

## Decisions of Joint Committee Governance Review on 8 April 2022

NUMBER	AGENDA ITEM	DECISIONS
1.	Joint Committee Governance Review	<p>The Joint Committee <b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Joint Committee is to be re-established with new governance arrangements that make accountability clearer, and decision making more transparent. This includes the receipt of any relevant recommendations from the Local Enterprise Partnership Business Board, and any other relevant legacy matters that involve both the West of England Combined Authority area and the area of North Somerset Council.</li> <li>2) Joint Committee will play its full role in the development of strategy for the West of England region as a whole, working with the LEP, Combined Authority and Western Gateway and other partners to advocate for the region with Government and other stakeholders.</li> <li>3) That the four Unitary Authorities (Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council) agree to dissolve the existing Joint Committee arrangements subject to new Standing Orders being agreed by the Joint Committee, subject to Unitary Authority council governance processes.</li> <li>4) To note the comments made by the Scrutiny and LEP Chairs, which will be considered as part of the report produced by Monitoring Officers setting out new standing orders which be considered at the next meeting of the Joint Committee.</li> <li>5) Monitoring Officers will produce new standing orders which be considered at the next meeting of the Joint Committee. The new standing orders will include provisions which detail arrangements for the management of Joint Committee meetings and agenda setting; election of a chair; the co-production of reports; voting arrangements; the relationship with the Combined Authority; and the role of the Combined Authority Mayor.</li> <li>6) One Front Door funding administrative arrangements should continue with regards to</li> </ol>

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		<p>relevant funds such as the Economic Development Fund and Resolving Infrastructure Fund.</p> <p>7) To ensure clearer accountability of the Joint Committee and in line with Quality Assurance Framework, approve the principle that for those funds that are the responsibility of the 4 Unitary Authorities, for example the Economic Development Fund reports, will be commissioned by the Committee and signed-off by Unitary Authority (UA) CEOs in partnership with the CEO of the LEP before publication.</p> <p>8) Note the Government White Paper "Levelling Up the United Kingdom", published on 2 February 2022, proposes changes to the current framework for the governance and funding of LEPs. To welcome the agreement of the LEP Board to establish a working group, comprising representatives from the Combined Authority, the LEP, North Somerset and a representative from the three other Unitaries to consider options and proposals regarding the future governance of the LEP to bring before the respective bodies in the early summer.</p> <p>9) Note the letter received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities regarding 'Integrating Local Enterprise Partnerships into local democratic institutions' on 31st March 2022. Note that bespoke arrangements to maintain West of England LEP will need to be developed and welcome the opportunity to be engaged in the development of a preferred option.</p> <p>10) To provide greater transparency and accountability the Joint Committee will produce an annual report which will detail its activities and set out its priorities for the year ahead. Regular updates are to be provided at Joint Committee meeting regarding the work of the Western Gateway including engagement with Government and other key stakeholders.</p> <p>11) Good governance and accountability require that the West of England Joint Committee should have a clear and distinguishable identity, distinct from the Combined Authority. The Joint Committee is to establish its own online presence whereby committee reports, and decisions can be clearly accessed by the public. This will provide public access to the Joint Committee's standing orders and terms of reference to support the public's understanding of its role and purpose.</p>

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		<p><b>NOTE:</b> Outcome of the Call In meeting held by West of England Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022:</p> <p>'The West of England Combined Authority Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee, together with Overview &amp; Scrutiny representatives from North Somerset Council <b>AGREED</b> to <b>UPHOLD</b> the Call In and asked West of England Joint Committee to reconsider the decision 'Joint Committee Governance Review'.</p> <p>The Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee made following reasons for their decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was lack of Scrutiny engagement before the decision was taken.</li> <li>• The amended recommendations were presented shortly before the start of the West of England Joint Committee meeting. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee did not have authority to contribute and respond to amended recommendations on behalf of the Committee.</li> <li>• The relevant information was not made available to the public, there was no reference to the Ministerial letter of 31st March regarding the integration of the LEP into the combined authority. and no reference was made to the need to resolve decision making and constitutional issues relating to the non-co-terminous boundary between WECA and the LEP.</li> <li>• The proposal gave no indication of the potential cost of splitting out the Joint Committee meeting separately from the Committee.</li> <li>• The West of England Combined Authority Chief Executive made a statement that the proposal would put at risk £600m of funding.</li> <li>• The Scrutiny Committee specifically indicated that priority be given to the integration of the LEP and that nothing in the recommendations should be used to justify a delay in fast track integration into the CA.</li> </ul> <p>The West of England Joint Committee were asked to consider -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee understand that the LEP has already established a</li> </ol>

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		<p>working party to propose a preferred course of integration into the Combined Authority. The Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee request a report from the Unitary Authorities outlining the actions needed and the timeline to achieve the quickest possible integration of the LEP.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Providing a timeline for responding to the issues raised and the tabling of the revised constitution and standing orders.</li> <li>3. A report of the potential revenue costs of the proposal to split out the meetings as well as including ongoing admin, communications and support and an indication of how these would be funded.</li> <li>4. To receive a detailed report from the Chief Executive explaining the threat to £600m of funding.</li> <li>5. To receive a response from the unitary authorities advising how that threat can be avoided.</li> <li>6. The proposals depend on the detail of the constitution and standing orders which would need to be drafted and presented to scrutiny before going to Joint Committee.</li> <li>7. A detailed explanation of how these proposals interact with the levelling up White Paper and the Ministers' letter of 31<sup>st</sup> March.</li> <li>8. A constitution and standing orders cannot force joint working where one or more of the parties does not want it. It is imperative that the funding body -WECA -and the recipient UAs establish a reliable and workable joint working process. All parties need to agree a basis for decision making that leaves the accountable body responsibilities clear, without putting funding in jeopardy, but which does not prevent the constituent UAs from determining spending on projects within their boundaries. Putting a lot of work into drafting a constitution without resolving this is futile. Each member of the Joint Committee needs to agree to genuine collaborative working.</li> <li>9. A request for WECA and the UAs to agree a timeline and provide this information by 31<sup>st</sup> May to enable scrutiny to review in June, before approval so that earliest possible integration of the LEP is possible.</li> </ol> <p>The Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee also <b>AGREED</b> to set up a Task &amp; Finish Group to oversee the delivery of recommendations and requests made by the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022.</p>

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		The matter will be re-considered as soon as practicable by the decision taking committee in order that the decision taking committee can consider their final decision on the matter. That final decision cannot be "called-in."