

West of England Combined Authority Committee

30 November 2018

Questions submitted to the meeting, and the replies are enclosed.

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WECA Committee meeting
30 November 2018

Agenda item 8 – Items from the public

Questions Received

1	Andy Burkitt Subjects: a. Bus strategy b. Air pollution - transport c. Light rail
2	David Redgewell Subjects: a. Tram / train plans b. West of England Joint Spatial Plan and transport c. Transport intergration
3	Cllr Martin Fodor (Bristol CC) Subject: Transport powers
4	Andrew Shore Subject: Public transport forum

1. QUESTIONS FROM ANDY BURKITT

1. Bus strategy

In regard to WECA's work on a unified bus strategy, can you please indicate how that will take into account the need for proper bus interchanges/transport hubs – particularly as requested in the Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance Bus Strategy and the testimony of the Campaign for Better Transport before the Transport Select Committee?

I am particularly thinking of the failure of Bristol City Council to manage a proper bus interchange at Temple Meads and the need to revisit South Gloucestershire Council's continued opposition to the idea that the 20+ buses per hour going along Filton Avenue might just conceivably stop by Filton Abbey Wood station.

REPLY:

The Transport Update report to this committee meeting (Agenda item 15) includes an update on the West of England Bus Strategy work-stream. A significant element of the Bus Strategy is a review of the extent of the current network and the formulation of options to improve it. Paragraph 17 of the report notes the following:

“An appraisal of alternative network options forms a key part of the work programme. It is anticipated that the promotion and operation of interchange has significant potential to boost passenger numbers, by opening up a wider range of potential trips, simplifying the network and passengers' awareness of it, therefore normalising the concept of transfer.”

This work is currently underway and the results will be included in the full strategy to be produced for public consultation in the new year.

2. Air pollution – transport

TfGB notes the mention of air pollution throughout the papers on transport. Can WECA please indicate:

a. How they will fit the new policies adopted this month by BCC into that plan;

REPLY:

The draft Joint Local Transport Plan goes out to public consultation in January 2019 with the final Plan expected to be endorsed in early summer 2019. Between then and now any new and emerging policies will be reviewed for inclusion in the final JLTP.

b. Whether they have noted the policies adopted by some Chinese urban areas to ensure all buses are electric and whether they have started conversations with the local bus fleets;

REPLY:

The draft Joint Local Transport Plan includes policies to encourage low emissions vehicles and electric vehicle uptake. Recent schemes include:

- **The Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) awarded £7million of funding over 5 years to promote the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs) following the West of England's Go Ultra Low West bid.**

- **Metrobus will see over 50 new low emission buses brought into service.**
- **Clean Vehicle Technology Fund provided funding to retrofit 42 Euro V classification buses to improve their environmental performance.**
- **Clean Bus Fund provided £0.5 million funding to retrofit 35 of the sub-region's most polluting bus services with selective catalytic reduction technology to improve their rating to Euro V and Euro VI standard.**
- **Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire and B&NES were successful in a £2.2m bid to government to retrofit a further 81 Euro IV and Euro V buses, to bring them to Euro VI standard.**
- **Bristol City Council in partnership with First Bus is in the process of trialing two hybrid electric buses that automatically switch to electric mode when entering an Air Quality Management Area.**

c. Whether they intend to look at organisations like FOSBR, Clean Air Alliance, and TfGB Alliance who have considerable expertise in these areas and use them to help develop the Bus Strategy?

REPLY:

We will be consulting with a range of stakeholders on the bus strategy in the new year. The Joint Local Transport Plan includes a Bus Strategy overview document which will also be subject to consultation from January 2019.

3. Light rail

As many of the TfGB members were involved in the 1980's with the Tram for Avon and include amongst its members European & UK Light Rail experts, is there any chance that their expertise could be utilised or are WECA going to reinvent the wheel for the fourth time in Bristol?

REPLY:

The Transport Update report to this Committee meeting (Agenda Item 15) includes a summary of work being undertaken to progress Mass Transit studies. Initial work has been undertaken by Bristol City Council on behalf of WECA. The original scope includes advice on stakeholder engagement and consultation, including the development of a stakeholder engagement plan.

There are a wide range of study areas being undertaken, including:

- **Metrowest update;**
- **Light Rail, Tram Train study;**
- **Bristol Area Feasibility Study;**
- **The Bristol Southwest Economic Link Study (BSWEL);**
- **Network Rail infrastructure investment discussions; and**
- **Mass Transit Phase 2.**

It is anticipated that these work streams will be aligned and managed under a more cohesive project governance approach. It is proposed to submit a report to the 1st February 2019 WECA Committee detailing the approach and seeking approval to progress the next phase of Mass Transit.

2. QUESTIONS FROM DAVID REDGEWELL

1. Tram / train

What is happening with the plans for the Tram / Train? Will it use the main line after Ashton Gate or run on the road to the City Centre and will it continue as a through service to places such as the Henbury Loop, and Yate. How will it be integrated with buses and ferries and how will it fit into access plans for the Airport?

REPLY:

Network Rail are to undertake a study into tram train options for the Portishead Line. The study is due to report in March 2019. The Transport Update report to this Committee meeting (Agenda Item 15) includes a summary of work being undertaken to progress Mass Transit studies including tram train options. One of these, the Bristol Southwest Economic Link Study (BSWEL) is looking at tram train routes to the Airport. Approval to progress to the next phase of Mass Transit will be put to the 1 February 2019 WECA Committee.

2. West of England Joint Spatial Plan and transport

In order to start further MetroBus routes it is likely that some subsidy will be required – how much money will WECA be allocating to subsidy for the routes mentioned in the report to Cliveden & Nailsea, Thornbury and Keynsham – Long Ashton?

REPLY:

Consultation is currently underway on additional evidence to support the forthcoming Examination in Public (EiP) for the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP), and this evidence is summarised in Agenda Item 14 to today's meeting of the Joint Committee. This documentation includes a Transport Topic Paper and an Emerging Findings Transport Report, both available at the following website:

www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk/consult.ti/JSPAdditionalEvidence/consultationHome

These reports give further details of the formulation of schemes to address the transport impact of the Strategic Development Locations set out in the JSP. It is envisaged that the services to support the public transport interventions will, in principle, be funded commercially (as for the current metrobus network). However, any 'pump-priming' of services will be the subject of a future decision at this stage, closer to the commencement of delivery of the developments, and including the potential for developer contributions as part of this funding.

3. Transport integration

How much work is currently being undertaken on bus rail integration and the promotion of inter available tickets across the WECA region and will this be one of the priorities for the new Integrated Transport Unit that is being created and led by Peter Mann?

REPLY:

The Transport Functions report to this Committee (Agenda Item 13) sets out the intended approach for the Combined Authority. Proposals will be developed to deliver these functions and will be presented to a future committee.

3. QUESTION FROM CLLR MARTIN FODOR (BRISTOL CC)

Transport powers

What plans are there now to use the powers and budgets of the WECA to provide a step change improvement in conditions of commuters and shoppers accessing Bristol and other centres in the region to enhance pedestrian, cycle, and bus use?

REPLY:

The Joint Local Transport Plan report (Agenda Item 13) going to the West of England Joint Committee on 30 November 2018 sets out the vision for transport to 2036 of ‘Connecting people and places for a vibrant and inclusive West of England.’ The Plan aims to provide a well-connected sustainable transport network that offers greater, realistic travel choice and makes walking, cycling and public transport the preferred way to travel. Trips into and within the West of England will be seamless, faster, cheaper, cleaner and safer.

4. QUESTION FROM ANDREW SHORE

Public transport forum

Please can you advise when the Public Transport Forums will be resurrected, or replaced with new style events, and run across all three authority areas within WECA, as the replacement for the Public Transport Forums previously run by individual Councils, such as the useful one previously facilitated by South Gloucestershire?

The last such forum hosted by South Gloucestershire was back in February 2018 – some 9 months ago – and I was promised by Mayor Bowles (in July) that the first such new event would take place in October 2018. However, October 2018 has come and gone, indeed so has November almost passed, and yet there is no news on these public transport forums or engagement events. Despite the fact that WECA has now been in place for 18 months, and I first raised this matter with Mayor Bowles back in June 2018, some 5 months ago.

Please can WECA accelerate their activity in this space and advise when these valuable public events will be operational once again?

REPLY:

The West of England Combined Authority was given new powers over transport as part of our devolution deal. We are taking those on, working with our constituent councils including South Gloucestershire.

It was not practical to take on these responsibilities when the Combined Authority was first set up as we didn't have the staff in place and we wanted to ensure continuity of service and seamless transfer of services. We are now working with our councils to take on delivery of these new powers and functions within the Combined Authority.

Once we have completed this process, we will work with our constituent councils to put together a programme of public meetings across the region to discuss transport as we will have the responsibilities and resources required. We will publish dates and locations via www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk.

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