rural and urban isolated communities and service viability.

- b) What progress is being made on developing a comprehensive and integrated Bus Strategy for the Region and how will you deal with cross boundary issues in North Somerset?

A: A Bus Strategy for the West of England is currently in development, including the area covered by North Somerset, for production from Spring 2019. An update of the Bus Strategy, including an overview document to support the forthcoming Joint Local Transport Plan 4, was considered by the WECA Committee on 27th July 2018.

- c) What progress is being made on Integrating the growing MetroBus network with the current network of local buses and local trains and the ferry service?

A: Bristol City Council is responsible for the management of the Quality Partnership Scheme for metrobus services across the three metrobus schemes. The second Metrobus service (the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads route) was launched earlier this month, and the north-south route between the North Fringe and Hengrove is planned for opening in January 2019.

Integration with background bus services has been a key part of the design of metrobus stops and interchanges. A significant number of stops and interchanges are shared with specified background bus services, and this feature will significantly expand after January 2019 (along with links to Parson Street and Bedminster stations) and ticketing is jointly managed across both services. Completion of the Temple Way junction currently under construction will include a new metrobus stop to serve Temple Meads station, and the future metrobus extension to Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood will further grow opportunities for bus-rail interchange.

- d) What financial allocation has the Mayor allocated to protecting rural bus routes which provide links for often disadvantaged communities to health services and employment opportunities?

A: Currently, the tendering, and prioritisation of funding, for supported bus services is undertaken by the councils directly. The Bus Strategy will include consideration of how best to prioritise the future provision of supported services, for reporting from Spring 2019.

- e) What is happening with the service 51 in Bristol and Service 10 in Bath both previously operated by Wessex. It appears that the 51 service has been partially replaced but there is no news on the 10 service for Bath?

A: Further to the answer to question d) above, we would advise that both these queries should be addressed directly to Bristol City Council and Bath & North East Somerset Council respectively.

2. Rail Related Questions

a) What progress is being made on extending the local regional rail services and in particular the Henbury Loop and the Portishead line? The Henbury Loop would enable services to be provided to a potential new Arena site in the Filton area.

A: Timetable work on MetroWest Phase 1 and 2 is progressing but there are no plans for Henbury loop services.

b) Has WECA submitted a formal response on the Cross Country Rail Franchise consultation which closed on 30 August and if so what were the key issues raised with the DfT?

A: A West of England response was submitted to the Cross Country rail franchise consultation. Three main priorities for the new franchise were put forward:

- 1) A new fleet of longer, more spacious trains to meet current, suppressed and future demand, to offer a comfortable, reliable alternative to the private car or air for long distance journeys and replace the unpopular and uncomfortable Voyager trains.*
- 2) Half hourly services between Bristol and Exeter as proposed in the previous Direct Award.*
- 3) Additional stop at Worle station as the gateway for Weston-super-Mare (100,000 population) and Bristol Airport.*

Question 3 - Andy Birkett, Transport for Greater Bristol

Question – MetroWest

WECA is assisting with finding the funding for the Portishead Railway with the Local Enterprise Partnership in consultation with the North Somerset Council.

Can WECA assure the public that the line will stop at stations in the Bristol City Council area from Ashton Gate and through to Bedminster and not just those stations in North Somerset?

A: MetroWest Phase 1 services to Portishead includes stops at Bedminster and Parson Street stations. There are currently no MetroWest proposals for a station at Ashton Gate.

Question 4 – Gary Hopkins, Councillor, Bristol City Council

Question –

1 there is a reference to a bid for eu funds in the meeting papers.

How confident are you that these funds will be received given that at present the government is planning to take us out of the EU?

2 the uk government has promised to replace some funding that will be lost after Brexit. Is this application covered by that promise.

Reply:

Response covering both questions

WECA is confident that a successful application for ESF funding would lead to the full funding being realised and that Brexit will not impact this position. James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, made a statement to the House of Commons on 25th July that gave the following guarantee regarding EU SIF funds:

“Furthermore, in 2016 the Government guaranteed funding for UK organisations in receipt of EU funds where projects are agreed before the day the UK leaves the EU. The Government has today announced an extension to this guarantee, which will underwrite the UK’s allocation for structural and investment fund projects under this EU Budget period to 2020 in the event of no-deal. This ensures that UK organisations, such as charities, businesses and universities, will continue to receive funding over a project’s lifetime if they successfully bid into EU-funded programmes before December 2020.”

(EU funded projects that begin in 2019 will have until 2023 to spend the funding allocated to them.)”

Question 5 – Dine Romero, Councillor, Bath & North East Somerset

Question – Western Gateway Shadow Sub-national Transport Body

“What additional benefits for the West of England area are expected from the Western Gateway Shadow Sub-national Transport Body compared to current coordination practices? Can the Mayor guarantee that this will not become yet another layer of unnecessary bureaucracy, which could potentially disadvantage our area?”

A:

The setting up of regional groupings of Local Transport Authorities (Informal or Shadow Sub-National Transport Bodies) is in response to the DfT's request to provide a regional evidence base for the prioritisation of Major Road Network Funding which will be available from 2020.

Background documents giving more information can be found at the following sources:

DfT MRN Consultation December

2017: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/670527/major-road-network-consultation.pdf

Rees Jeffreys report: <http://www.reesjeffreys.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/A-Major-Road-Network-for-England-Report-Summary-David-Quarmby-and-Phil-Carey-Rees-Jeffreys-Road-Fund-October-2016.pdf>

Question 6 – Claire Young, Councillor, Bath & North East Somerset

Question – Visitor Economy

We welcome the proposed shift towards a more regional approach to marketing the area, as outlined under Item 10. However we feel that it is unfortunate that the report fails to give any figures for the economic value of tourism to South Gloucestershire, as it does for Bristol, for Bath, and even for Bristol Airport in North Somerset. Could you please reassure us that the performance indicators you propose to use to monitor the visitor economy will include breakdowns by local authority, to ensure that South Gloucestershire is not neglected in future?

A: We are bound by the information available from third parties, this is not currently available by local authority area. In the future we will explore the feasibility of breaking the economic value data down in this way.