

Minutes of the West of England Combined Authority Committee , Friday, 23 September 2022

Members:

Metro Mayor Dan Norris, West of England Combined Authority
Cllr Kevin Guy, Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Toby Savage, South Gloucestershire Council
Mayor Rees, Bristol City Council (apologies given, Cllr Craig Cheney attended as substitute)

Richard Bonner, Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board (non-voting member – apologies given, Katherine Finn, Vice-Chair of the LEP Board, attended as substitute)

1	<p>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>The Metro Mayor Dan Norris welcomed everybody to the meeting which was held at MShed. The evacuation procedure was noted.</p>																											
2	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Mayor Marvin Rees (Bristol City Council). Councillor Craig Cheney attended as substitute.</p> <p>The Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board, Richard Bonner, a non-voting member of the Committee, had sent apologies. Katharine Finn, the Vice-Chair of the LEP Board attended the meeting as substitute.</p>																											
3	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCALISM ACTION 2011</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest declared.</p>																											
4	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meetings held on 1 July 2022 and 29 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>																											
5	<p>CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The were no announcements from the Chair.</p>																											
6	<p>ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS)</p> <p>Five questions from three individuals had been submitted in advance of the meeting. The questions and responses had been circulated and published prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Nine statements from Members of the Public had been received, details below. Members of the public attended the meeting and addressed the meeting for up to three minutes on the topic of their statements where indicated:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="252 1435 1469 1872"> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Dave Redgewell (read out by Jordan Curran)</td> <td>Transport Issues</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Damien Valentine</td> <td>Bus Services 178</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Brendon Taylor</td> <td>Bus Services - Disability</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Jordan Curran</td> <td>Bus Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Cllr Denise Denis (Wells City Council) (read out by Rosa Kell)</td> <td>Bus services</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Emilia Melville</td> <td>Public Transport</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>Cllr Marley Bennett, Bristol City Council</td> <td>Bus Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>Robbie Bentley</td> <td>Bus Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>Rosemary Nash</td> <td>Bus Services</td> </tr> </table> <p>The statements were published on the Authority's website. The Metro Mayor stated that he anticipated more funding from April 2023 and he acknowledged that other Combined Authorities also had some issues.</p>	1	Dave Redgewell (read out by Jordan Curran)	Transport Issues	2	Damien Valentine	Bus Services 178	3	Brendon Taylor	Bus Services - Disability	4	Jordan Curran	Bus Services	5	Cllr Denise Denis (Wells City Council) (read out by Rosa Kell)	Bus services	6	Emilia Melville	Public Transport	7	Cllr Marley Bennett, Bristol City Council	Bus Services	8	Robbie Bentley	Bus Services	9	Rosemary Nash	Bus Services
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COMMENTS FROM CHAIR OF LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The following statement was made by Katharine Finn, Vice-Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership Board.

Introduction:

§ I would like to begin by emphasising the LEP Board's commitment to working with the new administration in government and to continue to build on our relationships with government and our local MPs.

§ Especially as the region continues to recover from the significant impact of Covid and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we remain in a state of uncertainty as our residents, businesses and public services are affected by the rising cost of living.

Investment Fund

§ I note the inflationary impact on the Investment Fund and welcome recommendations that will minimise this impact and enable the funding of ambitious activities [within approved budgets] and ensure key outputs are delivered on time.

§ I am pleased to see the investment in infrastructure to enable the delivery of the Hengrove Park development which will significantly transform that part of South Bristol and provide much needed homes.

§ It is important that we ensure we have an active pipeline of projects to take advantage of funding opportunities as they arise, and we are well placed to bid into national programmes as well as utilising our own funding.

Investment Fund Delivery Assurance

§ I welcome the measures being put in place to improve project delivery and help ensure we avoid delay and can provide the benefits of these projects earlier.

§ I welcome the review of the Quantum Technologies Innovation Centre (QTIC) project. QTIC, at the heart of the new Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus, has the potential to be a nationally and internationally recognised asset for the region and will cement our reputation as the home for innovation. I am particularly pleased to see the emphasis on the development of a skill strategy – this will mean that people from across the whole West of England region can access pathways into the high-quality jobs created by QTIC. The new measures recommended by the review will help get this project back on track and ensure that it's potential can be fully unlocked.

Infrastructure Directorate Transport Update

§ The business community supports the scale and ambition shown through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement [CRSTS] and Transforming Cities Fund [TFC] and for continuously reviewing its key activities and work programmes to reflect changing priorities and cost increases.

§ These schemes will help growth and productivity - connecting our residents to employment and training opportunities in an efficient and affordable way.

Green Recovery Fund Update / Update on progress towards Climate & Ecological Strategy

§ I note the vast progress made and the scale of challenge the region faces to meet the 2030 target.

§ I am pleased to see the first open call for the Green Recovery Fund was a success and that a number of applications were received.

§ The business board fully supports the environment team as it expands its programme of activities. Unfortunately, last week's LEP Board was postponed when we were due to discuss in more detail, however the LEP would welcome exploring ways in which we may be able to support delivery, assist in catalysing the private sector to take action and help empower our residents.

Combined Authority Internal Approvals

§ The LEP is always supportive of processes that improve the efficiency whether it be for internal or external projects.

8 COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee attending the meeting and outlined the comments made by that Committee. The comments had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

9 MOTIONS

There were no motions submitted in advance of this meeting.

10 INVESTMENT FUND PROGRAMME

The Committee received an update on the overall Investment Fund programme and headroom and set out new investment in a variety of schemes.

The following additional amendment was proposed by Councillor Savage:

"Following the approval of the Outline Business Case for the Arena Infrastructure Package (known previously as the North Fringe Infrastructure Package) at the July WECA Committee, it is recommended that an allocation of £6.637m be made from Investment Fund, subject to Full Business Case submission by March 2023".

Councillor Savage stated that he felt agreement had been reached at the July 2022 meeting to issue planning consent to allow for the Brabazon Arena conversion and a decision was needed in order to get certainty going forward. The amendment did not award funding but was asking for the same consistency as the other projects set out. The Interim Director of Investment and Corporate Services stated that from a technical perspective it was in line with other recommendations but felt that due to the lateness of the submission more time to consider the issues would be welcomed so that a proper discussion on the proposals could take place.

Following a short adjournment it was agreed that additional time was needed to consider this amendment and it was thus suggested that the matter be discussed further at the Extraordinary meeting scheduled for 14 October 2022.

The recommendations were moved by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and seconded by Councillor Kevin Guy.

Councillor Guy stated that footfall in Bath was now higher than pre-pandemic levels and especially welcomed the Milsom Quarter project and the Fashion Museum project. Bath would now hopefully have a world-class museum to attract further visitors.

Councillor Cheney welcomed the funding for the Albert Dock and Harbour.

[Voting arrangements: Decision required majority agreement of Committee Members in attendance, or their substitutes (one vote representing each Authority) and including the West of England Combined Authority Mayor]

The recommendations were unanimously agreed.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To approve the Full Business Case for the Hengrove Park Enabling Infrastructure project and the award of £19.83m for the period to 24/25.
- (2) To approve the Strategic Outline Business Case for the Milsom Quarter project and the award of £2.475m for the period to 24/25.
- (3) To approve the Outline Business Case for the Albion Dock project and the allocation of up to £5m within the programme, subject to Full Business Case submission by March 2024, value for money and evidential certainty on growth in visitor numbers, and the scheme being fully funded.
- (4) To approve the Feasibility and Development Funding Application for Western Harbour Feasibility and the award of £279k to produce a Strategic Outline Business Case by November 2022.
- (5) To approve the Feasibility and Development Funding Application for the Bristol Harbour Place Shaping Strategy and the award of £283k to produce the Strategy by summer 2023
- (6) Amend the approved capital programme for individual project approvals agreed at the July Committee and within this report.

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INVESTMENT FUND DELIVERY ASSURANCE

The Metro Mayor stated that with rising inflation he was keen that projects be completed as soon as possible. He did not want to deprive the region of improvements due to delays in delivery whether through inflation or government claw-back. The Committee was asked to review changes to schemes within the Investment Fund programme against the agreed delivery assurance principles.

The recommendations were proposed by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and seconded by Councillor Craig Cheney.

Councillor Cheney commented that he was supportive of the recommendations especially the QTIC+ project coming forward.

Councillor Guy was keen that the Committee was on top of monitoring the projects so that they did not overrun and that all the payments offered value for money.

[voting arrangements: Decision required majority agreement of Committee Members in attendance, or their substitutes (one vote representing each Authority) and including the West of England Combined Authority Mayor]

Votes for: Councillor Craig, Councillor Savage and Councillor Guy.

Votes Against: Metro Mayor Dan Norris.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To approve the change requests for schemes within the current programme as set out in Appendix 1.
- (2) To approve the change requests for schemes within the current programme as set out

- in Appendix 2, subject to review and endorsement by the Programme Review Board.
- (3) To delegate the approval of the updated Full Business Case for QTIC+ and formalising a set of staged payments linked to delivery of the project to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils

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INFRASTRUCTURE DIRECTORATE TRANSPORT UPDATE

The Metro Mayor Dan Norris asked the Committee to agree upgrades to bus stops in the region to encourage bus passengers to use local services. The report requested approval from Committee on key decisions and associated funding (where applicable) related to projects within the Combined Authority's Infrastructure Directorate Transport Portfolio.

The recommendations were proposed by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and seconded by Councillor Kevin Guy.

Councillor Guy stated that the Transport Board should take more of a role to drive forward a vision for the region as a whole. He welcomed that extra investment into transport schemes in the region.

Councillor Savage stated that South Gloucestershire was in control of around half of the bus stops in that region, most of the others were controlled by town and parish councils. Therefore discussions would need to take place with lots of different organisations. South Gloucestershire would assist with this where possible.

[voting arrangements: Decisions required majority agreement of Committee Members in attendance, or their substitutes (one vote representing each Authority) and including the West of England Combined Authority Mayor]

It was unanimously **RESOLVED**:

- (1) Further to committee approval in July 2022- Delegation to approve the award of contract for the Strategic Programme Delivery Partner to the Director of Infrastructure of the Combined Authority in consultation with the other Directors of Infrastructure within the constituent Councils, to be awarded in November 2022;
- (2) Further to the committee report in July 2022 –to streamline the change control process for the infrastructure programme of works, to Go-Live is October 2022
- (3) to reallocate the awards of Transforming Cities Funding of £0.186m (3 x £0.062m) from B&NES to the Combined Authority to develop further: Sliver Street (B3355) – Fosseway (A367) as part of the Somer Valley sustainable transport corridor with FBC forecasted for Jan 2024, Bath Road Keynsham as part of the Bristol to Bath Strategic Corridor with FBC forecasted for March 2024 and Weston to City Centre cycle route as part of Bath Sustainable Walking & Cycling Links (BSWCL) with FBC forecasted for March 2023;
- (4) to approve Transforming Cities Funding and CRSTS funding for the Bedminster Green Full Business Case (as part of the A38(s) Bristol to Hengrove Metrobus Extension). The funding allocations are £4.07m TCF and £6.319m CRSTS.
- (5) to delegate the approval of Transforming Cities Funding and CRSTS funding, for the Bristol Bridge Signals Junction and Car Park VMS Project (previously Bristol City Centre Junctions - part of the A37/A4018 Stockwood to Cribbs Causeways Sustainable Transport Corridor) for the Full Business Case due October 2022. Approval to be delegated to the Director of Infrastructure of the Combined Authority in consultation with the other Directors of Infrastructure within the constituent Councils. The funding allocations are £0.645m TCF and £1.748m CRSTS funding.
- (6) to delegate the approval of the Full Business Case for the Bus Stop Upgrades project

and the award of up to £5m from the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) to the Director of Infrastructure of the Combined Authority in consultation with the other Directors of Infrastructure within the constituent Councils. As this is funded by TCF, delivery must be completed by March 23. Committee agrees the aim to maximise the number of bus stops that can be upgraded during this period. Members are urged to ensure planning and highways regulations are streamlined to ensure the number of bus stop upgrades are maximised during the period while TCF funding is available.

13 GREEN RECOVERY FUND UPDATE

The Metro Mayor stated that the record temperatures seen over the summer showed that we faced a climate emergency that required bold action. The report set out investments to support nature recovery and renewable energy generation.

The recommendations were proposed by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and seconded by Councillor Savage.

Councillor Savage welcomed the report and recommendations. He was pleased to see support for the Frome Valley River Reserve project that was being driven through an existing Council landholding. More applications would be considered including increasing tree canopy cover. He was supportive of the work being spearheaded by the Institute for Advanced Automotive Propulsion Systems owned by the University of Bath based at the Science Park at Emersons Green and the work around hydrogen to make sure that the region was at the forefront of that emerging technology.

Councillor Cheney especially welcomed the projects that would benefit the City of Bristol as a whole including Capricorn Quay which would create a floating ecosystem habitat that would improve water quality, support stronger fish stocks and provide a haven for birds within Bristol Harbour and the work being done by Bristol Energy Network.

Councillor Guy stated that North East Somerset was a green asset for the region and supported the Forest of Avon initiative that would see 1000 volunteers plant 50000 additional trees to boost the biodiversity of the region.

An amended recommendation (2) was proposed by Councillor Savage as follows:

“Approve the £4.995m investment in Regional Low Carbon Delivery Scheme – to be fully funded through £50m Green Recovery Fund”.

This amendment was seconded by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and agreed unanimously.

[voting arrangements: Decision required majority agreement of Committee Members in attendance, or their substitutes (one vote representing each Authority) and including the West of England Combined Authority Mayor]

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

- (1) Approve the funding recommendations for round 1 of the Green Recovery Fund as set out in section 2
- (2) Approve the £4.995m investment in Regional Low Carbon Delivery Scheme – to be fully funded through £50m Green Recovery Fund.
- (3) Approve the feasibility & development form to spend £330k local nature recovery strategy from GRF allocations (pending government funds) as set out in section 6
- (4) Delegate approval to the West of England Combined Authority Head of Environment in consultation with the Directors of Infrastructure for approval of grant funds for

- community pollinator fund, as set out in section 7
- (5) Delegate the approval of remaining Green Recovery Fund to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Executives of the Unitary Authorities

14 UPDATE ON PROGRESS TOWARDS CLIMATE & ECOLOGICAL STRATEGY

This report provided Committee with an update on progress towards tackling the climate and ecological emergency (in line with the requirements of the motion agreed in 2019, that an update would be provided every six months). The report provided an update on action since agreement of the Climate & Ecological Strategy & Action Plan in April 2022.

Metro Mayor Dan Norris stated that this was another important climate emergency report and was the Authority's first 6 monthly update on the refreshed Climate Strategy. He stated that if the region was to meet its ambitious net zero goals then the progress must be continually monitored and be constantly looking at what more can be done. He stated that this would required joint efforts from national government, unitary authority partners and the wider community.

The recommendations were proposed by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and seconded by Councillor Kevin Guy.

Councillor Guy stated the importance of data collecting in order to gauge progress against the targets and to demonstrate to Government the urgency of the situation.

[voting arrangements Decision requires majority agreement of Committee Members in attendance, or their substitutes (one vote representing each Authority) and including the West of England Combined Authority Mayor]

Resolved:

The Committee noted the progress report as per the agreement set out in the original motion declaring a climate emergency.

15 WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY & MAYORAL FORECAST 2022/23

This report requested that the committee to review the revenue financial forecast report for 2022/23.

The Metro Mayor Dan Norris proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Craig Cheney.

Councillor Cheney confirmed that any levy would have to be approved by the individual unitary councils as part of their budget setting processes.

Councillor Savage reiterated that decisions would be made as part of budget settings in February 2022. He asked that all possible funding streams and efficiencies were explored to support transport in the region.

The Metro Mayor confirmed that the Authority was working hard on identifying possible efficiencies.

Councillor Guy asked that the authorities had plenty of time to consider proposals so that projects could be delivered in a timely manner.

	<p>[voting arrangements: Decisions required majority agreement of Committee Members in attendance, or their substitutes (one vote representing each Authority) and including the West of England Combined Authority Mayor]</p> <p>The Committee unanimously RESOLVED:</p> <p>(1) To review and comment on the Mayoral Fund forecasted revenue as detailed in Appendix 1;</p> <p>(2) Review and comment on the Combined Authority forecasted revenue as detailed in Appendix 2;</p>
<p>16</p>	<p>HEADLINE ASSESSMENT ON INFLATIONARY PRESSURES & MITIGATIONS</p> <p>This report presented a headline assessment on the inflationary risks on that work to date, and mitigations given the significant economic and inflationary pressures our residents and business in the region and country were facing. This was the first stage of the process. An assessment had been completed for the Combined Authority programmes. The next stage would be to look at the programmes managed through UAs. Inflation and the potential recession are issues that would require quarterly updates to Committee for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>A recommendation to Recommendation 2 was proposed by Metro Mayor Dan Norris as follows:</p> <p><i>“To request officers minimise the impact of inflation by funding within approved budgets and ensuring key outputs are delivered on time with regular coordination meetings with regional Finance and Infrastructure Directors”</i></p> <p>The amendment and the recommendations were seconded by Councillor Craig Cheney and agreed.</p> <p>The recommendations were moved by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and seconded by Councillor Cheney.</p> <p>[voting arrangements: Decisions required majority agreement of Committee Members in attendance, or their substitutes (one vote representing each Authority) and including the West of England Combined Authority Mayor]</p> <p>The Committee unanimously RESOLVED:</p> <p>(1) That it be agreed that the inflationary impact on the Investment Fund reduces the headroom available by £11.6m as shown in figure 7 in section 5.4;</p> <p>(2) To request officers minimise the impact of inflation by funding within approved budgets and ensuring key outputs are delivered on time with regular coordination meetings with regional Finance and Infrastructure Directors</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>COMBINED AUTHORITY INTERNAL APPROVALS</p> <p>This paper was withdrawn to a later date.</p>
	<p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p>

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