

A meeting of the
West of England Combined Authority Committee

will be held on

Date: Friday 17 March 2023

Time: 1.00pm

**Place: Room 1, Bawa Healthcare & Leisure, 589 Southmead Road,
Filton, BS34 7RG**

Notice of this meeting is given to members of the West of England Combined Authority Committee as follows:

Metro Mayor Dan Norris, West of England Combined Authority
Cllr Kevin Guy, Bath & North East Somerset Council
Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council
Cllr Toby Savage, South Gloucestershire Council

Enquiries to:

Vicki Yull
West of England Combined Authority Office
70 Redcliff Street
Bristol, BS1 6AL
Email: democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

The West of England Combined Authority Committee Agenda

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1. EVACUATION PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire, please await direction from staff members who will help assist with the evacuation. Please do not return to the building until instructed to do so by the fire warden(s).

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence from Members.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

Members who consider that they have an interest to declare are asked to state:

- a) The item number in which they have an interest;
- b) The nature of the interest, and;
- c) Whether the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest, non-disclosable pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest.

Any Member who is unsure about the above should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting in order to expedite matters at the meeting itself.

4. MINUTES

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To consider and approve the minutes of the West of England Combined Authority Committee meetings held on 18 January and 27 January 2023.

5. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive announcements from the Chair of the West of England Combined Authority.

6. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS)

WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Any member of the public can submit a maximum of two written questions in advance of this meeting.
2. The deadline for the submission of questions is 5.00pm, at least 3 clear working days ahead of a meeting. For this meeting, the deadline for questions is **5.00pm on Monday 13 March 2023**.
3. Questions should be addressed to the Chair of the meeting and e-mailed to democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk.
4. Under the direction of the Chair, wherever possible, written replies to questions will be sent to questioners by the end of the working day prior to the meeting.
5. Please note - under the Combined Authority's committee procedures, there is no opportunity for oral supplementary questions to be asked at committee meetings.

6. The written questions and replies will be circulated to committee members in advance of the meeting and published on the Combined Authority website.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

1. Any member of the public may submit a written statement (or petition) to this meeting.

2. Please note that one statement per individual is permitted.

3. Statements must be submitted in writing and received by the deadline of 12 noon on the working day before the meeting. For this meeting, the deadline for statements is **12 noon on 16 March 2023**. Statements should be emailed to democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk.

4. Statements will be listed for the meeting in the order of receipt. All statements will be sent to committee members in advance of the meeting and published on the Combined Authority website.

5. **Please note:** If any member of the public wishes to attend the meeting to orally present their statement, they are asked please to notify the Combined Authority's Democratic Services team of this at the point when their statement is submitted and by 12noon on the working day before the meeting at the very latest.

6. For those presenting their statements at the meeting, up to 3 minutes 'speaking time' is permitted for each statement. The total time available for the public session at this meeting is 30 minutes.

7. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Chair (or the Chair's representative) of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership Board to be invited to address the meeting.

8. COMMENTS FROM THE WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair (or Chair's representative) of the Combined Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to present the comments of that Committee.

9. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Chair (or Chair's representative) of the Combined Authority's Audit Committee to be invited to address the meeting.

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10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2023

To consider an update on regional progress towards tackling the climate and ecological emergencies and seeking approval to adopt a revised

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regional Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan (CESAP) 2023; and expand the Green Recovery Fund (GRF) to £60m.

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| 11. INVESTMENT FUND PROGRAMME | 133 -
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| To consider an update on the overall programme and headroom. | |
| 12. INVESTMENT FUND DELIVERY ASSURANCE | 167 -
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| To consider changes to schemes within the Investment Fund programme against the agreed delivery assurance principles. | |
| 13. INDICATIVE MEETINGS TIMETABLE 2023/2024 AND MANAGING THE PERIOD PRIOR TO THE ANNUAL MEETING | 183 -
188 |
| To consider the indicative dates for West of England Combined Authority, West of England Joint Committee, and West of England LEP Board meetings for the 2023/2024 year. To agree a date for the 2023 Annual Meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Committee. To put in place provisional arrangements for decision-making in the period between the May 2023 election date and the Annual Meeting, should the need arise. | |
| 14. WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY AND MAYORAL BUDGET FORECAST OUTTURN 2022/23 | 189 -
206 |
| To consider the revenue budget financial forecast information for the West of England Combined Authority and the Mayoral budget for the financial year 2022/23 based on data from the period April 2022 to January 2023. | |
| 15. AUDIT ACTION PLAN: FEEDBACK FROM AUDIT AND OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND PROGRESS REPORT | 207 -
236 |
| To consider the progress and next steps on the Combined Authority's route to improvement following the external audit report from Grant Thornton and the emerging action plan in response discussed by the Combined Authority Committee in December 2022. | |
| 16. COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE CONSTITUTIONAL UPDATE | 237 -
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| To consider changes to the Monitoring Officer's delegations to address the Auditors concerns identified in the VFM report of November 2022. | |

DRAFT
Minutes of the
West of England Combined
Authority Committee , Wednesday,
18 January 2023

Members:

Metro Mayor Dan Norris, West of England Combined Authority
Cllr Kevin Guy, Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Toby Savage, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Don Alexander, Bristol City Council (as substitute for Mayor Marvin Rees)

1	<p>EVACUATION PROCEDURE</p> <p>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). Cllr Don Alexander attended as substitute in his place.</p>
3	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCALISM ACTION 2011</p> <p>There were no Declarations of Interest declared in respect of the Localism Act 2011.</p>
4	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes from the meetings held on 14 June 2022 (adjourned from 26 May 2022), 23 September 2022, 14 October 2022 and 12 December 2022 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chair.</p>
5	<p>CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>There were no Chair's announcements.</p>
6	<p>ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS)</p> <p>Ten questions had been received from six members of the public. The responses from Metro Mayor Dan Norris had been circulated and published.</p> <p>In addition, fifty-seven statements had been received in advance of the meeting. The following persons who were present at the meeting were given the opportunity to address the meeting for up to three minutes each on the topic of their statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Claire Young, South Gloucestershire Council; • Dave Redgewell; • Cllr Tim Rippington, Bristol City Council; • Jackie Head; • Jevon Smith (on behalf of Brendan Taylor); • Cllr Tim Kent, Bristol City Council; • Cllr Hal McFie, Bath & North East Somerset Council; <p>All the statements received had been circulated and published on the Authority's website.</p> <p>Metro Mayor Dan Norris reiterated that the DRT plan was not designed to be a substitute for supported bus services but was designed to get passengers onto the commercial bus routes.</p>
7	<p>COMMENTS FROM CHAIR OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP</p> <p>We recognise that having an effective transport system is critical to the economic functioning of the region, connect our residents to jobs, to educational institutions, health and leisure is critical. We recognise however, that there are difficult issues that we face as outlined in the paper, but these issues are not unique to the West of England.</p>

I think we should acknowledge the engagement that Mayor Norris has led engagement with communities across the West of England, and would like to thank him, colleagues and officers for their community engagement.

Whilst there are difficult decisions to make, we support the overall approach set out in the committee paper to settle on a transport levy for bus services across the region, including supported services.

A rise in fuel prices and wages, set against a shortfall in driver numbers has created a challenging economic environment for operators and our region needs to embrace the transport offer changes which will be implemented from April if we are to succeed with a more cost efficient transport offer beyond 2025.

Finally these measures form a part of our wider approach to our regional transport network, and we are looking forward to the wider consultation on the 'Mass Transit / Future 4 West network, and this should sit alongside the measures and community engagement that is required to transition towards measures such as the Demand Responsive Transport. One of the issues that we face in the region compared to others, is the lack of fund raising at the WECA level, and other CA's have these powers, and such consultation provides us with the opportunity to look at other ways in which we can support and fund the networks and much needed improvements in our transport infrastructure.

8 COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Duguid, the Chair of the Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee attended the meeting and submitted comments on behalf of that Committee. The West of England Combined Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee had met informally two days before the meeting and the comments from that committee had been circulated and published in advance of the meeting.

9 SUPPORTED BUS SERVICES: CONTRACT DECISIONS

The Committee considered a report setting out the overall approach to buses, bringing together supported bus services, funded by the Transport Levy, to be taken in the context of regional bus network investment, primarily funded through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The region had secured significant funding through BSIP which would enable change and a move from traditional to transformative solutions for the region.

The report set out a raft of bus network investment interventions including, fare packages, revenue support to enhance services, rural (DRT), feeder services, additional services, and driver recruitment campaigns.

The investment precedes future capital investment in bus priority measures and passenger facilities through the City Region Sustainable Travel Settlement (CRSTS) aimed at ensuring longer term public transport sustainability.

Through BSIP the Authority had also created meaningful partnerships with operators, including revenue share opportunities through Enhanced Partnerships (EP) scheme.

In introducing the item Metro Mayor Dan Norris thanked all the officers and councillors across the region for the enormous amount of work that had gone into enabling and preparing the report.

He reminded those present that the West of England Combined Authority Committee had

made a decision in July 2023 to extend the supported bus services network until early April 2023. This gave the opportunity to reassess an optimum way forward to provide a supported network, in light of the opportunities afforded by the award of the Bus Service Improvement Plan - as well as other Transport solutions being trialled through the Future Transport Zone programme.

With Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding, the Authority had contracted to introduce a Demand Responsive Transport platform across the region to increase connectivity into the region's commercial network. This funding had also enabled the Authority to enhance a number of existing supported bus services. These would become operational in early April 2023.

This funding would help to provide a new and transformative platform on which to build the region's Transport network for the future and to establish a more sustainable longer-term solution at a time when all were experiencing inflationary pressures and bus patronage was below pre-Covid levels. The Bus Service Improvement Plan funding would also help to reduce the pressure on the calls for increased levy funding in the medium term but it has to be noted that this has not been without consequence for some existing supported services.

Councillor Savage asked whether it could be confirmed if enough information was contained in the report in order that a decision could be made, especially in relation to the Equalities Impact Assessment. It was confirmed that an independent assessment was carried out and shared with the officers of the constituent authorities. The Interim Monitoring Officer confirmed that sufficient information was available in the report to enable a lawful decision to be made.

Councillor Kevin Guy stated that the rising costs and mix of commercial and supported services was confusing to customers and welcomed the bold measures being put forward but was wary of the implementation across such a large area and wished that a smaller area had been used to trial the system first. He asked that sufficient resources be put into promoting the new scheme and asked that areas/zones be tweaked as necessary. He also felt that there had been no meaningful consultation with local communities and parishes. He asked that the Local Transport Board meet in public so that there could be meaningful dialogue with the community. In Bath the DRT monies would be used to continue the supported bus services.

Cllr Don Alexander stated that public transport was struggling in a number of areas in the country and thanked officers for their work in coming up with this proposal. Much of the government money had gone to private operators. He looked forward to the next stage of BSIP. The key to making DRT a success would be lots of communication and promotion. He stated that he would support the proposals.

Councillor Savage asked about recommendation (3) of the meeting held on 14 June 2022 as follows:

“That governance arrangements and a media protocol are developed to oversee and support this area of work going forward and to delegate to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the UA Chief Executives, the development and implementation of these arrangements.”

and asked the Interim Chief Executive what the latest position was on implementing this recommendation.

The Interim Chief Executive stated that the Authority was committed to these recommendations and a report would be taken to the next meeting of the UA Chief

Executives. The focus on supported services and BSIP had meant that the Authority had had to move quickly on providing services. He confirmed that the work was likely to be completed in stages and would involve residents, councillors and user groups to gather information. The work would continue after the DRT start date in April 2023.

Councillor Savage asked why there was no reference to the public consultation sessions held during the summer of 2022. In response Metro Mayor Dan Norris stated that there was both a formal and informal consultation process. Letters and correspondence that arose from the public consultation sessions were passed on to the transport team. The Head of Capital Delivery confirmed that the responses from the public consultations had been fed into production of the report.

Councillor Savage further stated that he believed that the situation was better now than before Christmas 2022 and those extra weeks had been useful to mitigate the worst impacts. He felt that DRT was an important part of the solution but one part of an integrated system. He thought that DRT would be especially important to rural communities. He wanted focus on areas that may be digitally marginalised especially around communications. He thought there were examples of some value for money savings that could be made in certain areas.

Councillor Steve Bridger, Leader, North Somerset Council was invited to speak by the Chair. He thanked the Metro Mayor for his engagement with North Somerset officers. He would like a franchising model to be investigated in the future. In North Somerset he stated that some key bus services had been lost and welcomed the report. Data collection and analysis would be key in assessing the service.

Councillor Guy stated that the communications should reflect the work going on throughout the region. Metro Mayor Dan Norris stated that the main issue currently was around drivers' shortages.

[Voting arrangements: A decision on the [levy] requires a unanimous vote in favour at a full meeting of the Combined Authority by all members appointed by the constituent councils, or substitute members acting in place of those members, present and voting

Other decisions must be carried by a majority of the Mayor and members appointed by the constituent councils, or substitute members acting in place of those members, present and voting].

There was a slight clarification made to recommendation 2 which was agreed.

It was moved by Councillor Kevin Guy and seconded by Councillor Toby Savage and unanimously

Resolved:

To:

- a) Note award of DRT services across the region funded through BSIP.
- b) To agree that a Levy for 2023/2024 of an amount set out in table 1, section 11, with additional contributions included within the table, Appendix E, table 'LEVY contribution by budget line', to be issued by the Combined Authority (the "Transport Levy") to the constituent councils under 74 of the Local Government Act and in accordance with the Transport Levying Bodies Regulations 1992.
- c) To delegate to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the infrastructure

Directors in the CA constituent councils, the award of contracts to the bus operators in accordance with supported bus service contract option set out in Appendix A against the funding envelope available from the Transport Levy.

The decision was urgent as set out in paragraph 5 of the report, because any delay in implementation would mean that the statutory timetable for ensuring continuation of service of any let services would not be met. Therefore this decision was not subject to call-in.

Signed:

Date:

DRAFT Minutes of the West of England Combined Authority Committee , Friday, 27 January 2023

Members:

Metro Mayor Dan Norris, West of England Combined Authority
Cllr Kevin Guy, Bath & North East Somerset Council
Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council
Cllr Toby Savage, South Gloucestershire Council

1	<p>EVACUATION PROCEDURE</p> <p>The meeting was held at Turnberrie’s Community Centre, Thornbury. The Chair, Metro Mayor Dan Norris, welcomed everybody to the meeting and the evacuation procedure was noted.</p>
2	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
3	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest declared under the Localism Act 2011.</p>
4	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>To consider and approve the minutes from the West of England Combined Authority Committee Meeting held on 9 December 2022.</p>
5	<p>CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The meeting was held on Holocaust Memorial Day. Those present observed a minute’s silence.</p> <p>There were no Chair’s announcements.</p>
6	<p>ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS & PETITIONS)</p> <p>13 questions from 7 individuals had been submitted for this meeting. These questions together with the Metro Mayor’s responses had been circulated and published on the Authority’s website following the meeting.</p> <p>In addition 8 statements had been received from members of the public. These statements had been published on the Authority’s website prior to the meeting. The following individuals attended the meeting and addressed the Committee for up to three minutes on the topic of their statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Robert Dixon · Brian Blestowe · Dave Redgewell · Robbie Bentley
7	<p>COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD</p> <p>The Chair of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board, Richard Bonner, made the following statement in respect to the items on the agenda:</p> <p>Before getting into our detailed comments I wanted to reflect on a few matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · I had the privilege to attend the Convention of the North this week, with mayors, civic, government and business leaders from across the North. We also heard from DLUHC Secretary of State, Gove, and his opposition, Lisa Nandy. · It was my 2nd Convention, and I was struck by the confidence, the joined up nature of mayors and leaders, and the sense of real progress

- I was also struck by two other attributes, the mayors were ambitious to secure more devo powers, join the accelerator initiatives, create more local control on education, health, transport, etc. And using their soft powers to accelerate in bound investment, political engagement, and mobilise their communities.
- We workshopped 8 Policy areas, and from that the 1,000 delegates identified top 3 priorities:
 - o Inclusive and decarbonised city region transport systems
 - o Plan to deliver and improve housing
 - o Delivering a clean and affordable energy transition
- These of course chime here in West of England, and we want to see our 'mass transit' proposals coming forwards and being progressed, we want leaders to work together to create the policy framework to delivery new and improved housing, and of course support citizens and business on our transition to net zero.
- I was interested speak to a HM Treasurer Civil Servant, making the point, that our CRSTS programmes need to look to 2nd and 3rd rounds, and that as well as short term delivery, we look to the longer terms schemes. The example of work short term expediency over longer term strategic thinking is really well explained in Leeds / West Yorkshire. Similar to here, previously cocked up and didn't agree to deliver the opportunity to have trams, but now don't look back but are working hard to deliver their mass transit (9 strategic routes, station and park & ride interfaces, and transition to active travel), all that you would expect. However, the mayor is very clear that first spades won't be in the ground until her second term (whether her or another), but recognises the region needs that longer term strategic planning and delivery.
- I think that the approach being taken in the North highlights how so much more can be delivered when we collaborate, work together, engage and build trust with Government. Working together to create Optimism, Opportunity and Hope, using our Powers, hard and soft to make sure that happens.
- Hopefully with so much to get through today, we can bring the best of ourselves to this committee, and work together to get the very best outcomes for our citizens, and businesses to thrive and invest.

Mayoral and Combined authority budget 2023/24 and medium-term financial STRATEGY

- § I am pleased to see that it has been a successful year in terms of attracting additional funding into the region.
- § It is important that we recognise that the West of England Combined Authority is changing and that it needs to adapt and have the resources in place to ensure that it has the skills and capacity to deliver the significant programme of work ahead for the benefits of the economy, and ultimately the residents and businesses of the region.
- § The LEP Board is supportive and keen to increase its engagement and 'step change' positively the Combined Authority's reputation with government, business, and residents.

Investment Fund Programme

- § It is clear that inflation is already having an impact on the programme with a number of schemes facing significant cost increases and it will be important to keep this under regular review.
- § I welcome the proposed funding for the West of England Support Programme and that UKSPF is being blended with the Investment Fund to deliver greater benefit and I look forward to seeing the details of this £8.5m package when they come forward.
- § I recognise the issue of the large cost increase for the Arena Infrastructure Package and the need to fully review this, but fully support the scheme which is key to providing good,

and sustainable, travel to the Arena and the wider area.

In relation to Business Support Programme:

- § The Investment Fund report includes a recommendation to allocate £4.8m towards a new £8.5m West of England Business Support programme.
- § The landscape remains complex and difficult for SMEs, and therefore the Combined Authority and Unitary Authorities have a fundamental role to play in maintaining and sustaining the best possible conditions for businesses to thrive.
- § The Local Enterprise Partnership Board this month received a presentation on the work of the West of England Growth Hub. The service has significantly increased its reach and impact, supporting just short of 10,000 businesses.
- § In addition, though the Combined Authority's £5m investment in the Local Industrial Strategy Productivity Challenge, including programmes like Tech for Growth and the Universal Business Support Programme, a total of 160 business start-ups and 237 new jobs have been created, with 54% of businesses supported already experiencing productivity increases.
- § The new investment will build on this progress to put in place new capacity, regionally and locally, alongside a set of strategic projects which will, over 3 years, support 5,707 businesses, create 262 new businesses and 370 jobs, and achieve a GVA uplift of £21.3m

Investment Fund Delivery Assurance

- § I note that the process of challenge and support for projects is now in operation with the creation of the Programme Review Board and this should help support timely delivery and minimise delays which have been an issue for the programme to date.

Transport Paper

- § With such a significant programme of transport infrastructure investment planned over the next few years, it's exciting to see projects coming forward which are ready to transition into the construction phase. The three projects, MetroWest 2, cycle hangars and Integrated Micromobility Service will be some of first projects where we will see our investment unlock connectivity, decarbonisation and economic benefits for the Combined Authority region.

Transforming Cities Fund

- § It has been encouraging to see the amounts of investment received since the Transforming Cities Fund was initially awarded in late 2018 for the development and construction of major transport schemes.
- § I would also like to reflect that there are some lessons learnt and significant changes needed to ensure we deliver for the region.
- § I would like to support this paper and ensure that the funding is spend to the benefit of the region.

Capital Strategy including Treasury Management & investment

- § I note that the information presented in the detailed capital budget for 2023/24, and indicative budget up to 2026/27 again demonstrates the significant capital growth in funding within the Combined Authority.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Winston Duguid, attended the meeting and submitted the views of that Committee on the agenda items. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had met to discuss the items on the agenda a few days previously. The comments submitted had been circulated prior to the meeting and published on the Authority's website.

9 MAYORAL AND COMBINED AUTHORITY BUDGET 2023/24 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Metro Mayor Dan Norris introduced a report by stating that the Authority was moving forward with a plan that recognised the impact of the economic slowdown and the impact of inflation on our residents and business in the West of England. He stated that officers had provided a transparent report to enable the Authority to meet the local challenges. He warned that delays would slow delivery as well as reducing purchasing power and value for money due to the inflationary levels.

The recommendations were moved by Metro Mayor Dan Norris. He stated that he also wished to move an additional effectiveness and efficiencies recommendation.

There was a request for an adjournment for the members of the Committee to discuss any additional recommendations and/or amendments.

The meeting adjourned at 1348 and reconvened at 1527.

On resumption of the meeting Councillor Toby Savage stated that he wished to move two additional recommendations as follows. These recommendations would become recommendations 1 & 2, with the existing recommendations becoming recommendations 3-5. This would be seconded by Cllr Kevin Guy.

"1. Approve the combined authority budget for 2023/24 as summarised in figure 6 and the relevant related supporting appendices, with the exception of the £8m staffing increase, of which 10% will be withheld to enable further work to be undertaken to assess the relevant need against pressures on services. The remaining funds will be released following the unanimous approval of the Combined Authority Chief Executive and Chief Executives of the Constituent Councils. Should a decision not receive unanimous approval the matter will be returned to the next Combined Authority Committee.

2. That the acting Chief Executive works with UA Chief Executives on a programme of effectiveness and efficiency reviews to be agreed at the March 2023 committee, including the delivery timescales for such reviews, which will include appropriate value for money testing with external validation where appropriate, this will include the development of a risk-based reserve policy as referred in para 4."

The Interim Chief Executive stated that this enabled the Authority to pass a robust budget and keep up the pace of delivery.

Councillor Savage stated that he accepted the need for additional resources to deliver the programme of work and strengthening of governance. It was important to balance the needs of residents and maximising the value for money. Leaders needed to ensure that they spent the available money as wisely as they could.

[voting arrangements: A unanimous vote in favour at full meeting of the Combined Authority by all members appointed by the by the constituent Authorities or substitute members acting in place of those members, present and voting].

The recommendations were carried unanimously.

The Committee **RESOLVED**:

1. Approve the combined authority budget for 2023/24 as summarised in figure 6 and the relevant related supporting appendices, with the exception of the £8m staffing increase, of which 10% will be withheld to enable further work to be undertaken to assess the relevant need against pressures on services. The remaining funds will be released following the unanimous approval of the Combined Authority Chief Executive and Chief Executives of the Constituent Councils. Should a decision not receive unanimous approval the matter will be returned to the next Combined Authority Committee.
2. That the acting Chief Executive works with UA Chief Executives on a programme of effectiveness and efficiency reviews to be agreed at the March 2023 committee, including the delivery timescales for such reviews, which will include appropriate value for money testing with external validation where appropriate, this will include the development of a risk-based reserve policy as referred in para 4.
3. Approve the West of England Combined Authority budget for 2023/24 as summarised in figure 6 and relevant related supporting appendices.
4. Review and comment on the West of England Combined Authority projected revenue forecast for 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix 2.
5. Approve the Mayoral Budget for 2023/24 together with the funding contribution from the West of England Combined Authority, (Investment Fund), budget of £675k as set out in Appendix 7.

10 INVESTMENT FUND PROGRAMME

The Metro Mayor introduced a report which provided an update on the new funding awards through the Investment Fund programme and the impact these had on the overall headroom remaining in the current investment period.

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

Cllr Guy stated that there were exceptionally good projects included including on better sustainable transport which he especially welcomed.

Cllr Savage welcomed the report and stated that it was important that there were no delays in agreeing the projects outlined.

Mayor Marvin Rees also welcomed the report and felt this would help secure long-term transport improvements in the region, although he was concerned about the amount of resilience built into the system currently such as bus driver recruitment.

[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].

It was unanimously agreed.

The Committee **RESOLVED**:

- (1) Approve the revised Local Growth Assurance Framework as set out in paragraph 7.
- (2) Approve the Waterspace Connected Phase 1 Outline Business Case and the award of £296k to develop the Full Business Case by November 2024, as set out on paragraph 11.
- (3) To approve the Scholars Way Outline Business Case and the award of £580k (£72k TCF and £508k CRSTS) to develop the Full Business Case by July 2023, as set out in paragraph 11.
- (4) To allocate £4.8m to the West of England Business Support Programme as set out in paragraph 12 and delegate the approval of the Full Business Case to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils, as set out in paragraph 12.
- (5) Delegate the approval of the Full Business Case for the Arena Infrastructure Package and the award of up to £10.081m to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils following a report to the Programme Review Board (PRB) and subject to the PRB's unanimous recommendation to CEO's.

11 INVESTMENT FUND DELIVERY ASSURANCE

This report set out the changes to schemes within the current approved investment programme.

In line with the previously agreed delivery assurance principles, these changes had been reviewed and tested by the Programme Review Board, who was seeking to support and speed up scheme delivery.

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

[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 recommendation was unanimously agreed.

The Committee resolved to approve the change requests for schemes within the current programme as set out in Appendix 1.

12 TRANSPORT PAPER

Metro Mayor Dan Norris introduced a report setting out that the Combined Authority was

embarking on an unprecedented programme of transport infrastructure investment and project delivery which would support growth and productivity across the region and will be a critical enabler to its net zero transition.

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

Councillor Guy remarked that there was a red line in terms of cost increases, and if those costs increased too far the projects would have to be rescoped so it was important that the projects were delivered as soon as possible.

[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 agreed unanimously.

The Committee RESOLVED:

- (1) MetroWest Phase 2** –to approve funding to cover stage 1 and remaining elements of the scheme. As set out elsewhere on this agenda a Full Business Case (FBC) has been produced seeking the award of £13.663m of funding (£2.6m beyond that previously awarded) for stage 1 of the project which will include the construction and opening of Ashley Down Station, secure planning approval for North Filton and Henbury stations and tender detailed design and construction works. An allocation of £6.245m from the Investment Fund (IF) is proposed for the delivery of the remaining elements of the scheme.
- (2) Cycle Hangars** - to approve the FBC and funding from the Transforming Cities Fund of a total of £360,661 (£289k already awarded for development) to enable the installation of at least 28 cycle hangars on Bristol City Council social housing sites.
- (3) Integrated Micromobility Service Contract** - that a new Integrated Micromobility Service contract be tendered and awarded to cover on-street Micromobility rental services. Recommendation that the authority to issue the tender and award the contract is delegated to the Interim Director of Infrastructure in consultation with Unitary Authority Directors. Recommendation that the authority to sign/seal the contract be delegated to the Monitoring Officer.

13

TRANSFORMING CITIES FUND

Metro Mayor Dan Norris introduced a report asking the Committee to utilise the remaining Transforming Cities Fund by March 2023.

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

[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 agreed unanimously.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To approve the recommended use of TCF as set out in paragraph 7.
- (2) To approve the delegation of urgent change requests relating to the fund to the Infrastructure Directors meeting in consultation with the Programme Review Board, to ensure that the fund is fully utilised by March 2023. Where agreement is not reached decisions will be escalated to the CEO's meeting.
- (3) That, subject to decision by the CA Section 73 Officer regarding eligible capital spend, to delegate to the Combined Authority Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Unitary Authority Directors the approval of change requests within overall funding envelopes for schemes in the City Regions Sustainable Transport Settlement programme to utilise any potential underspend in the TCF.

14

CAPITAL STRATEGY INCLUDING TREASURY MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

This report presented the Capital Strategy for the West of England Combined Authority including the detailed capital budget for 2023/24, and indicative budget up to 2026/27 and The Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24.

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

[voting arrangements. Recommendations 1 & 2 - Required unanimous vote in favour at full meeting of the Combined Authority by all members appointed by the by the constituent Authorities or substitute members acting in place of those members, present and voting.

Recommendation 3 - 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 Capital Budget as detailed in Appendix 1;
- (2) To approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 detailed in Appendix 2.
- (3) To agree the specific Highways and Transport Capital Grant allocations totalling £25M to the constituent councils for 2023/24 as set out in Figure 3.

The meeting closed at 15.45.

Signed:

Date:

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Statement from the Chair of the West of England Combined Authority Audit Committee

The Audit Committee wish to draw the following matters to the attention of the West of England Combined Authority Committee.

1. Value for Money (VFM) report

These comments are a summary of discussions at Audit Committee, representing views supported by all members from all political parties. We preface these remarks by emphasising that all members want the West of England Combined Authority to succeed and recognise how important its role is, which is why we want it to work effectively.

Members want to see the West of England Combined Authority benchmarked against other combined authorities. We understand that political differences will occur but we expect them to be managed.

In December, Audit Committee were briefed on the action plan in response to the VFM audit report.

It was indicated that the action plan would be evolving and developing. However, on 2nd March we were presented with the same plan with no updates or improvements. In December we were told that the Leaders were planning a meeting in January, to deal with the co-working issues and establish how they could improve their working. We understand that meeting eventually took place in late February.

We welcome the Terms of Reference for the Solace Peer Challenge but note that these issues were those identified by Audit and Scrutiny meetings over a year ago.

If we are to be updated on the action plan (which we expect on a regular basis), we would like to know what has actually happened rather than have received a document that has not changed since it was tabled at the beginning of December.

- SR1 (improve working relationship)
We have seen no evidence that this is happening, if it is to happen, by March. Why is there no detail of the programme of activities and the Regional Priorities?
- SR2 (commit to protocol to consult)
We note that in spite of the VFM report the last West of England Combined Authority Committee involved a 100-minute adjournment for leaders to agree on the budget. We reiterate that these breaks indicate a failure of commitment to work together and are damaging to the public and governmental perception of the Authority.
- SR3 (statutory officer conflict of interests)
What is the status of the protocol? Has it been circulated and published by January 2023?
- KR1 (future management structure)

Is this on course for October 23 if the Employment Committee cannot function between March and May?

- KR2 (re independent legal advice)
“As soon as is practically possible” is not specific enough and does not acknowledge the seriousness of the weaknesses. There is no reason why this has not been actioned.
- IR1 (chief execs working relationship)
Who is checking independently with UA senior officers that this is working?
- IR2 (constitution)
As more and more flaws in the Constitution become apparent, what action has been taken? Has anything happened on the Constitution? This is not specific enough and does not acknowledge the seriousness of the many issues. This is important enough for a detailed and specific timeline to be established for addressing each area of weakness.
- IR3 (senior officer performance reviews)
This was presented to Audit Committee with no assurance from the Head of HR. Has it been formally recorded?

Audit Committee wants to see detail to confirm that the actions referred to in the Action Plan are happening and are effective in achieving the required outcome.

We would hope each member of the Committee can commit to working together to resolve differences in advance of public meetings, so that any amendments to papers can be agreed and published in such a way that members of the public and Councillors can understand what has changed from the originally produced papers.

Without categoric confirmation that the actions are happening and are effective and without all individual Committee members commitment, the action plan is only an attempt to placate auditors and Audit Committee.

One of our members summed this up succinctly - “Message from Audit Committee should be: sort out matters of disagreement ahead of the meetings and present a united front on the day”.

2. Bus, Transport and Infrastructure Risk Register

Audit Committee does not express an opinion on Policy, but it does have a role in the review of attitude to and management of risk. It follows therefore that when a policy area affects many citizens across the region, it is inevitable that we look at the risks relating to those policies.

We recognise that risk registers are drafted by officers in diplomatic language using local authority terminology. However, members are concerned that the risks relating to the withdrawal of support for bus services from some of our most deprived areas do not identify the seriousness of the situation. Similarly, the risks around Demand Responsive Transport do not appear to have fully recognised the extent of the potential commercial and economic risk, or the social impact. There is no knowledge of the actual demand, or the capacity needed to fulfil it, or the expectation of passengers. The procurement processes appear not

to have identified the potential challenges and may have allowed start-up companies to be appointed with limited experience staff and equipment for the service they have tendered for.

The related risks seem massive and the urge to solve this crisis appears to have led to decisions which may have significant unmeasured risk to the Authority.

We are not convinced that officers are fully aware of the magnitude of this risk and that Committee may not have been informed of this when the decision was taken.

Overall, the risk register made for poor reading. With the bus service network very near to collapse there seemed no recognition of the potential impact on well-being and attainment of net zero. It will be difficult to regain passengers who decide or are forced to go back to using a car. Should these risks not be recognised?

Given these risks are shared with the unitary authorities cannot unitary authority expertise be used more effectively by the West of England Combined Authority.

Concerns about CRSTS were also expressed. There appears to be delay and dependence on contractors. There is clearly a potential risk of government clawback. Descoping will reduce benefits and net zero gains.

(As a note and an example of the problem - the risk register report says there is no HR, Environmental or Financial issues arising from the report. It was explained to us that this related to the production of the report. Members felt this was at best totally misleading, and at worst failed to acknowledge the potential Financial and Environmental impact of the risks being described, which would leave the average resident feeling the report was only intended to be theoretical).

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REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

DATE: 17 MARCH 2023

REPORT TITLE: CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2023

DIRECTOR: ROGER HOARE, HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT

AUTHOR: KIERAN HIGHMAN, SENIOR ENVIRONMENT MANAGER

Purpose of Report

1. This report updates Committee on regional progress towards tackling the climate and ecological emergencies and seeks approval to adopt a revised regional Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan (CESAP) 2023; and expand the Green Recovery Fund (GRF) to £60m.

Recommendation

- The West of England Combined Authority Committee is asked to:
 1. Note progress on Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan 2022 actions, as set out in Appendix 2.
 2. Adopt the Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan 2023 as set out in Appendix 3.
 3. To support expansion of the Green Recovery Fund by £10m to invest in priority projects that target the climate and ecological emergencies, including allocating £6m from the existing Combined Authority Investment Fund headroom as shown in Table 8.1 of this Report.
 4. As part of the Green Recovery Fund expansion, further development work will take place to determine supply and demand for green construction skills, building on the Post 16 Education and Infrastructure Report and aligning with a refreshed West of England Employment and Skills Plan, with an update to come to June 2023 Committee meeting.

Reasons for recommendations

- The CESAP aligns with Council and Unitary Authority motions in 2019 and 2020 relating to climate and ecological emergencies respectively

- The Committee's adoption of last year's CESAP included biannual reporting and a yearly update. This report and appendices form this annual update.
- Reporting on CESAP actions ensures the Committee continues to scrutinize Combined Authority and regional progress in addressing our declarations
- Adopting a revised CESAP ensures the region has a coherent strategy and meaningful actions to address climate change, and halt the decline in nature
- Recognising that we are not currently on track to meet our 2030 ambitions of Net Zero and Nature Recovery, we are seeking additional funding for projects. These projects will enable us to both strengthen delivery and increase our ability to bring investment into the region on these agendas.
- Of the £30m contribution from the Combined Authority's Investment Fund in establishing the £50m Green Recovery Fund, only £3.7m remains unallocated. A further £6m is sought to ensure the pace of delivery and ability of the Combined Authority to leverage in additional investment continues to grow.

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.

Background / Issues for Consideration

2. As a region, we have all declared climate and ecological emergencies. We have set ourselves 2030 ambitions for the West of England to be net zero, and to ensure that wildlife and the natural environment are in recovery with their decline halted.
 - 2.1 The Climate and Ecological Strategy & Action Plan (CESAP) sets the regional approach to meeting these ambitions. It includes short-term actions for delivery each year, and medium-term actions needed to achieve longer term 2030 ambitions. It recognises – to achieve our long-term vision and goals – we need to be collaborating across all levels of government and the wider public sector, helping to catalyse and seek funding from the private sector, and empowering our residents and communities.
 - 2.2 The CESAP was first agreed in April 2022, including commitments for the Combined Authority to provide 6-monthly progress updates and an annual review of actions. The 6-monthly update was provided to Committee on 13 September. This report provides an update on each action and sets out the proposed revised CESAP for 2023.

Progress update on CESAP 2022

- 2.3 Over the last year as a region we have made some great progress and have delivered on many of the actions we committed to. Others are ongoing, with a couple of actions requiring a rethink. Appendix 1 provides an update on each action. Highlights from our activities last year are included in our CESAP 2023, delivering:

- Retrofits to over 1000 homes and establishing the Retrofit Accelerator.
 - Support for residents and businesses with escalating energy costs, providing 360 SMEs with carbon surveys and 160 SME retrofits.
 - projects a share of £439,000 from our Community Pollinator Fund.
 - An additional 950 solar PV installations.
 - Improving public and sustainable transport across our region, extending the metrobus to Cribbs, gaining planning approval for new train stations - and securing over £640m in our CRSTS and BSIP settlements.
- 2.4 Increasingly our work is integrated, and we are working ever closer with our region's Unitary Authorities. They too have universally refreshed their commitments and action plans, and are working with us on significant projects that could be rolled out and benefit the wider region including:
- Bristol has seen the [launch of City Leap](#). This will invest £424m through a partnership between the Council and its partner Ameresco. Plans include installing 182MW of additional renewables and retrofitting council homes over the next 5 years.
 - Bath and North East Somerset are adopting the UK's first net zero requirements for new housing, and ambitious Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. Working in partnership with them and the South West Net Zero Hub, other councils are seeking to adopt a similar policy.
 - South Gloucestershire Council have [started investigating the potential of abstracting heat from former coal mine workings](#) across their area and parts of Bristol. This identified four areas of potential with over 20,000 homes and buildings that could use this as a potential heat source. There has been interest across our region, such as in Radstock. We are working with our Unitary Authorities to expand and explore this potential of heat from mines further.
- 2.5 Next year, we will develop a shared digital portal of actions the Combined and Unitary Authorities have committed to in respective action plans – for greater public engagement in delivery of environmental actions across our region.

Expansion of the Green Recovery Fund

- 2.6 Last year, £21.5m of GRF from the Combined Authority's Investment Fund was awarded to projects aligned to our regional objectives, leveraging in £16m match funding. Overall, of the £50m GRF, £37.5m has been awarded.
- 2.7 Of the remaining £8.5m Investment Fund element of the GRF, a further £4.8m is earmarked for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Following Bristol City Council's indication that they are not going to proceed with on street charging element of EV project, the Combined Authority is pursuing ways of delivering a compliant Final Business Case (FBC) to move forward with Bath & North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire elements of the scheme to maintain the region's commitment to net zero by 2030.
- 2.8 This results in £3.7m of the Combined Authority's Investment Fund remaining to be allocated to environmental projects. This paper seeks to expand this by £6m, with an aim of leveraging in an additional £5.9m. This would bring the

total GRF to £60m. Our aim, included in our revised CESAP, is to secure additional investment from other public and private sources over this year.

- 2.9 The Post 16 Education and Infrastructure Report, detailed in Appendix 4, has identified a growing need for green construction and retrofit skills. Our region's net zero ambitions are predicted to result in over half of green jobs being created in the sector. This £100k evidence-base work is needed to understand the current and future supply and demand position to inform training provision and any future capital investment in the FE estate needed, including the potential for a Regional Centre for Net Zero Construction Skills.
- 2.10 New GRF investment would be the subject of a delegated decision to the West of England Combined Authority's Chief Executive, in consultation with fellow Chief Executives of the Unitary Authorities.

Proposed Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan (CESAP) 2023

- 2.11 We need the residents and businesses of the region to be better engaged in the climate and ecological emergencies. This will help to both shape our approach and support the delivery of the CESAP. Achieving the scale of change we need across our region requires us all to make big choices, especially when it comes to our homes and sustainable travel.
- 2.12 We will explore routes to bring in different voices and perspectives into the region to provide robust scrutiny of our approach and learn lessons from national and international experience.
- 2.13 We have used new evidence and input through consultation to update the CESAP's actions, to better reflect regional activity and priorities. Largely the format, strategic approach and long-term vision remain the same.
- 2.14 Two notable changes are a new Climate Resilience theme and a section noting last year's delivery, as above. Key priorities for next year include:
- Delivering domestic retrofits and strengthening supply chains via the Retrofit Accelerator. Phase one is aiming to advise 10,600 households, survey 5,250 homes, and deliver an additional 1,400 retrofits over the next 2 years; and Phase 2 will ensure local economic benefit in supporting 350 businesses to build their retrofit skills and capacity
 - Creating new habitats and securing investment in improving quality and connectivity of existing spaces for nature, including vital habitats for pollinators.
 - Supporting businesses to become resilient to climate change and energy price rises
 - Expanding green skills programmes to benefit from more local green jobs.
 - Removing barriers and increasing investment to expand rollout of EV infrastructure, new dedicated walking and cycling routes and improved public transport.
 - Empowering community energy and innovation to unlock renewable energy potential including mine water heat.
 - Preparing for the impacts of climate change, establishing a cross-sector

resilience group and investing in flood defences.

- 2.15 Achieving our long-term vision and objectives requires monumental effort. This is set out in the 'Challenges' section of the appended CESAP 2023. We cannot achieve this as a Combined Authority nor region alone. We need national regulatory changes and investment befitting the emergencies we face. Without this, achieving carbon neutrality and halting nature's decline by 2030 is almost impossible.
- 2.16 For instance, our region needs greater Government support in retrofitting 250,000 of our homes by 2030. Currently c1,700 retrofits are delivered in our region each year; with the Retrofit Accelerator targeting an additional 1,400 homes retrofitted over the next two years. The Government's key 'ECO+' £5bn insulation subsidy scheme may retrofit 410,000 UK homes by 2026 – proportionally this could help retrofit a mere 6,500 homes in the West of England.
- 2.17 Working with our Unitary Authorities, we will be collating our knowledge and actions into one shared accessible website – using this to engage our residents and businesses over the next year to define scenarios for our region in 2030, based on what we can deliver and what interventions are needed by others.

Consultation

- 3 We have consulted with the following in reporting on actions and updating the CESAP and expanding the GRF:
- Sought input from Combined Authority colleagues including those responsible for actions in CESAP 2022 and Heads of Service.
 - Via the West of England Climate Panel on 8 December 2022, represented by the regions Unitary Authorities, community groups, trade unions, businesses, infrastructure providers and universities.
 - Presented to and consulted with West of England Nature Partnership Board on 14 December 2022.
 - Held a whole-day workshop on 8 December 2022 with Unitary Authority Officers and had virtual follow-ups – including consulting upon the draft plan for 3 weeks (16 January to 6 February 2022).
 - Presented to and consulted with Business and Skills Board (9 Jan 2022).
 - Consulted with and presented to LEP Board (18 Jan 2022).
 - Consulted with and presented to Natural Environment Officer's Steering Group on 25 January 2022.
 - Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership on 3 February 2022.
 - Briefing regional environment directors 8 and 9 February 2022.
 - Briefings with Cabinet Members with climate and transport responsibility on 7 and 8 February 2022.
 - Briefing Climate Officers on additional regional GRF needs on 22 February 2022.

Other Options Considered

- 4 Not developing a revised Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and

Action Plan has been considered. This has been discounted on the basis that this does not meet our commitments to Committee nor the Motions we and Unitary Authorities have declared, and that a plan will enable action to be prioritised and ensure we are focused on the actions that will have most impact.

Risk Management / Assessment

- 5 The CESAP sets out how we plan to tackle risks associated with the climate and ecological emergencies. Full risk assessments will be undertaken for each action or project outlined within the action plan as they are brought forwards.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 6 Public Sector Equality implications are considered as part of the individual delivery plans for each action within the CESAP.

Climate Change Implications

- 7 The Combined Authority’s Climate Emergency Action Plan is the focus of this report, both reporting on progress last year and proposing new activity within the 2023 CESAP. This has been overseen by the Head of Environment.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Roger Hoare, Head of Environment, Combined Authority

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate

- 8 This report seeks approval to allocate £6m from the existing Combined Authority Investment Fund headroom to contribute to expanding the Green Recovery Fund. Appendix 1 of this report, summarised below in Table 8.1, identifies regional priorities for this funding. As with the existing GRF, decisions on drawing down this funding would be made by the Combined Authority’s Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the West of England Unitary Authorities.

Table 8.1:

	Existing Green Recovery Fund allocated or assigned to date	Existing Green Recovery Fund still to be allocated	Total	New Green Recovery Funding sought in this report	Total
Investment Fund	£26.3m	£3.7m	£30m	£6m	£36m
Leveraged investment	£16m	£2.1m	£18.1m	£5.9m	£24m
Total	£42.3m	£5.8m	£48.1m	£11.9m	£60m

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim Director of Investment and Corporate Services, Combined Authority

Legal Implications

- 9 There are no direct legal implications associated with this report. Legal implications associated with individual decisions to deliver this plan will be brought to Committee via CEOs if and when required.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Stephan Gerrard, Interim Director of Law and Governance, Combined Authority

Human Resources Implications

- 10 There are no direct HR implications associated with this report.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Alex Holly, Head of People and Assets, Combined Authority

Land / property Implications

- 11 There are no direct land or property implications associated with this report.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Alex Holly, Head of People and Assets, Combined Authority

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Outline Funding Priorities for expanded Green Recovery Fund

Appendix 2 – Climate Ecological Strategy and Action Plan – 2022: Overview of progress in delivering our actions

Appendix 3 – Climate Ecological Strategy and Action Plan 2023 (recommended for adoption)

Appendix 4 – Post-16 Skills Planning (Green Skills)

Background papers:

Green Recovery Fund - Overview and Establishment – Combined Authority Committee Paper approved December 2021: <https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s3085/9%20-%20Green%20Recovery%20Fund.pdf>

Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan 2022: <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/West-of-England-Climate-and-Ecological-Strategy-and-Action-Plan-2022.pdf>

West of England Combined Authority Contact:

Report Author	Contact Details
Kieran Highman	Kieran.highman@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

Appendix 1 - Outline Funding Priorities for expanded Green Recovery Fund

The previously approved Green Recovery Fund (GRF) has largely been allocated to projects. Details of where it is being allocated and funding award decisions can be found in is summarised in the table below:

GRF theme	Outline Proposal	GRF Allocation	Funding status FBC = Full Business Case OBC = Outline Business Case GOL = Grant Offer Letter
Low carbon buildings & places	Retrofit Accelerator Phase I	£3,000,000	FBC approved ¹
	Retrofit Accelerator Phase IIb (Step-up)	£200,000	OBC approved in Dec '21 committee alongside Retrofit Accelerator Phase IIa ²
	Local energy advice	£118,503	FBC approved ³ ; GOL and Procurement complete; project operational
	Retrofit Accelerator Phase 2a (supply chain)	£2,000,000	OBC approved; FBC to CEOs this Weds
	LCCF - innovative housing retrofit	£300,000	FBC approved ¹ ; GOL out
	RLCD - innovative housing retrofit	£995,000	FBC approved ¹ ; One GOL out, other being drafted
	Regional Low Carbon Delivery - business assessment	£2,839,247	FBC approved ¹ ; Green Business Grant and Surveys operational from April '23
	Sub totals of allocated amounts	£9,452,750	
	Remainder of £10m originally earmarked in Dec '21	£547,250	
Low carbon transport system, including EV infrastructure	Development of business case	£200,000	£200k invested in developing business case; remainder subject to this being approved
	Trials of innovative low cost on-street residential charging infrastructure	£4,800,000	
	Trial residential charging hubs		
	Install destination chargers in public car parks		
	Support EV Car Clubs		
Totals of allocated and earmarked amounts as per £5m allocated at Dec '21 committee	£5,000,000		
Green Environment/N	GI projects (incl Bath RiverLine)	£1,525,000	FBC approved ¹ ; GOL going out

Nature Recovery	Community Pollinator Fund	£1,458,075	FBC approved; Round 1 all GOLs signed and projects are initiating/running. Round 2 is launched and open until 19th April
	GRF round 1 - Somer Valley Rediscovered	£923,246	FBC approved ¹ ; GOLs going out
	GRF round 1 - Capricorn Quay	£480,000	
	GRF round 1 - Frome Valley	£1,106,377	
	GRF round 1 - Forest of Avon	£732,429	
	GRF round 1 - Tree Canopy	£1,131,046	FBC approved ¹ ; GOLs going out
	Local Nature Recovery Strategy Funding	£330,000	FBC approved ¹
	Sub totals of allocated amounts	£7,686,173	
	Remainder of £10m originally earmarked in Dec '21	£2,313,827	
Renewable Energy & Energy Capacity	Regional Low Carbon Delivery – Community Energy Scheme (local energy scheme continuation)	£1,160,222	FBC approved ¹
	Round 1 GRF - Solar roof (bristol energy co-op)	£569,312	FBC approved ¹
	Round 1 GRF - SIFFT	£1,551,400	FBC approved ¹
	HSTEAs	£900,000	FBC approved ¹
	Sub totals of allocated amounts	£4,180,934	
	Remainder of £5m originally earmarked in Dec '21	£819,066	

¹ Combined Authority Green Recovery Fund Update Committee Paper 23 September 2022: <https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s5257/13.%20GRF.pdf>

² Combined Authority Green Skills and Advice Prioritisation in Response to Budget and Spending Review Committee Paper 3 December 2021: <https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g485/Public%20reports%20pack%2003rd-Dec-2021%2012.00%20West%20of%20England%20Combined%20Authority%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

³ West of England CEOs delegated decision in awarding up to £150,000 of funding to provide local energy advice support during winter 2022/23 up to 31 March 2023: <https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=393>

⁴ West of England CEOs delegated decision in awarding funding to the Tree Canopy Green Recovery Fund Round 1 application: <https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=401>

There is still c£3.7m of the Combined Authority's Investment Fund remaining to be allocated to environmental projects. This is split between projects seeking to retrofit buildings (£547k), those delivering recovery in nature (£2.3m) and those increasing renewable energy and energy capacity (£819k). The unallocated funding for nature will be allocated by launching a second round seeking bids for nature recovery projects.

Decisions to award GRF to specific projects are subject of a delegated decision to the Combined Authority’s Chief Executive, in consultation with fellow Chief Executives of the Unitary Authorities.

Included in the table below are outline funding proposals warranting expansion of the Green Recovery Fund (GRF) - *including* the existing unallocated GRF, *excluding* projects listed in the table above with funding already agreed or (in the case of £4.8m for electric vehicles) earmarked.

These areas for investment have been identified in the development of and consultation on the revised Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan (CESAP) 2023; in turn, this is informed from reviewing regional priorities and last year’s delivery.

Each has been included on the perceived need and urgency of Combined Authority investment: where delivery is needed, and other sources are not available or known to the Authority at the time of writing.

These total £6m of additional Investment Fund sought with potential of leveraging in c£5.9m of investment into the region’s environment, if not more should heat from mines prove to be viable for commercial investment. Together with the existing unallocated GRF funding, these total £9.5m of Investment Fund with potential to leverage in £8m of third-party investment.

Funding sought for	Rationale	Proposed Combined Authority Investment Fund to GRF Allocation	Target for third-party ‘leveraged’ investment
Nature Recovery Funding Round 2	This GRF funding is already allocated for supporting regional nature recovery projects. A second round of GRF applications would be sought. Cost based on £10m originally being allocated to Nature Recovery, with £7.7m of funds already committed. Leverage funding based on previous projects awarded, having secured over 80% matched leverage.	£2,313,827 (existing from nature recovery allocation)	£1,800,000
Green Skills (including Retrofit Accelerator Phase 2B)	Building on the Post-16 Education & Skills Infrastructure report, and Green Skills reports (including Retrofit Market Analysis) more work is needed to develop our understanding of the current and future supply and demand position for green construction skills to inform training provision and any future capital investment in the FE estate, including the potential for a Regional Centre for Net Zero Construction Skills. This will form part of	£52,750 (new) £547,250 (existing from retrofit allocation) Total: £600,000	£300,000

	<p>a wider FE Capital Investment Strategy. We would anticipate this costing c.£100K.</p> <p>Using the outcome of the analysis work, we would propose using c.£200-300K to extend the work of the Retrofit Accelerator Phase IIb 'Step Up' which will focus on driving up the demand for retrofit training by individuals by bringing focus on green skills and training, and providing advice and guidance on access routes, including via existing services such as Future Bright and our new Skills Connect service.</p> <p>The funding would also allow us to continue to fund the successful pilot Green Futures project which works to bring understanding and focus on green jobs and careers pathways to young people in our schools and Colleges, increasing understanding of employer demands and building LMI and knowledge in schools. c.£200-300K would permit this project to be rolled out beyond its pilot to potentially every school and College in the region.</p> <p>See <i>Appendix 4</i> Post-16 Skills Planning (Green Skills) for further information.</p>		
<p>Retrofit Accelerator Phase 3</p>	<p>To pilot a revolving low-cost loan fund with a residential lending organisation such as Lendology CIC for the Combined Authority area, to be tested through the Retrofit Accelerator. This is to provide residents not qualifying for grant support access to finance for retrofit for those without savings, ability to extend their mortgage or access to other forms of preferential credit. In doing so, together with Gov subsidy for those living in fuel poverty, this aims to ensure majority of residents have the means to retrofit their homes and provide a just transition.</p> <p>Costs based on study commissioned by SW Net Zero Hub on behalf of Bath & NE Somerset Council and other Lendology consortium members (including other West</p>	<p>£1,625,115 (new)</p>	<p>£130,000 – Hub/Gov Match</p> <p>£5,000,000 - leveraged capital in retrofit</p>

	of England UAs). Initial stage is developing FBC: £200k, with match sought from SW Net Zero Hub/BEIS. If Business Case viable, has potential to support up to 300 homes based on typical retrofit cost of £20k per home; with potential for leverage representing capital borrowing estimate figure for piloting in the West of England sought in consultation w/ Lendology.		
Innovative Housing Retrofit Scheme	<p>A second tranche of the Scheme to fund 2-3 pilot projects that use modern methods of retrofit, ie those with exterior components manufactured offsite. Working with social housing providers and regional businesses to test innovative technologies and approaches, and finance models.</p> <p>Cost based on running a second tranche at same value of current Innovative Housing Retrofit Scheme, with potential to fund c3 innovative housing retrofit projects</p>	£1,500,000	£300,000
Pollinator Fund Expansion	<p>To respond to the overwhelming interest in the fund, which would otherwise be fully subscribed after a second round, and is making a significant contribution to the region's nature recovery ambitions.</p> <p>Cost based on interest received and learning from Round 1 and (live) Round 2, meaning Round 2 likely to fully allocate existing £1m to projects. Costs based on previously approved Full Business Case taking account of: 20% increase in applications to small grants; 20% increase in application success; and 15% extended reach. Rounds 2 and 3 could therefore issue grants to £680,450 worth of projects, with a total of £1,799,900 across the three rounds – hence an additional £800k could be utilised on additional Pollinator projects without any additional Combined Authority officer expense. Matched leverage is based on 25% requirement from those applying to scheme.</p>	£800,000	£200,000
Carbon surveys	To extend the free carbon survey offer and advice for energy bill reduction to support a	£716,000	£200,000

	<p>greater number of small & medium sized enterprises, using a wider eligibility criteria for business type. Potential to explore large business sponsorship for supply chains.</p> <p>Cost based on additional staffing needs and procuring of external surveys. Leverage based on securing sponsorship</p>		
Extension of Local Energy Advice Support	<p>Residents have continued need for local energy advice support. Funding sought to continue resourcing these services during 2024 – otherwise services in some parts of region will close end of March 2023.</p> <p>Investigations are continuing into securing investment into the region for these services. Options deployed in other areas (such as Gloucestershire) include NHS and public health funding, as a preventative measure to alleviate people suffering ill health in cold/damp homes, to reduce pressures on NHS and public health services; and securing CSR funding, such as funding from electricity distribution network operator Scottish and Southern Energy (SSEN) who fund local energy advice services across much of southern England.</p> <p>Cost estimate based on costs of running existing local energy advice services, obtained in consultation with UA officers and existing UA funding arrangements.</p>	£165,000	Ongoing to secure sustainable funding from health services and/or CSR for £165k/yr
Heat from mines	<p>The West of England has a rich mining heritage. These former workings, often flooded with warm water, could provide a strategic heating/cooling resource.</p> <p>Funding is needed to confirm the business case; and if confirmed, could de-risk heat extraction for commercial investment. The illustrative costs comprise: - c£10k to commission Coal Authority Stage 1 study for West of England as a whole</p>	<p>£818,865 (existing from Renewable Energy & Energy Capacity allocation)</p> <p>£841,135 (new)</p> <p>Total</p>	Match funding to be sought; heat from mines, if viable, could leverage in significant commercial investment in heating

	<p>- Stage 2 studies plus investigative boreholes for up to 6 high potential areas identified in Stage 1: £1,650k Total: £1,660k</p> <p>These costs are based on consultation with UA officers, who in-turn have consulted with the Coal Authority.</p>	£1,660,000	20 – 60,000 homes
Regional heat vulnerability and cooling resilience mapping	<p>This would be a commissioned study/ies to expand geography and scope of Bristol’s Heat Vulnerability Mapping. It would cover the whole region, look at rural as well as urban environments; and determine cooling strategy for region’s buildings (role of building solutions (e.g. reverse cycle heat pumps) and network solutions (cooling networks or ambient loops)</p> <p>Cost estimate being soft-tested with Bristol Climate Adaptation Manager and consultants with suitable skillsets</p>	£300,000	£0
Total from existing GRF	Round 2 of Nature Recovery Funding; 25% towards Retrofit Accelerator Phase 2; & 54% towards Retrofit Accelerator Phase 3	£3,679,942	£2,100,000
Total expanded GRF		£6,000,000	£5,865,000
Total		£9,679,942	£7,965,000

Appendix 2 - Climate Ecological Strategy and Action Plan – 2022

Overview of progress in delivering our actions

This background paper provides details on progress of actions in the West of England Climate Ecological Strategy and Action Plan (CESAP) 2022. It groups progress against the CESAP themes, summarising where these have been successfully delivered and therefore are not included as an action for the CESAP 2023; where action is ongoing, what's been successfully achieved and what needs progressing this next year; and where a rethink has occurred and a different approach is proposed.

Theme: Transport

Reduce number of car trips and freight journeys by:

Reviewing our transport major scheme programme to confirm how our schemes perform in terms of their carbon impact.

Review underway of carbon impacts of major transport schemes. **Ongoing action** to consider not just operational, but embedded carbon and wider environmental impacts and climate resilience - and embed this within decision making and project management. DfT guidance, expected Q4 2022/23, will allow us to robustly prioritise major schemes which have the greatest ability to reduce car dependency and congestion (aligning to improving air quality).

Increasing the pace of transport decarbonisation by progressing demand management measures including Travel Planning, marketing, parking policy, and a package of Workplace Parking Levies and/ or congestion charging areas (we will do this by updating JLTP4)

DfT guidance on updating JLTPs expected Q4 2022/23. We have commissioned and are reviewing a West of England Transport Decarbonisation Study evidence-base. Working with UAs, as an **ongoing action** these will enable us to update JLTP4 by Spring 2024.

Developing detailed plans for a liveable neighbourhood in Bristol and confirming areas to develop liveable neighbourhoods in B&NES and South Gloucestershire with a view to rolling out a programme of delivery across the region to reduce reliance on cars.

Programme delivery has **successfully** secured funding via City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), and has awarded funding to one Bristol pilot. This is **ongoing** work. Outline Business Case (OBC) is being developed for Bristol project for a planned trial; B&NES and South Gloucestershire are being scoped, ahead of drawing down capital development funding - as well as a second tranche of projects in Bristol.

Increase cycling & walking by:

Delivering 14 cycling and walking schemes as identified in the cycling & walking strategy and work with partners to start to design schemes and proposals to submit to active travel fund (round three).

We have **successfully** started designing these schemes, with each completing their Outline Business Cases – targeting delivery this coming financial year. Work is **ongoing** to deliver these. Cotham Hill, Park Row, Old Market Gap Active Travel Fund (ATF) schemes are just about to start construction. Kingswood design is being finalised. We have incorporated these schemes into wider strategic schemes where possible, to minimise disruption and achieve economies of scale in construction. In addition, we've **successfully** secured and allocated £360k towards from the Transforming Cities Fund in providing at least 28 cycle hangers on Bristol Council housing sites being delivered by this Spring.

Launching e-Bike offer within Bristol, with a view to expanding across the region

An e-bike offer within Bristol in February 2022, operated by ShareBike in partnership with Big Issue. As of June 2022, the scheme showed initial **success** had 150 e-bikes, 33,000 rides and 3,800 users. In August 2022, ShareBike pulled out. We have had to **rethink** and are now procuring an Integrated Micromobility Service to include e-scooters, e-bikes and e-cargo bikes, due to launch Summer 2023.

Increase uptake of public transport by:

Delivering tap on tap off transport ticketing, offering a simpler public transport fares system which provides better value for money through fare capping in place for adult single trips and developing an integrated ticketing plan to provide a single consistent offer to customers across the region.

This was **successfully** launched on 17th July across all First West of England services, including those in North Somerset. We have also implemented fare capping in place for adult single trips. **Ongoing** work is developing integrated ticketing initiatives, with the aim to provide travellers a single ticket for using different forms of public transport, with plans to develop the multi operator scheme to introduce mobile tickets and availability through the new multi modal MaaS system in summer 2023. Expansion of tap on tap off systems to multi operator ticketing is expected in in 2024/25.

Improving frequency and accessibility of rail services through commencement of key infrastructure delivery including MetroWest Phase 1a and Phase 2 and commencing CRSTS delivery

We have **successfully** introduced additional services between Bristol Temple Meads (BTM and Severn Beach in Dec '21. Work is **ongoing** between the Combined Authority, Network Rail and Great Western Railways to accelerate the introduction of new enhanced half hourly services between BTM and both Westbury and Gloucester from May 2023.

We have **successfully** secured DfT capital funding for MetroWest1 (Portishead Line), and secured Development Consent Order approval from DfT in Nov '22. Detailed design work has now started, with line opening planned in 2026.

We have **successfully** secured planning approval for Ashley Down Station, which is the first station planned to be constructed under MetroWest 2, with funding approved at 27th January Committee. Construction work will commence in January (subject to funding being confirmed) and the station is programmed to be open in 2024.

The remaining two stations to be delivered under MetroWest 2, North Filton and Henbury, are at outline design stage. Planning approval has **successfully** been approved for North Filton, and is anticipated Henbury and Charfield station in the next few months; with these new stations planned to open in 2026.

We have **successfully** secured CRSTS funding and have recently started design and optioneering work with Network Rail aimed at delivering step free access at Lawrence Hill station. Construction works are planned to start in 2025 following completion of design work.

Improving frequency and accessibility of bus services through commencement of key infrastructure delivery including commitments made in the Bus Service Improvement Plans and transport hubs in Future Transport Zones

We have **successfully** secured £540m in our City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) and a further £105m to improve bus services specifically, including in North Somerset, in our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) settlement. We have successfully commenced infrastructure delivery, allowing the extension of metrobus routes to Cribbs Patchway now operational and Bedminster Green section works well underway.

Ongoing work will see our CRSTS and BSIP programmes continue in delivery; and see metrobus improvements at Bedminster Green (linked to wider regeneration project).

Increase uptake of public transport by:

Building better bus shelters, enabling green roofs and investing in green areas around stops including commissioning at least 15 new green roof bus stops and designing new standards to improve quality of wildlife habitats and buses and the surrounding verges

Work is **ongoing** to deliver at least 15 new green roof bus stops. The first 3 green roof bus shelters are due to be delivered in South Gloucestershire by March 2023. We are working to develop a regional bus stop standard to provide a consistent standard for green roof bus shelters.

Launching new transport brand to build a consistent brand across the region to increase awareness of public transport capabilities and provision and build trust amongst users

Following a public design competition launched in January 2022, **ongoing** work is underway in preparing this brand. This is being aligned to our revised corporate branding work. This is due to launch in later in 2023

Launching public consultation on a new public transport system within the region to prioritise deliverable routes and modes

Building on the 'Big Choices on Buses' conversation run by Dan Norris, work is **Ongoing** to prepare public consultations on the public transport needs within the region

Increase uptake of low carbon vehicles including electric vehicles by:

Increasing the amount of electric charge infrastructure in the region by investing £5m in a range of new projects (informed by EV charging strategy & feasibility work) and accessing government funds through £500m EV Charging Strategy to enhance our work where possible

Work is **ongoing**. Since the previous CESAP report on the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure delivery action, Bristol City Council (BCC) have indicated they have put on hold all work towards the delivery of on-street residential EV lamp-post charging schemes. The CA is pursuing ways of delivering a compliant Final Business Case (FBC), through agreed delegations, to West of England CEOs that will enable us to progress delivery of EV Charging infrastructure in Bath & North East Somerset & South Gloucestershire while exploring with BCC options to progress the remaining scope.

Theme: Buildings & Places

Increase the energy performance of homes and buildings across the region by:

Increasing retrofit across the region. Working in partnership to develop and launch the regional Retrofit Accelerator to increase the scale and pace of retrofit within the region by creating a hub for homeowners to access information on retrofit and increase the number of accredited surveyors, coordinators and designers

We have been **successfully** working in partnership - allocating £3m towards Phase 1 of the Retrofit Accelerator, working with fellow councils, and procuring the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE). This first element is the Homeowner Advice Service. **Ongoing** work will see this launch in Spring with a website and advice line opening. CSE have set up 'Retrofit West' CIC to deliver this phase.

Developing further retrofit interventions, building on the retrofit accelerator, and focussing on development of supply chain and skills (developing a business case for this to access funding from the Green Recovery Fund)

We have **successfully** allocated £2m of funding towards the Retrofit Accelerator Phase II - a Supply Side Market & Capacity Building project. The Full Business Case is drafted, going to committee Q\$ 2022/23 **Ongoing** work, assuming this is approved, will see this launch this summer. It will provide a minimum of 350 business supports at a range of intensities with the outcome of increasing retrofit levels; whole house retrofit and installation of heat pumps.

Delivering the Low Carbon Challenge Fund's Innovative Housing Retrofit Scheme to retrofit 25 hard-to-treat properties within the region, acting as a demonstrator for new technologies and to support the wider roll out of retrofit

£1.5m has been **successfully** awarded to three innovative projects in the region. These cover 3 types: pre-1900, Easiform and rural off gas grid homes. Construction work is **ongoing** across these three projects, resulting in between 50-75 whole house retrofits to net zero or net zero ready standards.

Continue to grow delivery of the Low Carbon Challenge Fund Green Business Grants to improve energy efficiency of commercial and industrial properties (developing a business case for this to access funding from the Green Recovery Fund)

We have **successfully** surveyed 360 SME businesses and awarded 166 with over £1m of grant funding match - and have grown the Low Carbon Challenge Fund team into the Regional Low Carbon Delivery in September 2022 with a further £2m of funding for business grants, and expanding the team offering zero carbon surveys. **Ongoing** work will see this support provide c400 SME businesses free surveys, and up to 225 with grants towards energy efficiency measures.

Skills Bootcamps (regional funding): Wave 3 to deliver 4 green elements: 1) Delivering training programmes to increase the number of retrofit installers within the region including construction skills, 2) Green skills for future tech, 3) Modern Methods of Construction and 4) Upskilling retrofit.

We ran Wave 3 Green Skills Bootcamps during 2022/23. These initially struggled to attract companies, with the exception of the Retrofit element seeing significant interest from providers. Following a **rethink**, we more heavily promoted these in November and have seen more interest. **Ongoing work** will see Wave 4 launch this April.

Working with South West Net Zero Hub to deliver retrofitting schemes to improve energy efficiency to homes in fuel poverty including Green Homes Grant

The Hub, hosted by us, has **successfully** delivered energy retrofits to 1007 homes across the West of England (including North Somerset) via the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Programme. 440 of these have been raised to an EPC C or above. The Hub have **ongoing** work on, including awaiting the outcome of a Social Housing Decarb Fund bid - which would see it working with social housing providers to retrofit their stock across the southwest

Increase the number of new carbon neutral homes and buildings being developed that deliver Biodiversity Net Gain by:

Requiring increased development of low emission and net zero new build homes standards through our planning policy

Following the decision to pause the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) - this action has had a **rethink**. The evidence we and SW Hub developed and continued collaborative work across the region has seen **success** for Bath & NE Somerset Council in adopting the country's first net zero homes planning policy. **Ongoing** work by other local councils is underway to adopt similar requirements across the region's local planning policy

Support businesses to upskill around retrofit and green skills via Workforce for the Future Programme (namely the Modern Methods of Construction project (YTKO), Skills for Clean Growth (UWE) and digital learning factories (NCC)

The YTKO, UWE and NCC projects are **ongoing** and due to conclude in August 2023. Work is ongoing with SMEs, with learning feeding into other activity in our Business and Skills activity

Increase the number of new carbon neutral homes and buildings being developed that deliver Biodiversity Net Gain by:

Developing a long-term strategic plan setting out where homes, jobs and infrastructure are to support low emissions developments that are linked with biodiversity objectives including increasing wildlife abundance and new habitat creation.

Following the decision to pause the SDS - this action has had a **rethink**. Work is **ongoing** by local councils in updating their local plans to reflect shared 2030 ambitions

Use planning policy to ensure delivery of minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain across new developments

Following the decision to pause the SDS - this action has had a **rethink**. Bath & NE Somerset Council has had **success** in adopting minimum 10% BNG. **Ongoing** work by other local councils is underway to adopt similar requirements across the region's local planning policy

Reduce reliance on fossil-fuel based heating by:

Using planning policy to develop and implement an energy hierarchy for preferred energy systems to influence new developments and help shift from fossil fuel heating

Following the decision to pause the SDS - this action has had a **rethink**. The evidence we and SW Hub developed and continued collaborative work across the region has seen **success** for Bath & NE Somerset Council in adopting 'Energy In Use' targets as part of its Net Zero requirements. These establish an energy hierarchy in new buildings, requiring them to achieve energy performance levels prior to implementing renewable solutions. **Ongoing** work by other local councils is underway to adopt similar requirements across the region's local policy

Releasing the regional Placemaking Charter, setting out the quality standards expected in the region for developers, architects and house builders.

The Place Making Charter was **successfully** launched on 20 July 2022.

Theme: Nature Recovery

Improve the quality and connectivity of existing spaces for nature and wildlife by:

Improving existing natural spaces including Common Connections, Bath Riverline and Chew Valley Lake (Delivering Green Infrastructure Strategy projects)

We have **successfully** allocated £3m towards WaterSpace Connected and £3m to Chew Valley Lake from the GRF. **Ongoing** work will see Common Connections continue in its delivery. Bath River Line will continue in its development phase, having successfully recruited a project manager. WaterSpace Connected Phase I is progressing to full business case, having also successfully recruited a project manager - with community engagement starting early 2023. Chew Valley Lake Recreational Trail are developing their full business case too.

Developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) that provides a coherent regional vision for nature's recovery, building on the West of England Nature Recovery Network and helps direct investment in the natural environment into the most effective areas

A delay from Government sees this work as **Ongoing**. Government to roll out LNRS from April 2023. We have successfully recruited a LNRS project manager in Bath & NE Somerset Council; have set up governance arrangements and are scoping the LNRS, including seeking input from ADEPT.

Opening Green Recovery Fund (GRF) for projects to create new habitats and improve quality and connectivity of existing spaces for nature

We **successfully** opened the GRF to nature recovery projects - receiving 5 bids totalling £4.4m, and awarding 4 of these with a total of £3.2m whilst securing £4m match. Further **ongoing** work will see these progress throughout 2023: Somer Valley Rediscovered, Capricorn Quay, Frome Valley River Reserve and Avon Needs Trees.

Planting more trees and create habitat spaces along strategic corridors (incl. CRSTS and strategic nature recovery networks) and improved bus shelters (as part of replacement programme)

We have **successfully** awarded £732k and achieved £1.5m match for the Avon Needs Trees project. This seeks to plant 113 acres (50,000 trees). This and other nature recovery projects will result in more trees planted. Work is **ongoing** to embed nature recovery in bus stops and our strategic transport work (see reporting on Transport actions).

Working with partners (incl. Natural England) to develop a monitoring framework for the natural environment in the West of England to enable us to measure progress towards our ambitions, including the possibility to use a wildlife index to measure abundance and diversity of wildlife amongst the current ecological network

Create new spaces for nature and wildlife by:

Launching the Community Pollinator Fund to increase the number and quality of habitats for pollinators and bees across the region

Using planning policy to set out where homes, jobs and infrastructure are needed linking in with the biodiversity and ecology objectives, including those set out in Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy, Environment Act, Tree and Woodland Strategy, including the delivery of at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain

Ensuring that transport and planning projects delivered by the Combined Authority positively contribute towards nature's net recovery, including delivering at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain

Supporting WENP and the Forest of Avon Trust in accelerating action to deliver the ambitions of the Forest of Avon Plan and access government funds such as Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund

Enable business, other stakeholders and residents to contribute to nature's recovery, including unlocking investment in nature-based solutions by:

Launching the West of England Placemaking Charter for creating high quality, biodiverse places that support access to nature and encourage health and wellbeing

Work is **ongoing**. We are recruiting a data analyst to gather evidence on the state of nature in the region, to inform the West of England Local Nature Recovery Strategy and better target funding for nature-based projects in the region

We have **successfully** run the 1st round of the Community Pollinator Fund, awarding 13 projects a combined £440,000 to create 224,000m² of habitats. **Ongoing** work to award further rounds (£560,000) is aimed to gain 312,498m² by 2024, supported by volunteers (target number 3,693 and hours 12,868)

Following the decision to pause the SDS - this action has had a **rethink**. Bath & NE Somerset Council has had **success** in adopting minimum 10% BNG. **Ongoing** work by other local councils is underway to adopt similar requirements across the region's local planning policy

The Environment Team has **successfully** recruited Senior Managers for nature recovery and a Senior Manager for transport. Their **ongoing** work with colleagues will see transport projects contribute to BNG

The £300k WENP bid was a **success**.

Ongoing work will accelerate work planting trees across the region through a partnership and new posts with the UAs and Forest of Avon Trust; in working towards the West of England ambition to double tree cover across the West of England by 2050; with at least 175-200 hectares by March 2025.

The Place Making Charter was **successfully** launched on 20 July 2022.

Working with business to protect pollinators and create green spaces by holding first regional Bee Bold Day and creating a targeted business campaign around this, including reducing pesticide use

The first community Bee Bold Day was **successfully** held at Siston common in partnership with the Common Connections project, including mass planting and family activities. Awards were given out by Mayor to community groups, business and charities to celebrate action to protect pollinators and green spaces. **Ongoing** work is linked to the Pollinator Fund

Supporting and promoting UA and partner organisations (e.g. WENP, Eat Local) engagement campaigns to raise awareness of and engagement with the natural environment, and encourage conservation volunteering and pro-environmental behaviours

We **successfully** delivered the 'Love Local. Explore Local' campaign, showcasing great spots to eat and shop locally. The WENP bid was successful too (see above). **Ongoing** work will see us support further campaigns to encourage residents to rediscover their local food growers and high streets, including the City Nature Challenge (April/May 2023), Festival of Nature (June '23) and Schools Summit (Spring '23)

Working with partners to support the development of platforms that enable businesses to invest in the natural environment (e.g. Bristol and Avon Catchment Market)

Dedicated resource was needed. We have **successfully** recruited a Senior Environment Manager to drive this work forwards. **Ongoing** work with Bristol Avon Catchment Market, Wildlife Trust habitat banking and Net Zero fund development is defining actions for our 2023 CESAP

Using regional skills programmes including Skills bootcamps and adult education budget to build skills required for ecology and natural environment sector.

The bootcamps have had good success, but there has been lack of uptake in those relating to nature. Following a **rethink**, ongoing work will see a revised proposal in how we support people developing green skills associated with nature

Community Support Fund (CSF) £1.5m of community projects including a number with environmental focus - linking communities, social cohesion and environment - HACT social value measures include pride of place and environmental awareness

The 4 CSF programmes focused on environmental social value are **successfully** delivering on target for March 23. So far 162 participants have enrolled, 86 have completed and 50 have progressed to further skills, employability or volunteering.

Green Futures Fund: testing innovative approaches to delivery of school careers activity and curriculum that align with the regional 'green' skills agenda.

This was **successfully** launched in March 22. Small numbers were reached through the pilot and saw more interest and focus on low carbon and the LMI from our green skills reports. **Ongoing** work is evaluating this, informing development of supporting people developing green skills associated with nature (see above) - and also to be informed by the regional Schools Summit in April 2023.

Theme: Businesses

Support businesses to transition to low emission, sustainable practices and adapt for climate resilience by:

Delivering 400+ free carbon surveys and funding 200+ small & medium enterprises to make energy saving improvements to their buildings and equipment will be completed for SMEs as part of the Green Business Grant Scheme

We have **successfully** awarded 166 with over £1m of grant funding match - and have grown the Low Carbon Challenge Fund team into the Regional Low Carbon Delivery in September 2022 with a further £2m of funding for business grants. **Ongoing** work will see this support up to 225 with grants towards energy efficiency measures.

Developing and implementing a carbon literacy programme for businesses to improve their understanding of climate and ecological emergencies and actions they can take to help address it

We **successfully** delivered a carbon literacy webinar programme, linked to above surveys and Green Business Grants programme. We have embedded carbon literacy within the Growth Hub offer to business (see below).

Using the Growth Hub Net Zero Cluster to support and promote low carbon business practices with our Net zero enterprise advisers incl. developing a regional communications campaign to business and industry – measure, monitor and reduce emissions, prepare for the local impacts of a changing climate, protect, and restore nature.

Our Growth Hub has **successfully** supported businesses. This is despite national funding being reduced. Since April 2022, 43 Medium Intensity (Over 1 hour/referral to a programme) interactions regarding Sustainability & Clean Growth have been held. A further, 98 interactions where 'Sustainability', 36 interactions where 'Net Zero', 41 interactions where 'Low Carbon' have been discussed; and a further 33 referrals for Carbon Surveys. We have also made Green Business Support one of five key areas within the Growth Hub, meaning **ongoing** work will develop a Net Zero pillar of support on the Growth Hub website and promote to increase SME awareness of tools and support available for launch in June 2023

Continue to grow delivery of Low Carbon Challenge Fund Green Business Grants to improve energy efficiency of commercial and industrial properties (developing a business case for this to access funding from the Green Recovery Fund)

We have **successfully** surveyed 360 SME businesses - and have grown the Low Carbon Challenge Fund team into the Regional Low Carbon Delivery in September 2022. **Ongoing** work will see this support provide c400 SME businesses with free surveys.

Ensure local people to access green jobs and bring 23,000 green jobs across the region by:

Delivering careers advice to school aged children through the Careers Hub and Green Futures Fund to encourage them into careers to support key skills needed to support our 2030 ambitions, including ecology

Providing young people will information on jobs and careers that contribute to NET ZERO through an online digital tool used by schools as well as resources for teachers.

Green' Teacher Encounters Project - offering schools the opportunity for teachers to take part in industry placements within 'green' employers to better understand the pathways and careers available now and in the future within green skills. Teachers also involve the employer in curriculum delivery aligned to green skills and LMI.

Using Workforce for the Future to deliver business support to 220 SMEs to understand what skills / knowledge they need in place to meet the 2030 ambitions and support the growth of modern methods of construction

Ensure that the refresh of the regional skills and employment plan includes focus on green job growth.

The Green Futures Fund was **successfully** launched in March 22. This saw interest and focus on low carbon and the LMI from our green skills reports. **Ongoing** work is evaluating this, informing development of potential to scale across all schools - to be informed by the regional Schools Summit in April 2023.

The Career Pilot partner has **successfully** been procured. **Ongoing** work to is captured in our CESAP 2023 proposed actions

Schools have **successfully** been recruited to take part across the region. **Ongoing** work on this is dependent on funding confirmation from the CEC, captured in our CESAP 2023 proposed actions

We have **successfully** supported 43 businesses and 59 residents through Workforce for the Future. The UWE Future project Skills for Clean Growth (UWE) is helping businesses to measure their carbon emissions and develop practices within the business to reduce emissions. Target of 100 business supports (currently achieved 24) and support to 200 employees/residents (currently achieved 16).

Also the Modern Methods of Construction project delivered through Workforce for the Future by YTKO to bring more sustainable practices and skills into the construction sector. Target to support 120 businesses (19 currently achieved) and 150 employees/residents supported (43 currently achieved). Workforce for the Future concludes this Dec 23, with actual support to businesses finishing in September this year. Target is to support 471 SMEs and 1062 learners.

We have **successfully** made Green Business Support a cross-cutting theme in our Growth Hub, and green skills being a cross-cutting theme across our Skills Connect portal. Work is **ongoing** on refreshing regional skills and employment plan provision, expected to conclude in October 2023

Prepare business for emerging green economies by:

Helping key sectors (incl. manufacturing & engineering) to innovate new sustainable technologies and supply chains via a range of projects, including through Workforce for the Future, DETI and Made Smarter projects

Digital Engineering, Technology and Innovation (DETI) Phase 1 has **successfully** been completed, including supporting more than 4,200 children across 60 schools.

Made Smarter launched in July 22 via the Growth Hub, and **ongoing** work is supporting 80 SME manufacturing businesses.

Workforce for the Future is reported on above.

Encourage businesses to 'green' their procurement, supply chain, and recruitment practices through incorporate green elements into Job Descriptions, all via the Good Employment Charter

The Good Employment Charter has been **successfully** launched. Sustainability objectives have been woven throughout the 7 pillars of the Charter. **Ongoing** work is encouraging employees to sign up to the Charter, and we are investigating the possibility of issuing a Green Digital Badge

Encouraging innovation in low carbon services, goods and technologies by awarding 50 new R&D grants to SMEs and 15 new products, processes or services (via Business Innovation Fund)

Round 3 of the Business Innovation Fund saw 9 SMEs **successfully** awarded £490,040 in grant funding towards a total of £2.2m R&D project costs. The SMEs have forecast that over a 5-year period 15m tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions would be saved if their R&D is successful and the new products processes and/or services they create are commercialised as they envisage. Round 4 closed in December 2022.

Revising our regional procurement strategy to maximise the use of social value weighting to procure locally sourced goods and services.

Work is **ongoing** to revise our corporate approach to procurement, being led by our newly appointed Procurement Business Partner. Following a rethink, this approach will include embedding sustainability commitments within procurement. This will be informed by Local Council approaches to green procurement and embedding sustainability within wider decision making - including South Gloucestershire and Bath & NE Somerset councils developing approaches aligned to Doughnut Economics, Bristol One City's use of Sustainable Development Goals, and North Somerset's work with Centre for Thriving Places

Using Invest Bristol & Bath to create a campaign to attract new green businesses to the region

Work on developing this campaign is **ongoing** - building upon the 'Clean Tech and Energy' landing page and associated articles on the website.

Theme: Energy

Increase renewable energy generation across the region, including through local, community focussed generation by:

Using Green Recovery Fund (GRF) to stimulate further renewable energy generation and capacity, including securing ongoing funding for Local Energy Scheme

Round One of the GRF saw 5 applications totalling £5.5m apply. Two projects **succeeded** in securing funding: Bristol Energy Network SIFFFT wind turbine project was awarded £1.5m and provided £1.3m match; and Bristol Energy Co-op Solar Rooftop project was awarded £569k, providing £2.1m match.

Ongoing work will see us supporting and managing the aforementioned wind turbine and solar rooftop projects.

Undertaking a feasibility study to de-risk the development stage of community energy, including creating a revolving fund

We had initially expected support for community energy to continue nationally, but had to **rethink** when Gov grant the Rural Community Energy Scheme drew to a close last year. **Ongoing** on this is to convert some of the Local Energy Scheme to provide development funding support; to encourage community energy applications to our Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF); and work with the SW Net Zero Hub on exploring other development funding opportunities that our local groups can access

Delivering Solar Together to increase number of Solar Panels in the region and reviewing its impact to decide if we will participate in a second round

The first round of Solar Together was **successfully** delivered. This saw 1,310 residents accept an offer - with c950 residents seeing panels installed, and 600 batteries installed. More than 8,000 solar panels installed across West of England Combined Authority & North Somerset area created 2.8MW solar PV capacity and saving 575 tonnes of carbon in year 1. **Ongoing** work with fellow unitary authorities is looking at launching a Round 2.

Delivering Innovative Local Energy Scheme (round 2) to support the implementation of innovative renewable energy projects of between 50kW and 5MW, that also deliver community benefits

Two projects were successfully awarded over £800k in Round 2 - a Bath and West Community Energy solar array in a community meadow at Fairy Hill, and Clevedon Pools lido river heat pump infrastructure. From Round One, the Ambition Community Energy 4.2MW wind turbine is being installed in Lawrence Weston and is due to be operational this spring. **Ongoing** work is overseeing the aforementioned projects, including work with National Grid on local grid constraints holding back the Fairy Hill project; and a Round 3 funding round will seek to for the £473k still to be allocated will launch early 2023

Encourage development of renewable energy schemes across the region (working with the South West Net Zero Hub to allocate funding and advice focussed on proven cheaper technologies e.g. solar, wind)

The Hub, hosted by the Combined Authority, has seen **success** supporting the development of renewable energy schemes. It has provided support and guidance to LA climate officers to enable development of rooftop and ground mount solar proposals, enabling a number of successful PSDS applications, and supporting funding bids for further domestic retrofit works across the CA and wider SW region. Their work will be **ongoing**, following their recent success in securing ongoing commitment and funding from central Government to be hosted by us and operate across the southwest

Continue to develop and fund the Low Carbon Challenge Fund's Innovative Local Energy Scheme to support renewable energy generation

We are **successfully** continuing to develop and fund the Local Energy Scheme. A further £660k funding has been allocated as ongoing funding. **Ongoing** work will see a new Local Energy Scheme grant round open in early 2023, and we're developing whether a proportion of this can provide development finance for community energy schemes in our region.

Work in partnership to develop new smart approaches to the decarbonisation, storage, management and distribution of energy by:

Ensuring new developments gas & electricity requirements are accurately included energy planning building on North Fringe & SW Bristol development plans (EPIC project)

The Energy Planning Integrated with Councils (EPIC), Feb 21 - Dec 22, has been **successfully** completed and findings published on their website:
<https://www.nationalgrid.co.uk/projects/energy-planning-integrated-with-councils-epic>
Ongoing work is seeing Unitary Authorities developing their Local Plans, including South Gloucestershire's work in the North Fringe - and us working with National Grid (see action below)

Increasing energy innovation funding coming to the region, working with partners such as Western Power

Western Power Distribution were acquired by National Grid, with their distribution business known as National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED). We are **successfully** working closely with NGED - they have presented to and sit on the region's Climate Action Panel; we have partnered with them on an innovation funding bid (outcome this Spring); and are coordinating engagement with them and fellow councils across our region. We have successfully awarded £2.5m funding and approved the Full Business Case for the Hydrogen Sustainable Transport Economy Accelerator (HSTEA).

Our work on increasing energy innovation is **ongoing**. We are working with National Grid in delivering renewable energy on our constrained grid; will be working with other infrastructure providers as part of our new work on Climate Resilience; supporting and working with councils on Net Zero Innovation funding bids; and are building region's strengths in energy infrastructure, hydrogen, wind and nuclear into our Digital and Innovation plans; and working with the likes of Western Gateway, Innovate UK and their associated Catapults

Appendix 4 – Post-16 Skills Planning (Green Skills)

Background:

West of England Combined Authority commissioned Pye Tait Consulting and Cambridge Econometrics to undertake a two-part demand and supply forecasting assessment of the region's post-16 estate and infrastructure in order to establish the extent to which it will be able to meet its future skills and training needs¹.

The report showed that the construction sector employs just under 48,000 people in the West of England area and future growth is predicted to be strong, at around 1.6% per year up to 2036. It states that green construction (e.g. housing, retrofit and energy installations) will constitute the key areas of demand, and these will require technical and green skills over and above those already being taught, as well as the upskilling of substantial numbers of current employees.

¹ Post16 Skills Horizon Scanning Research Report (westofengland-ca.gov.uk)

The region's net zero ambitions are predicted to result in 52% of the green jobs created being in the sector. These will be primarily in retrofitting existing buildings with energy efficient and green measures, including over 11,000 additional jobs in the installation of heat pumps and 2,500 additional jobs in installing insulation².

The region's FE Colleges have highlighted that construction facilities in the region are currently not meeting demand with the use of external temporary accommodation forced on colleges by excess demand and limited internal space. Other gaps identified by the report included: limited provision of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) – ideally a site which enables expansion of scaffolding, logistics and modern methods of construction, including potential for off-site fabrications skills; and lack of green skills provision to support delivery of sustainable building, retrofitting, and low carbon heating installation.

The report calls for greater numbers of retrofitting and installation courses to meet green skills needs (for new entrants and existing workforce), alongside more sector apprenticeships with digital skills incorporated. It also recommends more funding to help boost the West of England's 'ecosystem' by giving providers confidence to develop training programmes with input from green suppliers to meet anticipated need.

Action to date and next steps:

The Combined Authority has developed a strong strategic and high-level evidence base via the Green Skills Report, Retrofit Analysis and Post-16 Education and Infrastructure reports. These will underpin a refreshed West of England Employment and Skills Plan due this year to ensure that Net Zero is fundamental to regional skills policy, planning and delivery.

A Retrofit Step-up (£200K) was funded as part of the £50m Green Recovery Fund, aimed at engaging and upskilling residents for retrofit roles, as well as regional co-ordination capacity to better join up education providers and employers. Alongside this, a range of Skills Boot camps have been delivered including 'upskilling to retrofit, 'training of retrofit advisers and assessors' (see also Appendix 2).

Further work is now needed to understand in greater detail, the current and future supply and demand position for green construction skills (including retrofit) to inform training provision and any future capital investment in the FE estate needed, including the potential for a Regional Centre for Net Zero Construction Skills. It is proposed that an allocation of £100K is made within the £6m ask to the Combined Authority Committee to enable this.

This will also inform ongoing work on regional priorities to ensure that skills is fully reflected as a key driver of economic growth and development, particularly in relation to Net Zero. It is recommended that an update on this work and the refreshed Employment and Skills Plan brought back to Committee at a later date.

² Green skills - West of England Combined Authority (westofengland-ca.gov.uk)

WEST OF ENGLAND CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2023



FOREWORD

The West of England is an amazing place to grow up and grow old in. But we are living in the midst of a deadly climate and nature emergency. Many of our people and businesses are struggling to afford escalating energy bills during the current cost of living crisis. We are making progress to support our people, reduce emissions and restore habitats across the region. However, we need to come together across society and sectors in responding to these emergencies.

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In the last year we have seen and supported these collaborative efforts. I'm proud we have launched and allocated much of the £50m Green Recovery Fund. This is being invested in community energy initiatives to deliver solar and wind energy; innovative housing retrofits; improving and creating new areas for nature to recovery in Bristol Harbour, Somer Valley, Frome Valley, the Forest of Avon and via the Community Pollinator Fund; as match-funding for our SME carbon surveys and grants for retrofit and rooftop solar generation; and in establishing our flagship Retrofit Accelerator, to support households insulating homes, and local small businesses growing to meet local demand.

Our region is punching above its weight in progressing towards net zero energy. We have the country's largest water source heat pump in



Bristol's harbour, and the country's largest onshore wind turbine is being constructed in Avonmouth by the Lawrence Weston community. Bristol City Leap represents a huge leap forwards in partnership investment in energy, seeking to retrofit and deliver 182MW of new renewable energy generation through £424m of investment.

We are securing the investment needed to make moving around our region sustainable. We secured £540 million for our City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement to radically improve

infrastructure for buses, rail services and walking and cycling; and a further £105 million to improve local bus services.

But we must increase our activity to ensure residents, businesses and nature can prosper in our brilliant part of the world.

The scale of the challenge remains daunting and will require continued joined-up action locally, regionally, nationally and globally if we are to rise to this immense challenge. It is heartening to see the action being taken by, individuals, families,

communities and businesses all across the region who are doing things differently and stepping up to the challenge. Indeed, people from our most rural communities, to our market towns and great cities of Bristol and Bath are motivated to tackle the crisis and are often showing our politicians what can be achieved when it comes to the environment.

Many of the people that I meet and hear from are deeply concerned about the environment. Residents' bills have almost doubled this last year, with businesses facing even higher increases to their energy bills. This is partly driving the cost-of-living crisis. This is why we've supported local energy advice charities in advising residents this winter; and are expanding our offer of free carbon surveys and grant-funding support for SMEs looking to save energy and money on bills. Last year, we supported 360 SMEs with carbon surveys and provided grant funding to 160 of them retrofitting

Even if we achieve our region's ambitions by 2030, we face and must prepare for climate change. We need regional resilience to climate change, by ensuring our people and projects are supported in adapting to climate change.

Young people are particularly anxious - they are most alert to global warming and the ecological emergency, and know they have the most to lose. Aware of the great strength of public opinion here in the West of England we have rightly set a very

ambitious target to achieve net zero and halt and reverse decline in nature by 2030. I want the West of England to be the bee and pollinator capital of the U.K.

I will ensure that the West of England Combined Authority which I lead, takes bold action and works with partners across communities, businesses and the public sector in making the necessary decisions to rise to the challenge of saving our planet.

Although great strides are being made, we cannot do this in isolation. The West of England Combined Authority will need to work in very close partnership with residents, regional partners and our local councils. We will desperately need Government to do much, much, more too – and I will continue to relentlessly make our case to them. We must all support each other and collaborate across the region to achieve our aims.

This strategy and action plan builds on the great work already being undertaken and some of the successes that have already been achieved. It sets out practical steps we are taking as a region. It highlights the challenges we must continue to address. It continues our journey that I know people right across the West of England are committed to. It is a living document and will be amended and updated to reflect changing circumstances and new ideas that we will need to embrace, if we are not only to successfully protect the planet, but make it better than now.

I'm hugely proud of our great region for many reasons. I know that together we can make a real difference in the fight against climate change and helping reverse declines in our local wildlife and natural habitats. Let's get to it and show our country and the world how it can be done.

Dan Norris

West of England Metro Mayor

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OUR PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE

We have set six priorities where action is needed and where the region will deliver tangible progress to tackle the climate and ecological emergency. Our six themes are priority areas that have been developed in collaboration between the West of England Combined Authority and partners across the region.

Key cross cutting themes essential to the delivery of our priorities are: securing further funding and investment into our region; good quality data being used to inform decision making; the skills and supply chains to meet our region's needs; and strong collaboration. We are working closer than ever with:

- Public Sector Partners: Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire councils; NHS and other emergency services; schools, colleges and universities; and others
- Businesses: both small and large, including Business West, our 4 universities and utility companies including Wessex Water, National Grid, Bristol Water and telecoms providers.
- Communities: both individual residents and established community groups



By targeting action and investment in these priority areas we expect to deliver significant climate and ecological benefits. We seek additional investment into the West of England's environment, including allocating remaining and expanding the Green Recovery Fund (GRF) investment in regional priorities.

The table on the following page identifies our regional priorities and how our key actions for next year are aligned.

Our priorities		Our key actions for the year ahead
Transport	Decarbonise the transport system; reduce car dependency; manage demand; increase cycling, walking, wheeling and public transport; embed nature recovery within transport capital projects	Helping people travel more sustainably by removing barriers and increasing investment in busses and trains, delivering new dedicated walking, cycling and wheeling routes, and expanded electric vehicle charging.
Buildings & places	Increase the energy performance, climate resilience and environmental benefits of buildings and places	Delivering even more domestic retrofits and strengthening supply chains via the Retrofit Accelerator. Phase one is aiming to advise 10,600 households, survey 5,250 homes, and deliver an additional 1,400 retrofits (comprising 4,200 measures) over the next 2 years. Phase 2 will ensure local economic benefit in supporting 350 small and micro businesses to build their retrofit skills and capacity
Nature Recovery	Wildlife and the natural environment are in recovery, with their decline halted and in line with the West of England Nature Partnership the abundance of wildlife has increased by 30%.	Deliver new habitats for our region's wildlife and invest in improving quality and connectivity of existing spaces for nature on land and in water, including vital habitats for bees and other pollinators.
Business & Skills	Help all businesses become more sustainable and resilient to meet our 2030 objectives; help low carbon sector businesses and ensure local people benefit from growth in the green economy.	Deliver support to businesses across the region, helping them become resilient to climate change and energy price rises through £2m Green Business Grants and Growth Hub support; & expand green skills programmes to help local people benefit from increasingly available green jobs through the Retrofit Accelerator, Futurebright, AEB, skills bootcamps, Careers Hub and other skills initiatives accessed via Skills Connect
Net Zero Energy	Work to decarbonise the energy system and increase local renewable energy	Empower community energy and innovation to unlock renewable energy potential including mine water heat.
Climate Resilience	Take action to accelerate and ensure we are adapting to a changing climate and increase climate resilience across our region	Prepare our residents and businesses for the impacts of climate change, by investing in flood defences and nature-based solutions, and considering future climate scenarios in infrastructure and emergency planning.

LAST YEAR'S REGIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

We have seen significant progress since we published our 2022/23 Action Plan – including activity helping address the climate and ecological emergencies. In the past year, tackling these emergencies has become an even more central element of everything we do. In every project we are delivering, in every decision we make – we are taking steps to reduce and reverse our impact on climate and our natural environment.

Over the past year, cost of living pressures including the significant increase in energy costs have placed real pressure on people right across the region. Residents have struggled, as have local energy advice charities in supporting them. We funded these charities to meet last winter's exceptional demand. We have also improved our residents' resilience to energy price increases.

Through the South West Net Zero Hub, over 1000 lower-income households have seen their homes retrofitted to help reduce their energy costs. We also ran Solar Together, seeing a further 950 homes have solar PV panels installed. We have supported our businesses, advising them through our Growth Hub and skills programmes; and providing 360 SMEs with free carbon surveys to identify how they could save on their energy costs, and grant funding 160 to retrofit their buildings.

In the past year, we have also:

- a. Allocated £42m of our £50m Green Recovery Fund (GRF) to projects delivering our ambitions around retrofit, community powered renewable energy and nature recovery – including nature



- b. Awarded 13 projects a share of £439,000 from our Community Pollinator Fund, enabling 1,300 of our residents transform 50 acres of land to support our pollinators, building on our Bee Bold initiative
- c. Funded our ground breaking community energy groups' delivery:
 - i. Bristol Energy Network to construct the UK's largest onshore wind turbine in Lawrence Weston, and the bringing forwards further community wind projects across our region
 - ii. Bath & West Community Energy delivering a solar array and community orchard project at Fairy Hill
 - iii. Bristol Energy CoOp delivering solar PV generation on community, school and SME roofs

- d. Delivered public and sustainable transport improvements across our region, extending the metrobus to Cribbs, gaining planning approval for new train stations at North Filton, Ashley Down and Portishead - and securing over £640m in our CRSTS and BSIP settlements
- e. Delivering 3 Green Skills Bootcamps, embedding Green Skills across our skills provision and supporting over 160 people via the Community Support Fund in understanding environmental issues
- f. Investing £3.8m in the University of Bath's £11.3m Hydrogen Sustainable Transport Economy Accelerator (HSTEA) project at Bristol & Bath Science Park collocating hydrogen production, storage and research collaboration

We have not acted alone in addressing the climate and ecological emergencies this last year. Across the West of England communities, businesses, local councils and the wider public and third sectors have delivered too. We need this collaborative cross-sector approach to continue.

Our region is seeing the benefit of collaborative partnerships forming, such as Bristol City Leap. This will invest £424m through a partnership between the Council and its partner Ameresco. Plans include installing 182MW of additional renewables and retrofitting council homes over the next 5 years, and a strategic heat main running from Avonmouth and Severnside through South Gloucestershire into Bristol city centre.

We have seen new net zero standards being developed and applied across our region. Bath and North East Somerset have adopted the UK's first net zero requirements for new housing, and ambitious Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. Working in partnership with them and the South West Net Zero Hub, other councils are seeking to adopt similar policy. An excellent example of these net zero standards is North Somerset and Kier, who have built Winterstoke Hundred Academy expansion to net zero standards, achieving BREEAM excellent energy efficiency rating and 10% biodiversity net gain.

Innovative solutions building on our region's strengths and heritage are also coming to the fore. This year we've seen Rolls Royce successfully trial green hydrogen fuelling a jet engine, building on our engineering aerospace expertise; and, looking to our coal mining heritage, the potential of abstracting heat from former mine workings is being explored. South Gloucestershire Council have already identified four areas of potential with over 20,000 homes and buildings that could use this as a potential heat source. With former mine workings across the West of England and 'geothermal' energy historically accessed in both Hotwells and Bath Spa, future sources of net zero heating and cooling may be beneath our feet.

OUR STRATEGY

We published the first version of this regional strategy in March 2022. Our review has established that the 2022 strategy remains largely correct.

We are focused on establishing and progressing the pace of change through actions and delivering change that will impact peoples' lives both now and in the future. We are building and strengthening partnerships across our region to maintain and increase delivery.

In the past year, discussion across our partnerships and with the public has highlighted a new priority area – Climate Resilience. This has been added to our strategic priorities, recognising the importance of adapting our region to the inevitable impacts of climate change and the increasing risks to our region.

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The Challenge

The West of England Combined Authority's ambition is that in 2030:

- The West of England is net zero carbon,
- Wildlife and the natural environment are in recovery, with their decline halted and the abundance of wildlife increased by 30%; and
- The region has built its economic, social and natural environment resilience to the impacts of climate change

These ambitions have equal standing and status within the region. Although linked, we know that solving the climate emergency alone will not resolve the ecological emergency, and vice versa.

Achieving these formidable ambitions requires rapid and significant bold action at scale to transform our region. We must work across levels of government, catalyse private sector action, and empower the public to take action as well. We must adapt our behaviours, adopt new solutions and use existing technology rather than waiting for future solutions. We must adapt to an uncertain and changing national context.

As a Combined Authority, and working with North Somerset Council, our adopted strategies including the Joint Local Transport Plan, Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy and our developing policies are already contributing towards our ambitions.

This Strategy and Action Plan takes us further - setting out a route map between now and 2030. The Strategy and Action Plan:

- Defines our long-term strategic approach to tackling the climate and ecological emergency – the ways that we will deliver it and the objective for each priority area;
- Sets out our short-term action plan – including those actions already underway;
- Describes the medium and longer-term actions we will develop as we continue to plan for the future.

The Strategy and Action Plan provides a framework for our action up to 2030, but is not the final word. We will revisit these actions regularly, building up a programme that will realise our ambitions.

A Green, Just Transition

The actions required to address the impacts of climate change and deliver nature recovery will create new economic opportunities. The benefits from this transition must be shared widely, and support provided for those who may lose out. We must ensure the transition to a green economy does not leave anyone in the region behind.

This Strategy and Action Plan helps to tackle some of the most challenging issues we face as a region through this transition, including improvements to air quality, health and wellbeing, and addressing social inequalities.

We will continue to make necessary decisions to cut emissions, build resilience to the impacts of climate change and protect the natural environment, supporting our stakeholders to do the same.

Our actions and decisions will continue to be driven by science-based evidence, but we recognise that the urgency of the challenge means we will need to take decisions while the data remain uncertain, or where we are trying things that have not been done before. Where gaps in data are identified we will work with our stakeholders to address them.

OUR APPROACH

This Strategy and Action Plan is designed around six priorities developed and agreed by Combined Authority partners. Each section sets out:

- Our objective for 2030
- How we will deliver this objective – our strategic approach, outlining the key ways in which we will lead change
- 2023/24 actions – the immediate steps we will take to deliver swift action, and some of the regionally significant actions being taken by others
- Medium-term actions and long-term ambition – our and others' plans we are aware of and involved in to deliver further progress and to continue building our action. Further into the future, these will need to remain flexible so that we can continue to identify the actions needed to meet our ambitions and respond to opportunities.

We know we cannot meet our ambitions alone. We must collaborate together across our region, sectors and communities. The priority areas are interlinked, and impacts are often connected. For example, embedding nature recovery when we're retrofitting or constructing buildings, and how our businesses can benefit from our region adopting a sustainable transport system.

The strategy also sets out how the Combined Authority's actions will complement work already under way by our Unitary Authority partners, including North Somerset Council, and ensure we continue developing our plans in collaboration.

This strategy also includes our asks of government: where we will need devolution, policy direction, regulation, or funding to be able to co-ordinate and drive forward the transition.

We will continue providing progress reports every six months and update the Strategy and Action Plan annually to ensure we maintain momentum and ambition. This is the Strategy's first update, and is a living document that will remain under constant review.

The Strategy and Action Plan has been prepared in collaboration and consultation with key stakeholders, including:

- Unitary Authority partners, including North Somerset Council,
- Our Climate Action Panel, representing key businesses and stakeholders from across the region,
- The West of England Nature Partnership (WENP),
- Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership,
- The West of England Business & Skills Board and
- the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The West of England Combined Authority Committee has agreed five principles for the strategy:

- Take action now on the highest sources of emissions and causes of destruction of the natural environment and where we can have most impact as a Combined Authority – our six priority themes.

- Make the necessary decisions to cut emissions and protect the environment - we know that cutting emissions and protecting the environment will require taking hard decisions that will change the way we live and work in the region. We are not afraid to take these decisions and need residents and businesses to make the same tough decisions.
- Take a data led approach – providing metrics to fully understand the impact of actions taken and decisions made where the data is available. However, we recognise that the data to support some decisions is still in development. Where this is the case, we will not let lack of certainty be used as grounds for inaction or the avoidance of risk.
- Ensure that we are adapting to the effects of climate change by working with the natural environment and not against it, protecting and enhancing our natural assets and designing climate resilience into our infrastructure, land and water management across the region
- Facilitate a just transition – working to promote the green skills and high-quality jobs within a net zero and nature-rich economy. Ensuring that the decisions that we take do not adversely affect the most vulnerable social groups and SME businesses, ensuring we support their resilience first as those most at risk to climate impacts and energy price rises.

Regional roles and collaboration needed

Tackling the climate and ecological emergencies are a priority for the region. Yet achieving it will require changing what we do, how we live and work in the region and how we work together to make our decisions.

In order to meet the challenges that we face, we must work in collaboration – with regional partners, with residents, with businesses, and with Government.

The Combined Authority and our partner Unitary Authorities have an important responsibility to enable strategic changes and inspire behaviour change across the region in each of our six priority themes.

Local Government alone cannot save the region from the environmental emergencies we all face. Residents and businesses all have a role if we are to meet our ambitions.

There is no simple answer as to who does what. We need a flexible approach with a commitment to joining up, working together, sharing best practise, avoiding overlaps and pooling resources where it makes sense to do so.

Role of the Combined Authority

There are programmes and projects that we lead on, but we also take action to enable, fund, inform and inspire our residents and partners to take further actions. As a Combined Authority, we will focus on working in partnership with our Unitary Authorities to fulfil our role to:

- Deliver the actions within this plan to meet our challenging 2030 objectives, including:
 - reducing carbon emissions from our transport system and cutting car dependency
 - Significantly increasing retrofit across the region to reduce emissions from homes and other buildings
 - Supporting nature recovery by creating new spaces and habitats for wildlife including bees and other pollinators
- Changing the things within our direct control to help reduce emissions and halt the decline of wildlife including our own buildings, operations and travel and the way that we procure and commission.
- Grow the resources required to deliver action across the region. Developing successful fundable programmes, attracting private investment, and making the case for further investment.
- Deliver changes to our regional infrastructure to ensure that they enable us to meet our 2030 objectives

- Grow the skills within the region to support the delivery of action by developing successful skills training programmes, supporting businesses and residents with their own transition towards our 2030 objectives and making the case for further devolution and investment in skills in the region.
- Regional coordination of research, development and activity to address the climate and ecological emergencies across multiple sectors
- Showcasing good practice within the region to ensure we are involving and engaging our communities, delivering green social value, building partnerships where we need to drive effective change.
- Working with others to influence and make changes – working with our communities, partner councils and government to make the changes we all need to make

Role of local councils

Our region's Unitary Authorities share our ambition. Each has declared both climate and ecological emergencies. They have shared and some different influences over addressing climate and ecological crises in their local areas, defined in their own strategies and action plans.

Local councils have legal functions covering things such as planning, housing, education, waste, highways, and environmental health. They have thousands of employees across our region, supporting our region's million residents in their daily lives. This includes operational services and capital

projects, owning thousands of assets and operating many more.

Local Councils integrate their responses to both the climate and ecological emergencies through a broad range of statutory and non-statutory functions covering both people and place-based services. In doing so, they look across multiple functions to ensure that priorities are reflected in everything that they do and opportunities for services to work together across whole systems are capitalised upon.

Our region's Unitary Authorities, alongside the Combined Authority, have the same aim – to reach carbon neutrality area-wide by 2030. All of these Authorities made declarations of climate and ecological emergency between 2018 and 2020.

The Combined Authority supports our region's unitary authorities in the efforts and initiatives, such as:

- Bath and NE Somerset's application of net zero and BNG requirements for new developments via their Local Plan
- Bristol's Climate Neutral City Mission initiative which will bring key partners together to create a Climate Investment Plan
- South Gloucestershire's Live Labs 'Greenprint' highways initiative to explore how plant material mowed from our roadsides can be used for bio fuels and road materials

Role of our communities

To achieve our region's environmental objectives, all our region's communities need to be involved in shaping and delivering this agenda. The West of England Combined Authority and Unitary Authorities responsibility is to include and represent them in this. We have sought to reflect communities' needs within our strategies.

Our communities are already being impacted and adapting to the effects of climate change, and witnessing the ecological emergency in our natural environment. Without action, we will experience worsening impacts for years to come, especially impacting young people as our region's future generation. People must be locally supported in understanding, shaping and adapting activity.

We are fortunate that we have long-standing dedicated groups seeking to address climate change and improve our region's natural environment. We want to empower these and new groups to be part of the solution in delivering actions and environmental improvements.

We want to improve our engagement with our communities and organisations in this agenda. We will be building on strong foundations, joining others' engagement activity and collaboratively running our own engagements – including young people at a regional school summit this April, conversations with existing community groups and other partnerships, and coordinating conversations on specific challenges and opportunities.

Role of businesses and other organisations

Businesses of all sizes, commercial and industrial, are an essential part of reaching net zero carbon, protecting nature and ensuring supply chain resilience into the future. The Climate Change Committee has noted the importance of supporting businesses to achieve demand-side changes to energy use, including the transition to low carbon heating¹.

The role of other organisations across the West of England is also critical. This includes but isn't limited to our transport operators, housing associations, colleges and universities, charities and other public service providers.

A sustainable approach offers many opportunities for businesses including selling to customers who are looking for genuinely ethical and sustainable companies; and winning contracts from other businesses/organisations who want to improve their supply chains. Businesses that reduce their energy use will become more resilient to rising energy prices and the cost of living crisis. Businesses that plan for climate change impacts will become more resilient to direct or indirect weather extremes.

Businesses are responding positively to this challenge. A recent survey showed that nearly 70% of South West businesses consider climate change to be a core 'business issue' with 46% having already implemented plans and processes to reduce emissions and 31% switching to renewable energy².

¹ Climate Change Committee, Progress Snapshot 2022. Available [here](#).

² Business West, Business Attitudes Survey, 2021, Available [here](#).

Businesses are also increasingly aware of the difference that they can make in halting nature's decline and supporting nature recovery. This includes minimising their impact on the environment through the materials and processes they use and taking positive action in their local area such as developing projects to expand pollinator habitats.

We want to continue to support businesses in their sustainable journey through our Growth Hub, our free Carbon Surveys and Green Business Grants and Good Employment Charter. We also want to deliver more resources for businesses interested in protecting and expanding land for nature and pollinators.

A low carbon and greener economy is also an opportunity for those businesses delivering retrofit, natural environment, and renewable energy goods and services such as surveyors, builders, installers and ecologists. We aim to support these businesses to build their capacity to local economic market opportunities; and to support individual residents pursue green career pathways, to develop green skills to take up new or enhanced green job functions, responsibilities and opportunities.

Our Key Asks of Government

We support the findings and recommendations of the national Net Zero Review. With our region setting more urgent net zero goals of carbon neutrality by 2030, we urge Government to implement these recommendations sooner – and go further. The West of England has great strength and ability to deliver the 10 key missions identified within the Review. For instance, we are:

- Working ever more closely with National Grid and partners to ensure our electricity grid and other infrastructure is fit for our future needs;
- Looking at circular economy opportunities to reduce waste, such as South Gloucestershire Council investigating opportunities to use grass arising from maintenance to generate green gas in Live Labs;
- Seeking full scale deployment of solar across our rooftops via multiple projects and paving the way for onshore wind deployment, working closely with our community energy groups;
- Embedding and actively delivering nature and habitat restoration through our work; supporting our four universities and research and development sector in innovation; and
- Prioritising energy efficiency for households, leading to gas free homes.

We support the Government's Wildlife Improvement Plan, recognising its 10 goals aligning to our own regional priorities. Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework also aligns and strengthens delivery of the West of England Green Infrastructure Strategy.

However, in order to meet the scale of the challenge and achieve our objectives, we are clear that government will need to do more to support our ambitions to go further, faster. We need government to work with us flexibly and responsively, listening to our needs.

To make progress across all themes we will need government to:

- Provide more resources e.g. the skills funding and training frameworks required to ensure we can achieve the transition towards net zero and to protect and enhance the natural environment. The investment required goes way beyond the resources available to the Combined Authority or Unitary Authorities. Central Government needs to step up and invest in programmes we are developing.
- Devolve powers and adapt national regulation –it is not just about resources. The Combined Authority and Unitary Authorities need the powers to manage our transport, planning, energy infrastructure and skills systems to achieve our ambitions and need national regulation to reflect this and be supportive of our 2030 ambitions.

Our key asks of government are to:

- Build on the Retrofit Accelerator and work with the Combined Authority to agree a long term retrofit strategy for the region including the rollout of heat pumps. This would include defined outcomes to increase the rate of retrofit within the region, including increasing retrofit skills courses and working with the public and community groups to encourage people to retrofit their homes. This would need to be accompanied by multi-year settlement to achieve the defined outcomes to provide retrofit market confidence, rather than the piecemeal stop-start subsidies.
- Include West of England in the National Adaptation Programme 3 trials – allowing us to test and trial innovative new approaches to building climate resilience within our region; and mandate climate resilience planning to be included in local resilience forums. This work should include natural capital assessment to understand our natural assets and the services (ecosystem services) they provide.
- Resource National Grid to work with us and provide them the regulatory changes needed at high-voltage transmission level to increase the amount of renewable energy generated in the region through:
 - Delivering approved connections where developers will proceed and removing approved connections that won't be proceeding, allowing additional connections
 - ensuring these are realised locally in our region
- Strengthening the electricity grid to allow new generators to connect
- Implementing smart solutions, including clarification of Exempt Licence legislation allowing more renewable energy generation connected directly to buildings via private wire networks;
- Regulatory changes to treat localised generators and consumers (incl storage) as single entities, and to ensure an appropriate balance of storage vs generation (noting two thirds of approved but not yet connected electrical capacity in the region is storage)
- Create funding schemes to derisk community energy generation schemes, providing loans or grants for development costs. To collaborate with us in developing and launching further innovation funding rounds. These should be targeted at non-technical barriers relating to uptake of retrofit within buildings; and build on our region's strength in future energy systems supporting technological advancements in energy-from-mines, hydrogen and energy storage, nuclear fusion and tidal.
- Provide accelerated powers and set national policies for vehicle demand management, including distance and area-based options to make them fairer and more easily implemented, and further devolved powers to enable local transport decision making; and increase funding for capital investment and revenue support, including rural interventions to reduce car dependency; whilst continuing support for walking and cycling programmes and completing electrification of the rail network
- Provide sufficient capacity funding to produce, deliver and monitor Local Nature Recovery Strategies, including providing access to further proposed £124m within the £640m Nature for Climate Fund. The Government's Environmental Land Management schemes need to remain sufficiently ambitious to deliver nature recovery, including sufficient funding outside the Sustainable Farming Incentive.
- Provide sufficient resources for Local Planning Authorities to prepare for, implement and monitor Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Ensure that any changes to existing or introduction of new environmental legislation delivers increased protection for the natural environment
- To better reflect the advice of the Climate Change Committee in respect of emissions targets and that contained in reports to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for and adapting to the impacts of a changing climate.

Strategies & Plans in the Region

This strategy and action plan builds on the existing regional strategies within the region, including the Unitary Authorities' Local Plans, Joint Local Transport Plan, and Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy. All of our partner Unitary Authorities have also published their own climate strategies and action plans and have declared climate and ecological emergencies:

- Bath and North East Somerset Council who have a live page of projects (actions) they are taking: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/projects-progress>
- Bristol City Council's refreshed Climate Plan in 2022: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/5241-climate-emergency-action-plan/> and Ecological Plan in 2021: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/794-ecological-emergency-action-plan/file>
- North Somerset Council's refreshed Action Plan in 2022: <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/council-democracy/priorities-strategies/climate-emergency/our-plans-tackle-climate-change>
- South Gloucestershire's Climate and Action Plan refreshed in 2022: <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/climate-emergency-in-south-gloucestershire>

This Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan is not intended to replace or supersede the policies and activity contained within these documents. It is meant to complement them, providing an overview of our strategic approach and key actions to tackling the climate and ecological emergencies. As such, it should be read alongside our other regional strategies and action plans. Future actions and the development of this plan will take into account the wider regional strategies.

A snapshot of the key regional documents and strategies across the region's geographic authority areas is to the right and on the following page.

Sector	Bath & North East Somerset	Bristol	North Somerset	South Gloucestershire	West of England
Local Government	Climate & Ecological Emergency Action Plan	Climate Emergency Action Plan	Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plan	Climate & Nature Emergency Strategy & Action Plan	Climate & Ecological Strategy & Action Plan
	Local Plan incl. Partial Update introducing BNG and net zero requirements	Local Plan	Local Plan	Local Plan	Innovation and Digital Plans
	Green Infrastructure Plan	Bristol Ecological Emergency Action Plan	Green Infrastructure Plan	Green Infrastructure Plan	Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy
	Employment & Skills Plan	Employment & Skills Plan	Employment & Skills Plan	Employment & Skills Plan	Employment & Skills Plan
	Clean Air Zone	Clean Air Zone	Rewilding Plan	Air Quality Action Plan	Joint Local Transport Plan
	Renewable Energy Resource Assessment	Renewable Energy Resource Assessment	Renewable Energy Resource Assessment	Renewable Energy Resource Assessment	Renewable Energy Resource Assessment
Joint government initiatives	One Shared Vision	One City Climate Strategy		Local Strategic Partnership	West of England Nature Partnership Strategy
		One City Ecological Emergency Strategy		Climate Emergency University Advisory Group	Nature Recovery Network
		Bristol City Leap		Town and Parish Council and Business 'Local Climate and Nature Action Plans' (LCNAPs)	Bristol Avon Catchment Plan
	River Chew & Bristol Avon Catchment Plans	River Frome and Bristol Avon Catchment Plans	Bristol Avon Catchment Plans	River Frome and Bristol Avon Catchment Plans	Bristol Avon Catchment Plans
NGO strategy and action plans		Bristol Energy Network Community Energy Strategy		Forest of Avon Tree & Woodland Strategy	

UNDERSTANDING THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE



THE CHALLENGE FOR:

CARBON

TRANSPORT

BUILDINGS & PLACES

NATURE RECOVERY

BUSINESS & SKILLS

NET ZERO ENERGY

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

UNDERSTANDING THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE

The Carbon Challenge

Achieving our 2030 ambitions will require rapid and significant changes in the region. Current speed of change is not fast enough, and action must accelerate.

The West of England emitted 4,390kt of CO₂ in 2020. This amounted to 3.8 tonnes per person, 18% lower than the national average of 4.6 tonnes per person.

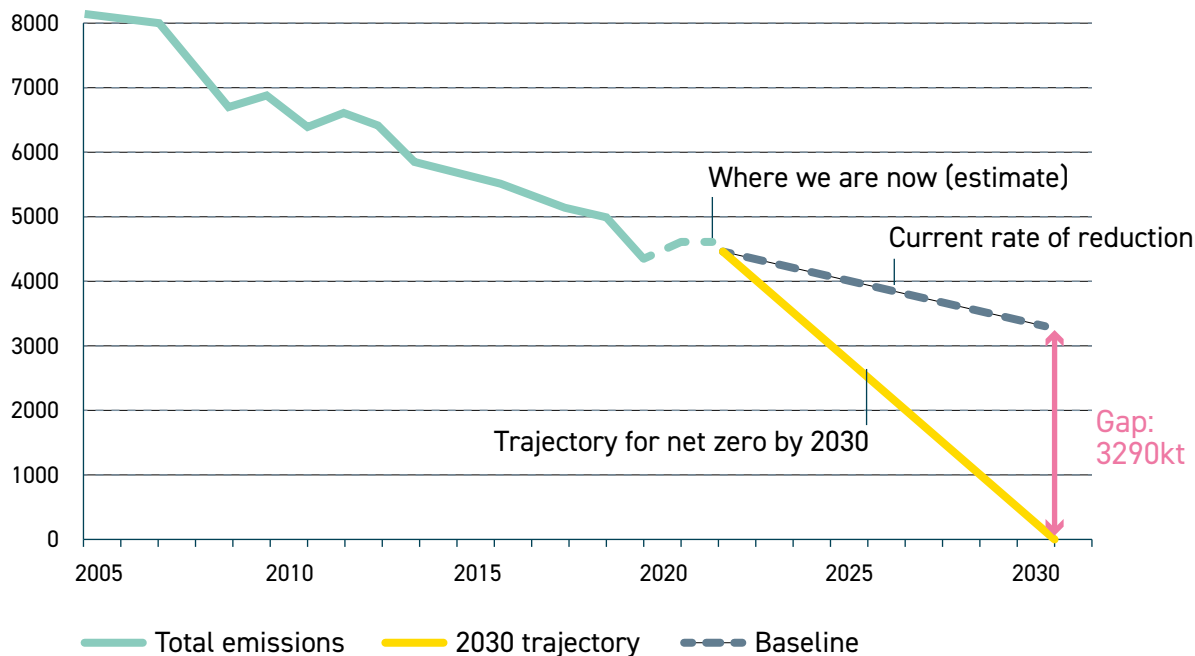
Regional emissions fell by 12% in 2020 compared to 2019 as a result of a reduction in business and travel activity during lockdowns. It is likely that some of these reductions were reversed in 2021, for which data is not yet available.

From 2005 to 2019, emissions fell by an average of 3.4% each year. If the pre-pandemic trend were to continue, the region would still emit 3,290kt CO₂ in 2030.

To reach net zero, emissions must fall by 501kt every year – 11% of current levels. This requires a significant acceleration of the progress made in recent years.

Figure 1: West of England greenhouse gas emissions must fall rapidly to meet our net zero ambition.^a

West of England trajectory to net zero (kt CO₂ per year)



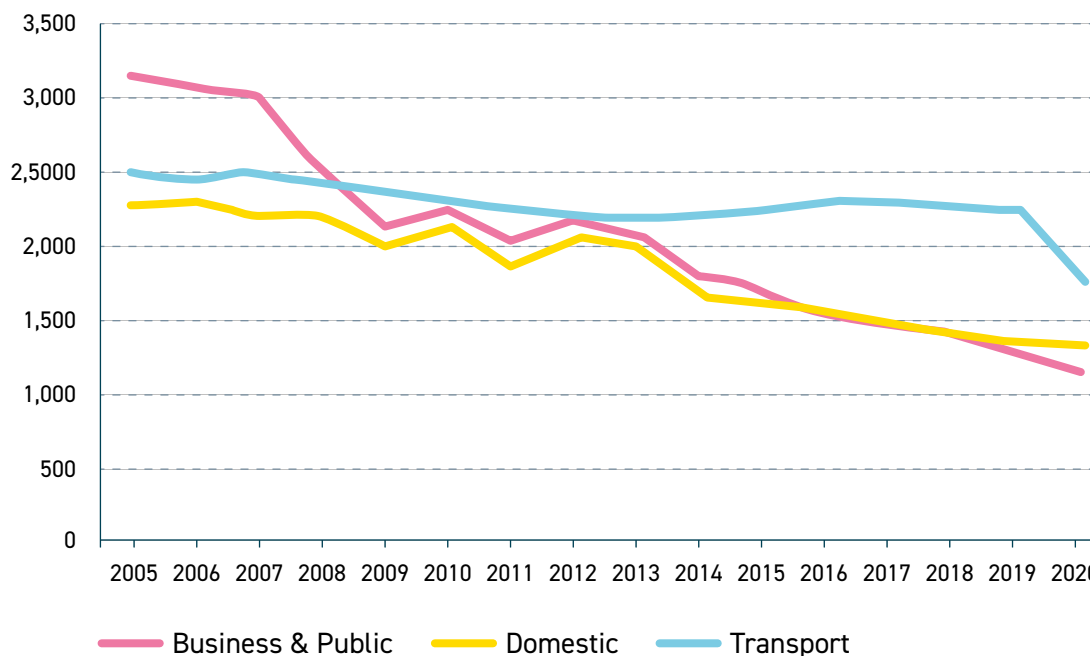
^a UK Government local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2020

The region's emissions in 2020 arose from transport (42%), domestic uses of power and heating (31%), and businesses and the public sector (27%). Reductions in emissions in recent years have arisen largely from the decarbonisation of the national electricity grid, which has reduced domestic and business emissions.

On the other hand, transport emissions have remained broadly level over the past 15 years. Increasing fuel efficiency and growing use of alternative modes has been off-set by rising car journeys; consumer preference to own larger vehicles; increasing trip length and freight movements. Reporting of transport emissions also reflects those considered within 'local control' - the emissions reported here only relate to 'surface' transport, excluding shipping and aviation emissions.

Figure 2: The sources of regional carbon emissions have changed since 2005. Domestic and business sources have declined.^b

CO₂ emissions (kt), West of England



^b UK Government local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2020

We know that these figures do not provide the full story: they cover only emissions produced within the UK. Our businesses and residents consume imported goods and services, which have their own carbon footprint that is not accounted for here. Emissions embedded in imported goods and services account for almost half (48%) of the UK's total carbon footprint.³ Consumers and businesses in the West of England have some control over the products they choose, but action is needed nationally and internationally to fully tackle this source.

Page 78 The following sections discuss the current position for each of the six priority themes in this plan.



³ Defra, UK Carbon Footprint 1997-2019

The Challenge for Transport

Emissions from transport are among the largest contributors to greenhouse gas and CO₂ emissions in the region, representing 42% of the total in 2020. This excludes shipping and aviation, which are considered by Government in emissions reporting in the context of (inter)national emissions and outside the scope of direct local control.

Overall, transport emissions are not reducing in line with other emissions. Population growth means that car trips are expected to increase by a further 8% up to 2030.⁴ Improvements in vehicle's fuel efficiency have been offset by changing consumer preferences for larger vehicles and travelling longer distances.

Historically, the West of England as a relatively prosperous area has had a high level of car dependency. More recently we have made substantial progress in growing bus, rail and cycle use; albeit, the last couple of years have seen the short-term drops in bus and public transport use largely linked to the COVID pandemic. Combined with financial pressures, this has resulted in some local bus services being cut and others being at risk of closure. However, increasingly longer trips, centralisation of services and amenities, and relatively generous parking provision, have continued to fuel a high level of car use.

There is a considerable gap between forecast transport carbon emissions reductions and 2030 ambitions. The ban on the sale of petrol and diesel cars from 2030 (and hybrid options from 2035) will help, but even considering planned activity and commitments such as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and the MetroWest local rail network packages, we face a large gap in achieving a carbon neutral transport system by 2030.

In order to close this gap, we need to substantially reduce the use of the private car mileage by around 40%, both in terms of the number of trips and their length. This represents a fundamental change in lifestyle; decentralising services so people can access them in their local neighbourhood; significant increases in the use of public transport and active modes of cycling, walking and wheeling; and a shift towards electric cars will help but will not be enough.

We will need significantly more investment in walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport infrastructure beyond existing plans to provide improved, alternative journey options to the private car. Travel by low-carbon modes needs to be the genuine first-choice for our residents and businesses. We need to deliver a range of meaningful demand management measures to help achieve a meaningful reduction in the number of car trips within the region. These measures will need to include:

- Travel planning, marketing and information on sustainable and accessible alternatives;
- Review and change our local parking policies to further dissuade private car dependency whilst continuing to promote our local high streets;
- Planning to place obligations around provision of local services, including mobility hubs, and sustainable transport priority within developments
- Improving infrastructure, support and incentives to increase travel by walking, wheeling and cycling
- Ensuring new housing developments provide a good level of local facilities, effectively creating new, high quality 'places' - placing obligations around provision, including mobility hubs and sustainable transport priority, via the planning process
- Progress a package of further pricing mechanisms including workplace parking levies and congestion charging areas, with revenues raised ringfenced for high quality alternatives to car use and to ensure a fair and just transition.

4 WSP, West of England Transport Decarbonisation Study, 2022

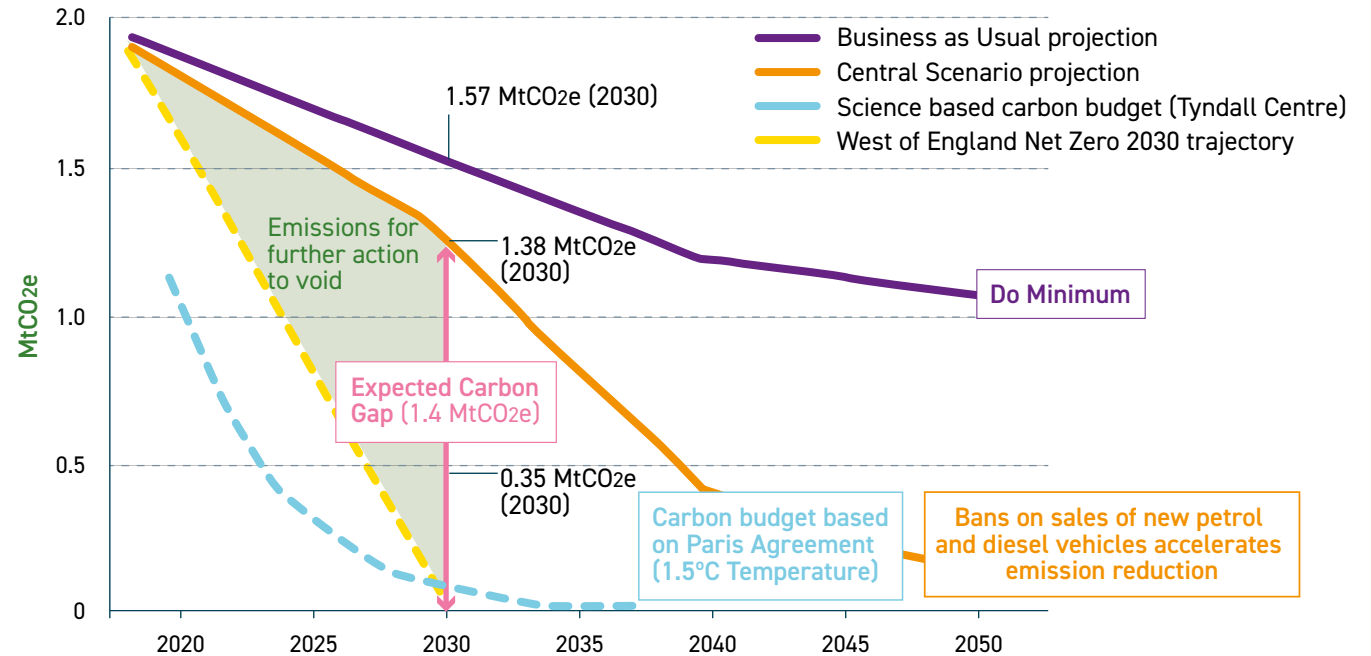
This graph illustrates the scale of the challenge in moving transport towards net zero. Our 2030 ambition is broadly in line with the Paris Agreement, but we will need to do much more to reduce car use given the likely proportion of non-electric vehicles by 2030.

Achieving this will provide the region significant benefits, including:

- Improve health, air quality and people's life expectancy;
- State of the art public transport and cycling, walking and wheeling networks
- Much more pleasant public spaces; and
- Much better access to local facilities.

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Figure 3: Emissions cuts required by 2030 from transport (yellow line) compared with baseline following national trends (orange line) (WSP)^c



^c Tyndall Centre Carbon Budget <https://carbonbudget.manchestser.ac.uk/reports/>

The Challenge for Buildings & Places

Heating and powering our homes accounts for just over a quarter (28%) of the region’s CO2 emissions. To reach net zero, we will need to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings and move over to low-carbon heating sources. A total of 250,000 homes will need retrofitting with insulation and low-carbon heating.

Across the UK, emission reductions from buildings have levelled off since 2015. To achieve a 2050 net zero target, the Committee on Climate Change recommends:

- All new buildings to be zero-carbon by 2025,
- All homes for sale should be rated EPC “C” level by 2028,
- All heating systems for buildings off the gas grid to be low-carbon from 2028 – i.e. not coal or oil, and,
- 100% of systems off natural gas by 2033.⁵

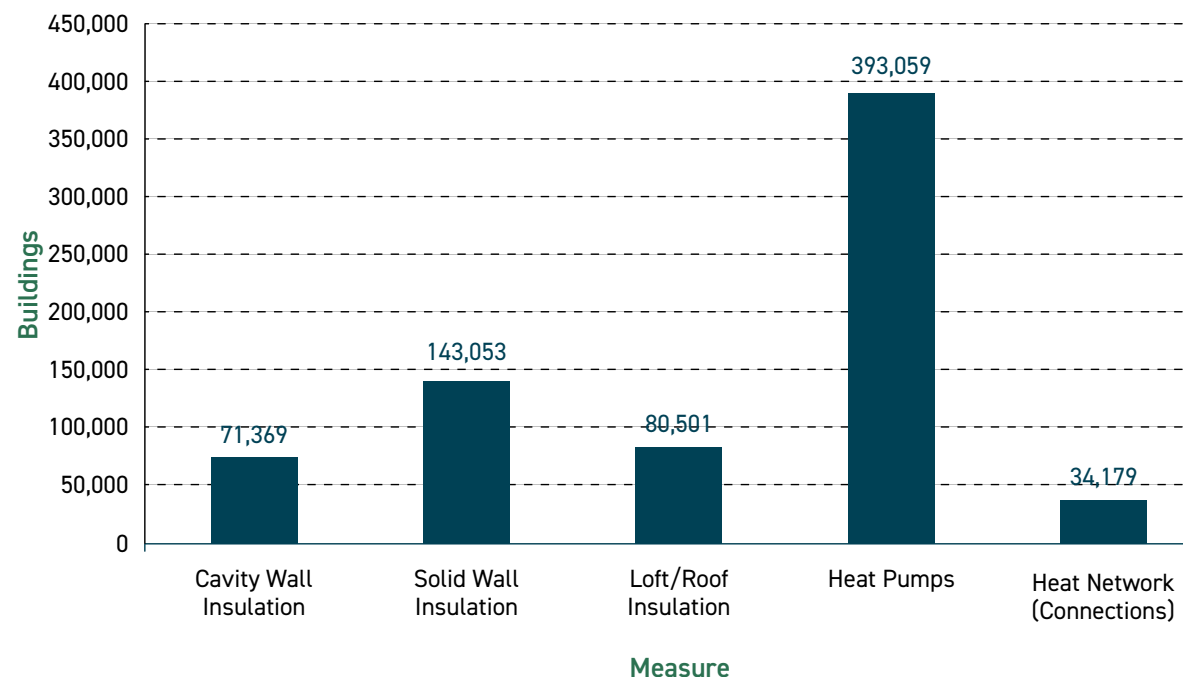
The West of England will need to act faster than this.

On energy efficiency, over 170,000 homes in the region need to increase their insulation and reduce energy use as far as possible through the delivery of over 290,000 insulation measures. This will lower fuel use and bills, and reduce the costs of

decarbonisation. Currently, around 1,700 homes are retrofitted with insulation in the region each year, but the rate needs to increase to 29,000 per year by 2030: 21,000 properties installing wall insulation, and 8,000 loft or roof insulation.⁶ And a further 8,400 non-domestic buildings across the region will need improvements to insulation as well.

To decarbonise heating, heat pumps or connections to heat networks will be needed for over 250,000 homes and 8,000 non-domestic properties. This will require over 40,000 installations per year by 2030. This is a significant shift: that rate exceeds the current rate of heat pump installations in the whole of the UK (30,000 per year).⁷

Figure 4: Total retrofit installations required in the West of England to meet net zero by 2030.⁶



⁵ Committee on Climate Change, The Sixth Carbon Budget: Buildings
⁶ Ecuity, West of England Retrofit Skills Market Analysis, 2021. Available [here](#)
⁷ *Ibid.*

The costs of retrofitting homes will be high, and beyond the capacity of the public sector to fund alone. Public policy will need to stimulate private investment, to share the costs. By illustration, the cost of increasing insulation and installing heat pumps varies significantly, depending on the age and construction of the building. Many homes in our region have heritage or conservation status that will affect the measures that are appropriate. A conservative estimate would be for an average cost of around £20,000 for a range of insulation measures and installation of a heat pump.⁸ Applying this figure to 250,000 homes needing measures gives a rough estimate of a total domestic retrofit cost of £5bn. Costs could rise if supply chain bottlenecks are encountered as the rate of installations increases.

However, the benefits of retrofitting our buildings are high. Well insulated homes are easier and cheaper to keep warm in summer, and cooler in winter. This helps people and businesses be more resilient to energy costs and the cost of living crisis we face. It also helps protect people from ill health associated from being in cold, damp or (in summer) too hot buildings. This in turn reduces pressure on our public health service.

Buildings and developments have a significant impact on the natural environment, impacting the quality and quantity of habitats such as woodland, wetland, grasslands and our water courses. The Environment Act is introducing the requirement for all new developments to deliver 10% Biodiversity



Net Gain, with the aim of leaving the natural environment in a better state than before. This requirement will come into effect nationally from late 2023 and should have a positive impact across the region in terms of delivering our nature recovery objectives, placing an increasing demand for skills and jobs within ecological services sector in order to meet the demands of delivering Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

⁸ DESNZ, What Does It Cost To Retrofit Homes?, 2017, available [here](#), and House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, Energy Efficiency of Existing Homes, 2021, available [here](#)

The Challenge of Nature Recovery

In common with other parts of the country, wildlife and the natural environment have come under increasing pressure in the West of England. As an example, numbers of woodland birds have declined 27% since the 1970s, 7% of this in just the last 5 years.

A functioning and resilient natural environment is vital to our society, economy, and wellbeing, and will also be crucial to mitigating the effects of climate change. Half of the world's GDP is moderately or highly dependent on nature, and 75% of the crop types grown by humans require pollination.⁹

Containing both urban and rural areas, the region provides a network of natural spaces on land and in water for residents and wildlife. However, we need to expand and better connect these areas and improve their quality as natural habitats to enable nature's recovery, as well as improving access. Currently, the region's natural spaces include:

- 5,583 hectares of accessible green space (4% of the region's area)¹⁰
- 11,657 hectares of woodland (9% of the area)¹¹

- 10,000 hectares of water and wetland (8% of the area)

366,000 people (32% of the population) have access to substantial green space within 300 metres of home.¹²

The West of England Nature Partnership has mapped the region's Nature Recovery Networks to identify the best opportunities to deliver improvements.¹³

Wildlife habitats across the West of England need to be strengthened to promote the recovery of nature. Nationally, only 28% of habitats of European importance were in a favourable or improving condition in 2019 – down from 53% in 2007.¹⁴ Key species are much less abundant than in the past: for instance, the abundance of farmland birds has declined by 55% from 1970-2019, and butterflies by 22% since 1976, across the UK.

The challenge is not only on land, but in water, where rivers provide habitats for a range of wildlife, play a key role in protecting against flooding, and are important places for recreation, however river habitats in England are facing significant pressure. Only 14% of English rivers are meeting good ecological status and no river is meeting

good chemical status, posing dangers to nature, swimmers and other river users.

The State of Nature Report for the UK set out that this harm is ongoing:¹⁵

- 41% of species assessed decreased from 2009 to 2019;
- 15% of all wildlife in the UK is threatened with extinction;
- 2% are already extinct;
- Butterflies are down 16% since the 1970s and familiar birds like the house sparrow have reduced by more than half in the last 40 years.

These are the results of long-term damage to ecosystems and habitats, and they will need a comprehensive response to improve the quality, quantity and connectivity of our natural environment. The requirement to develop Local Nature Recovery Strategies, deliver Biodiversity Net Gain, improve Green Infrastructure, and existing work across our networks such as the West of England Nature Partnership will help to address some of this challenge, but we will need to do more to fully address the damage.

9 World Economic Forum, The New Nature Economy Report, 2020, available [here](#)

10 Ordnance Survey, Open Greenspace

11 Forestry Commission

12 Natural England

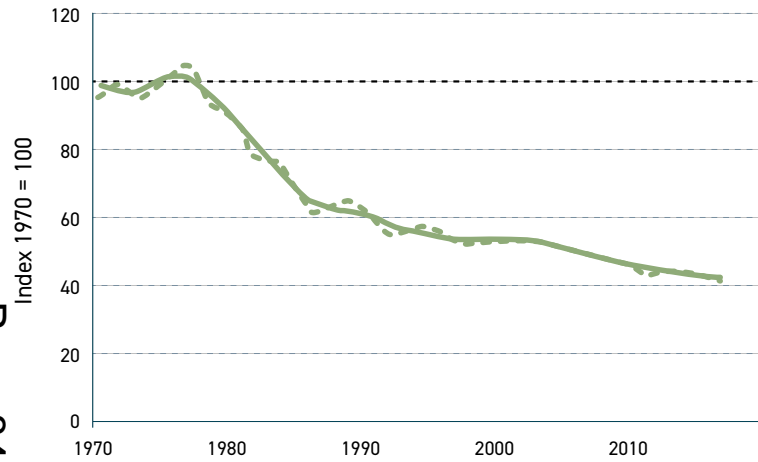
13 West of England Nature Partnership, Nature Recovery Network, available [here](#)

14 Defra, UK Biodiversity Indicators 2021

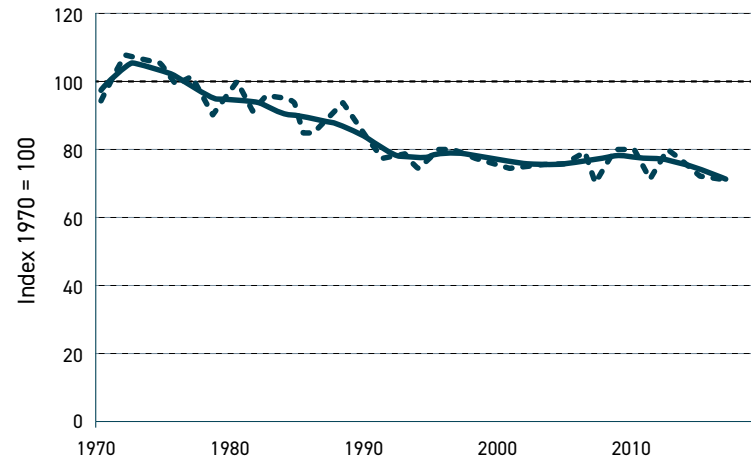
15 RSPB, State of Nature 2019

Bird populations in the UK over time (1970 to 2020)¹⁵

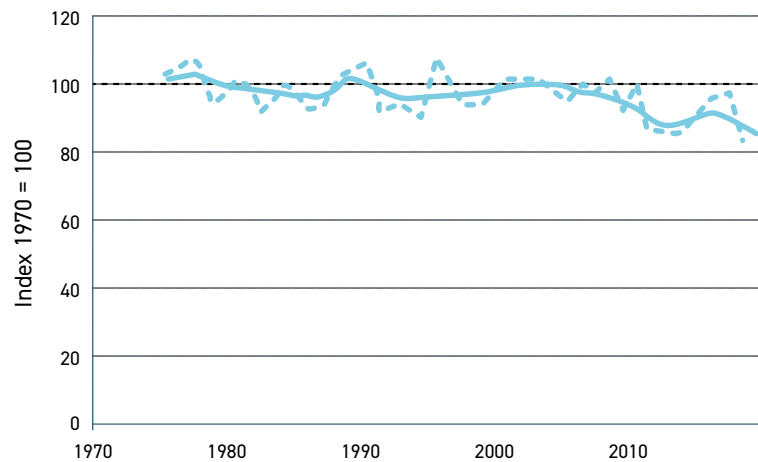
Farmland birds (19)



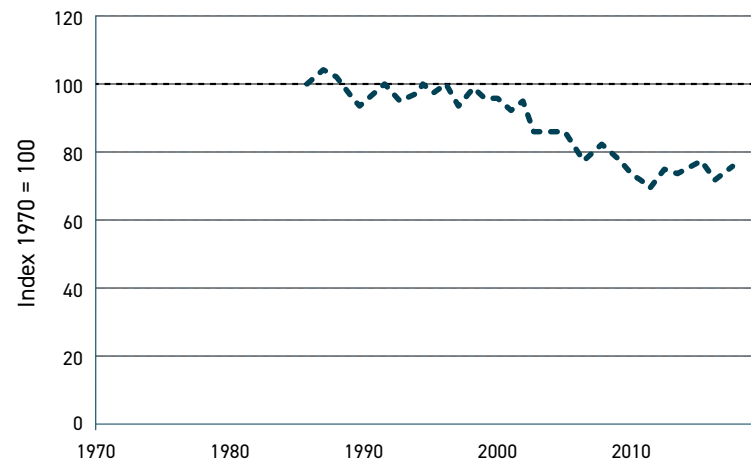
Woodland birds (37)



Water and wetlandbirds (26)



Seabirds (13)



The Challenge for Business & Skills

Cutting emissions

All businesses need to fully decarbonise their operations, ranging from heating and powering their buildings to logistics, transport and production processes. Businesses and organisations in the West of England emitted 1,310kt of CO₂ in 2019. These emissions have fallen 49% in the past 10 years, but a significant challenge remains in removing the remaining emissions.

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Industrial firms produced 43% of these emissions; commercial businesses 34%, the public sector 18%, and agriculture 5%. Emissions mainly came from electricity (41%) and gas (33%), with industrial firms also using other fuels (24% of the total). The prevalence of gas and other fossil fuels demonstrates that decarbonising the electricity grid will not solve the problem alone, and that substantial changes will be needed by businesses in how they power and heat their buildings and business processes. Furthermore, firms will need to manage their supply chains to minimise 'imported' emissions embedded in goods and services they import from abroad.

In the current economic climate and cost-of-living crisis, the connection between decarbonisation and economic resilience/growth has never been so strong. Payback on investment in low carbon solutions has been transformed by rising energy

prices, increasing demand in supply chains and markets. Many businesses are unsure what their path to net-zero could look like. With the right support, local businesses will grow our region's economy in developing and exporting low carbon products and services.

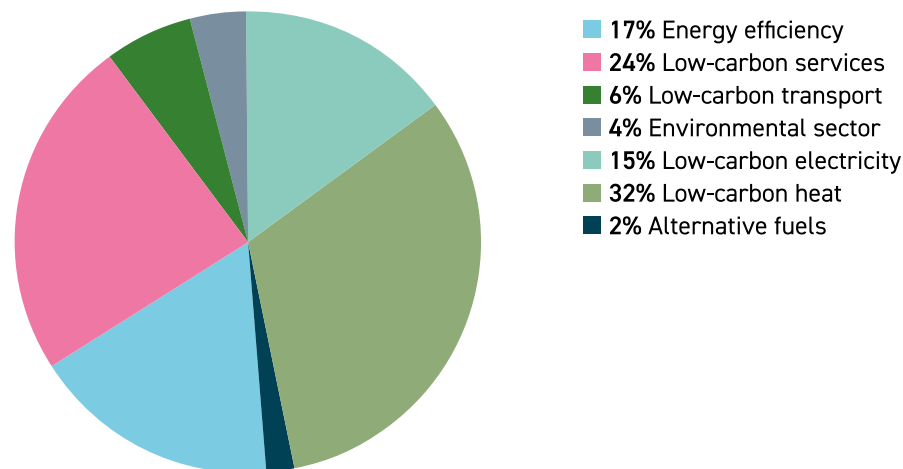
Green jobs

Achieving net zero will need people with the right skills and in new jobs. The West of England will need over 45,000 green jobs by 2030. This is made

up of jobs in manufacturing (10%), construction and installation (52%), and operation and maintenance (38%).¹⁶ Evidence from our Unitary Authorities and key stakeholders also shows that demand for jobs within the ecological sector is likely to grow with the increased focus on delivering Biodiversity Net Gain.

Employment and skills provision will need to increase to meet this requirement. Around 6,250 people are estimated to currently work in low carbon jobs in the West of England.

Figure 5: Forecast low carbon job opportunities by sector, 2030, Ecuity



¹⁶ Ecuity, West of England Green Skills Market Analysis, 2021. Available [here](#)

Green business opportunities

These will also emerge. New low-carbon products and services will require innovation, and the West of England's businesses are well placed to take advantage of these growth areas. The low carbon economy is predicted to grow by 11% per year up to 2030, creating around one million jobs nationally.¹⁷ Areas of green sector growth include:

- Low carbon electricity products and services, which could grow by 5-7% per year to 2030;
- Products and services for low emission vehicles, which could grow by 20-30% per year to 2030; and
- Low carbon financial services, which could grow at over 10% per year to 2030.

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As set out above, this could create 45,000 green job opportunities by 2030 in the West of England. And these businesses could lift the region's low carbon GVA from £760m in 2020 to £3.7bn per year by 2030.¹⁸

Our definition of what constitutes a green job is one that "will help to create the job functions, responsibilities, conditions, working practices and/or business processes which contribute towards reducing emissions, lowering the carbon footprint and protecting the environment."



¹⁷ Ricardo, UK business opportunities of moving to a low carbon economy, 2017

¹⁸ Ecuity, West of England Green Skills Market Analysis

The Challenge for Net Zero Energy

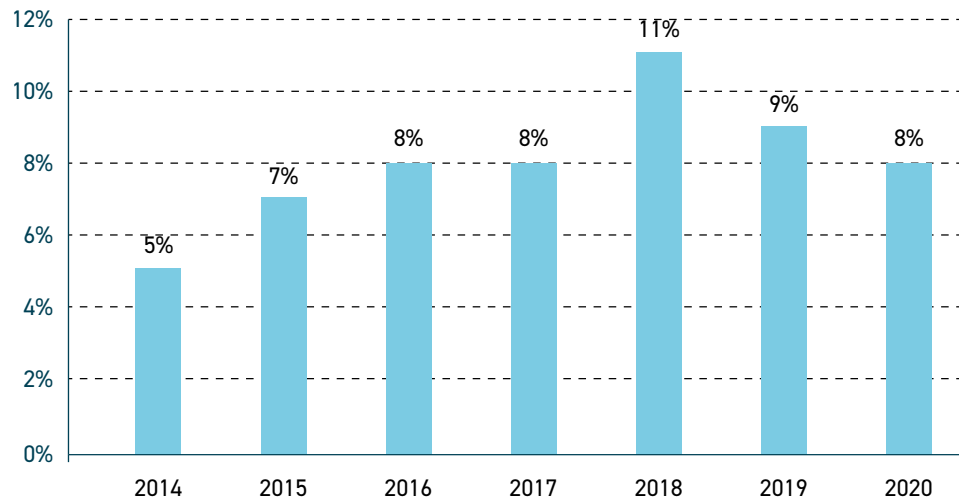
In 2021, national grid electricity was 55% low carbon, comprising 15% from nuclear and 40% renewable.¹⁹ The Government is aiming for a fully decarbonised electricity system by 2035, but due to grid inflexibility to maintain supply and demand, integrating renewables is still a major challenge.

Within the region, renewable electricity generation is 41% higher than a decade ago, yet still only provides 8% of the region's electricity consumption. After increasing significantly up to 2018, the region's renewable generation has dipped since 2018, with declining generation from municipal waste, anaerobic digestion, and onshore wind.

Photovoltaics (PV) are the largest source regionally, providing almost two-thirds (65%) of locally-generated renewables, followed by onshore wind (29%).²⁰ There are currently 23,200 sites with photovoltaic generation across the West of England, a 72% increase since 2014.

Figure 6: The share of our electricity consumption generated from renewable sources within the region has increased in the long-term but dipped in recent years significantly

Share of electricity consumption generated from renewable sources within the West of England



¹⁹ DESNZ, UK Energy in Brief 2021

²⁰ DESNZ, Regional Renewable Statistics

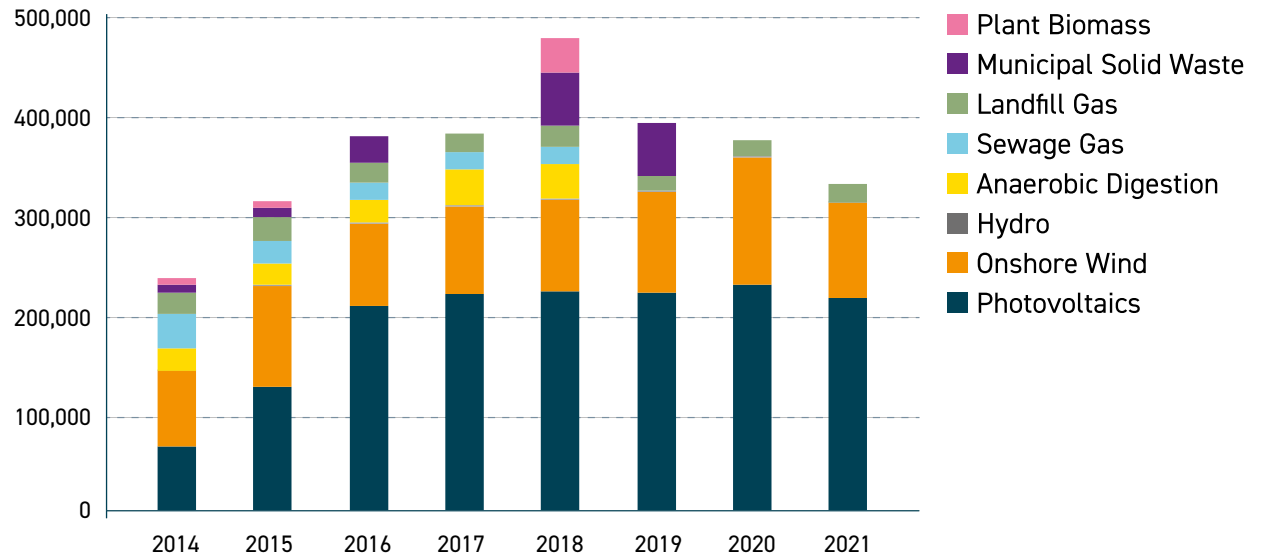
There is a huge volume of proposed electrical capacity approved to connect to the region's electricity grid. Partly driven by the escalating value of electricity, the region has over 2,000MW accepted to connect²¹ – over five times our region's current generating capacity. 1,326MW of this is electricity storage, with the remaining majority being 650MW of solar PV.

Whilst these are accepted to connect, and National Grid must honour these connections, they may not come to fruition. National Grid have said new connections in the southwest of England are unlikely to be approved until 2028-2031.²²

Increasing our region's renewable electricity will require:

- Delivering approved connections where developers will proceed
- Removing developers that chose not to proceed with the investment, allowing additional connections
- Strengthening the electricity grid to allow new generators to connect
- Implementing smart solutions, such as locating renewable electricity generation adjacent to where there is demand from buildings & industry

Figure 7: Photovoltaics and wind turbines are the largest sources of renewable generation within the region



21 **Embedded Capacity Register** - December 2022 - National Grid's Connected Data Portal

22 National Grid 2022 regional customer connections updates: <https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/connections/regional-customer-connections-update>

Decarbonising our region's heat is principally aligned with retrofitting our buildings. However, in addition to installing almost 400,000 heat pumps within buildings - the region needs to connect over 34,000 buildings onto heat networks – insulated pipes running between buildings connected to large renewable heating solutions.

Installing these networks between buildings and finding renewable sources of heat – larger heat pumps, such as the one installed in Bristol's floating harbour; or capturing heat currently lost in former mine workings and in our industrial areas and piping it to where it's needed – requires significant engineering, infrastructure investment, innovation and collaboration.

The greatest challenge will be in people and businesses changing their investment priorities, to recognise climate responsibility and the benefits of warmer well-heated buildings, and install heat pumps and retrofit energy efficiency measures in their buildings. Engagement, advice and other support is needed to support our region investing to save our climate and escalating energy costs.

Community renewable energy schemes will play an important role in increasing generation, as well as being powerful tools for promoting engagement and support for new renewables developments. Therefore, the acceleration of their deployment withing the region would be highly beneficial. Nationally, community schemes generated less than 1% of renewable electricity in 2021.²³



There is opportunity to build on existing progress, by joining up community energy schemes to ensure that residents are linked into and benefit from local energy initiatives.

²³ Community Energy England, Community Energy State of the Sector 2021

The Challenge for Climate Resilience

Our climate is changing and will continue to do so. Despite efforts to reduce emissions, the effects will have impacts for years to come.

The Climate has already changed - across England, average annual land temperature in the decade 2010-2019 was 0.9°C warmer than in the period of mid 1970s to mid-2010s.

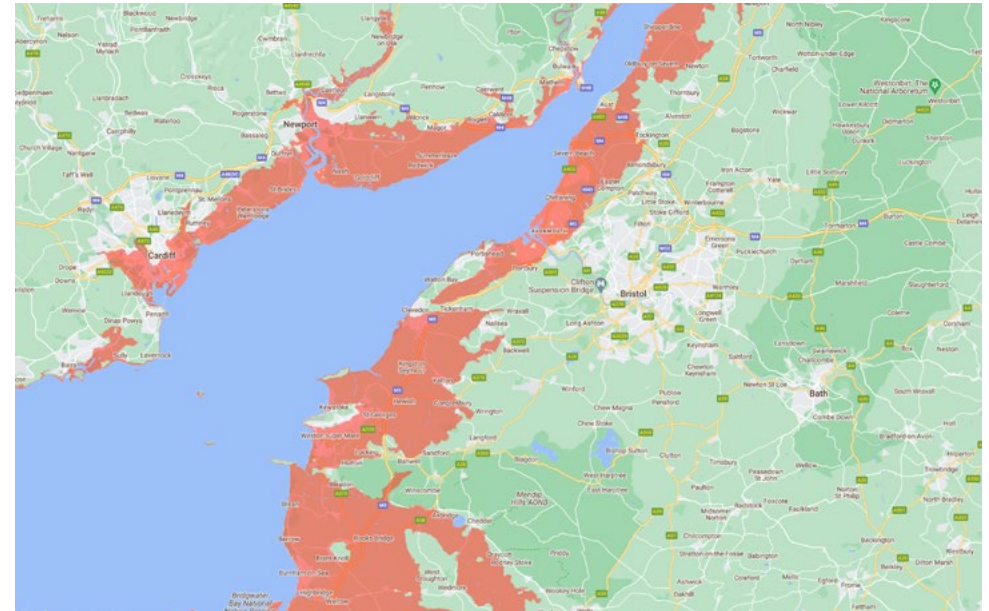
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In the West of England we can expect to see hotter temperatures & more heat waves. Summer temperatures are expected to rise by between 1.7 and 3.9°C by the 2050s and between 3.1 and 7.6°C by the 2080s. Hotter temperatures put people's health at risk. During 2022's record-breaking heat waves there were over 3200 excess deaths in the UK. Summer high peak temperatures will increase by up to 4.5°C in 2050, and 8.9°C in 2080. Heat waves will increase the decline of our regions natural habitats and also increase the chances of wildfires. Summers will be drier, those with droughts will be up to 42% drier in 2050 and up to 62% drier in 2080. This will impact agriculture and industry, and our natural environment and ecosystems.

Our winters will be wetter. Rainfall is expected to increase by 9-28% by the 2050s and by between 17% to 48% by the 2080s. Sea levels are projected to rise by between 24-36cm by the 2050s, and 42-72cm by the 2080s. This will increase the vulnerability and susceptibility of homes, businesses and infrastructure to flooding – exacerbated further by climate change's impact on more extreme weather events. The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment sets out this will result in us facing:

- Increasing pests, pathogens and invasive species impacting our natural environment
- More frequent flooding and coastal erosion, impacting our buildings and infrastructure
- Extreme weather events impacting our transport, health and social care sectors
- High temperatures and drought resulting in water scarcity and impacting public health – combined with international impacts impacting food scarcity and national security

Land projected to flood annually by 2050, even with massive cuts in emissions now AND optimistic projections in sea level



Climate Central Coastal **Risk Screening Map**, showing land projected to be below annual flood level in 2050

The challenge we face is to ensure the West of England is prepared to adapt and our communities and businesses are as resilient as possible to the impacts of climate change. We import much of what we use – we need resilient local food production, infrastructure and supply chains; and cannot solve all the problems ourselves. This needs national and international work.

The National Adaption Programme sets out the actions that government and others will take to adapt to the challenges of climate change in England. This CESAP establishes what actions we need to do locally.

What does this evidence mean for our Strategy and Action Plan?

The evidence for the region is clear. We are not on track to meet our 2030 objectives for the climate and ecological emergencies.

Our regional emissions and the scale of damage to the natural environment are still too high and are not projected to reduce or recover quickly enough. If we do not take action now to change this pathway, we will continue the pattern of doing irreversible damage to the region, and putting the businesses and lives of our residents at risk.

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This document provides the strategic framework and long term vision for us to achieve our 2030 ambitions. The actions set out provide the first steps towards meeting them and enabling the changes that we need to see across the region. However, we are clear that these alone will not be sufficient for us to meet our targets.

As a region, we need to work collectively to take the big decisions, accepting that there will need to be trade-offs in the way we invest our money and live and work within the region to meet our objectives. Addressing the climate and ecological emergencies will be the greatest challenge of our times, but one that we cannot afford to get wrong.

OUR ACTION PLAN



OUR STRATEGY FOR:

TRANSPORT

BUILDINGS AND PLACES

NATURE RECOVERY

BUSINESS & SKILLS

NET ZERO ENERGY

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

OUR ACTION PLAN

Working with partners across the region (including our Unitary Authority partners, the region’s Climate Action Panel, the Local Enterprise Partnership and others) we have identified six core areas that we must focus on to achieve our ambitions. Whilst these areas have been separated for ease of reference within this plan, the actions are often interlinked, and the impacts will be shared between them all.

To keep actions clear and concise, we have not identified specific partners we’re working with against each action. The vast majority of actions involve us working with our partners – including

Unitary Authorities, businesses, education providers, community groups, residents and many more. Each action should be read in this context – of us working with partners across the West of England in their delivery.

Included in our Action Plan are a selection of complimentary actions being led by our Unitary Authority partners. These are those the Combined Authority has some involvement in, or where they will directly influence some of our activities. However, these are not comprehensive. Earlier in the document are links to Unitary Authority climate and nature action plans. We support their and other organisations’ efforts in addressing the climate and ecological emergencies. Over the next year, we will be looking to bring our actions together with others in a searchable digital format – allowing greater visibility of work across our region in achieving our nature and climate goals.

In each section of the action plan, we set out:

The challenge	Setting out the challenge we must address in relation to this priority
Our focus	Highlighting the areas we have agreed with partners we should focus on to meet that challenge
Our call to Government	Setting out what we will call on Government to do to enable swifter progress



Immediate action we will take in 2022-23



Medium-term actions we will take or develop with our partners in 2024-28



Longer-term ambitions that will be further developed in future iterations of our climate and ecological emergency action plan

OUR STRATEGY FOR TRANSPORT

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: To decarbonise the transport system; reduce car dependency; manage demand; increase cycling, walking and public transport; and embed nature recovery within transport projects

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The Challenge	Our focus	Our ask of government
<p>Emissions from transport, including freight, are one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas and CO2 emissions (around 44%)</p> <p>Without intervention, car trips are expected to continue increasing.</p> <p>Significant modal shift and lifestyle change away from private cars is vital, with around a 40% reduction in car mileage required to meet our 2030 objectives.</p>	<p>We will deliver the objective by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting the number of journeys, promoting mode shift • Substantially increasing public transport, walking and cycling • Promoting the growth of local facilities, accessible by non-car modes. • Increasing the uptake of low carbon and electric vehicles. • Achieving the powers to deliver Demand Management measures, ringfence revenues for sustainable transport 	<p>Obtain powers to deliver demand management options, including distance and area-based options</p> <p>Increased funding for capital investment and revenue support, including rural interventions to reduce car dependency.</p> <p>Continue support for walking and cycling programmes.</p> <p>Completion of electrification of the rail network</p> <p>Further devolution of transport powers to enable more local decision making</p>

Next year with our partners we will aim to:	Anticipated timescale
Reduce number of car trips and freight journeys by:	
Reviewing our Joint Local Transport Plan to confirm the policies which will substantially cut greenhouse gas emissions to prioritise options progressed in terms of their carbon and environmental impact.	Autumn 2023
Increasing the pace of transport decarbonisation by progressing plans and start to implement demand management measures	March 2024
Supporting councils in their efforts to strengthen car parking policies and prioritising accessible locations and sustainable travel in new development through their Local Plans	Throughout 2023/24
Developing detailed plans for a liveable neighbourhood in Bristol and confirming areas to deliver liveable neighbourhoods in B&NES and South Gloucestershire with a view to rolling out a programme of delivery across the region to reduce reliance on cars.	March 2024
Launch and trial Mobility as a Service scheme – a one-stop-shop to deliver a regional digital journey planning, booking, ticketing, payment and information solution	Throughout 2023/24
Explore and secure investment in further innovative transport solutions and services to reduce car and freight trips (including alternative fuels such as electricity, hydrogen and biofuels) as well as social and planning innovation.	Throughout 2023/24
Increase walking, cycling & wheeling by:	
Delivering 16 (TCF, ATF and CRSTS) walking, cycling & wheeling schemes and work with partners to submit applications for additional schemes to future active travel fund (round four).	Throughout 2023/24
Deliver 30 cycle hangars in Bristol, and explore feasibility of wider regional rollout	by Q1 2023
Deliver walking, cycling and wheeling routes within new strategic transport corridors being delivered under the CRSTS, integrated with delivery of green infrastructure.	Throughout 2023/24 and beyond
Deliver improved walking, cycling and wheeling facilities across Yate Station, Ralph Allen School in Bath, Concorde Way and Clapton Road in Midsomer Norton; and subsidising rental schemes and training, including Bristol Family Cycling Centre via £680k investment	Throughout 2023/24
Supporting councils and regional partners in their walking and cycling initiatives including working with employers and communication campaigns, and in traffic management schemes	Throughout 2023/24
Increase uptake of public transport by:	
Run 'WEST Link' fleet of 'on demand' minibuses to connect people to our bus corridors (Demand Responsive Transport)	Up to 2025

Next year with our partners we will aim to:	Anticipated timescale
Deliver Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) trial in north Bristol to connect people to major employment opportunities and other key destinations such as Southmead Hospital	Up to 2024 as part of FTZ
Build 15 green roofed solar-powered bus stops, as well as improving wildlife areas around them, this year and deliver a further 300 in subsequent years under CRSTS	By 2024 (w/ 300 delivered in CRSTS by 2026/27)
Implement fare capping in place for adult single trips and develop a single ticket solution to simplify residents' journeys across the region through BSIP.	By 2024
Improving frequency and accessibility of trains through delivery of new train lines and stations (via MetroWest Phase 1a, Phase 2 and CRSTS),	Throughout 2023/24, with Portway opening Q1 2024, Ashley Down in 2024/25, and Portishead & North Filton in 2026
Increase uptake of electric and net zero fuel vehicles by:	
Delivering around 300 new electric vehicle chargepoints and 400 charging bays by investing £5m (informed by EV charging strategy)	Initial Business Case for Spring 2023
Commence a new contract for micro-mobility to enhance scooter hire provision and introduce on-street ebike hire in the Bristol Bath areas	Launch Summer '23
Deliver our sustainable urban freight trials, introducing e-cargo bikes in university and hospital campuses, 'parcels as passengers' on trains and 'local high-street aggregator' to consolidate local neighbourhood deliveries	By March 2024
Supporting our councils in maintaining Clean Air Zones and in their electrification and decarbonisation of their fleet by publicly backing them	Throughout 2023/24
Build our region's hydrogen economy by exploring opportunities for green hydrogen electrolysis and piloting application of hydrogen as a transport fuel in sectors difficult to electrify (including HGVs operating locally, such as busses and in goods distribution)	Throughout 2023/24
Reduce the impact of our transport systems on nature by:	
Agreeing a regional framework for how transport projects will minimise their impact on nature, through interventions such as nature-based solutions to road run-off, wildlife kerbs, and regular and targeted cleaning of gullies.	By March 2024
Agree regional priorities for retrofitting of existing transport infrastructure to reduce its impact on nature	By March 2024

IN THE MEDIUM TERM WE WILL:	OVER THE LONG TERM, WE WILL:
<p>Medium Term Actions 2024-2028</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open six new railway stations by 2026, increasing access to rail for more people across the region. In 2024 we will see Ashley Down station, and in 2025 having step-free access at Lawrence Hill Station. Then in 2026 we shall see the new Portishead Line and new stations at: North Filton, Henbury and Charfield • Increase use of rail by 1,300,000 new rail journeys per year by 2025/6 by developing our regional rail network (delivering measures outlined in our CRSTS programme and Rail Delivery Plan). • Increase bus travel from 48,000,000 in 2021/22 to 70,000,000 bus journeys per year by 2025/6 (to pre lockdown levels) by developing our regional bus network through the delivery of measures outlined in our CRSTS programme and Bus Service improvement Plan. • Develop the walking, cycling and wheeling network in line with the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and the CRSTS programme. • Limit the increase in emissions of new development by designing and implementing planning policy to deliver reduce dependency on cars and increase use of sustainable public transport. • Work with Unitary Authorities to design and implement demand management measures within the region. • Work with government and Unitary Authorities to build a case for further devolution to enable more strategic decisions to be made on public transport in the region. • Expand car-share / car club services to offer services across the region, working with Unitary Authorities and private operators to shape and deliver • Build on the success of the Green Futures pilot to help educate young people on the benefits of transport decarbonisation, adopting green practices and pursuing green jobs. • Invest in nature-based solutions to limit pollution caused by the road network. • Reduce ecological severance caused by the existing transport networks and new infrastructure, for example through wildlife tunnels and wildlife kerbs. 	<p>Long Term Vision 2028-2030</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a network of 15-minute liveable neighbourhoods that will contribute to the longer-term reduction in emissions • Achieve a 40% reduction in car usage through the successful implementation of demand management frameworks • Have an affordable, convenient, sustainable and easy to use alternative to the car for all our rural and urban residents • Support industry partners to develop future transport fuels or energy systems for transport including the aviation industry • Have a road network that makes space on roads for cyclists, walkers and wheelers as standard. • Commence delivery of a new, state of the art public transport mode – Future4West – along four strategic corridors.

Transport Case Study

Delivering bus service improvements – metrobus and the Greater Bristol Bus Network

The region has a strong track record of success in delivering improvements to bus services which have led to increases in passenger numbers. Over the last 15 years we have worked together to improve bus services over the region with the introduction of projects such as the Greater Bristol Bus Network, Bath Transport Package and the metrobus Bus Rapid Transit network. Representing an investment exceeding £300m, following the introduction of these schemes the region saw an increase in bus use of 42% until 2017, and a further increase of 6% following the introduction of metrobus, bucking the national trend. The West of England councils working in partnership with bus operators, brought several key corridors up to recognised good practise 'showcase' and/or metrobus standards with:

- Over 150 new buses offering higher service frequencies including biomethane-fuelled metrobus services.
- Around 1,000 improved bus stops including new shelters, level access and more than 300 new real time information displays.
- Significant new bus priorities, including a new bus lane and bus-only junction on the M32.
- Improvements to public realm, pedestrian and cycle access and safety.



This has led to the region securing £540 million for our City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement to radically improve infrastructure for buses, rail services and walking and cycling; and a further £105 million for revenue funding for new bus services as well as further infrastructure in North Somerset.

OUR STRATEGY FOR BUILDINGS AND PLACES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Increase the energy performance, climate resilience and environmental benefits of buildings and places

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The Challenge	Our focus	Our ask of government
<p>Emissions from heat is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas and CO2 emissions [around 35%] in the region. Most of our heat is supplied by gas.</p> <p>Retrofitting and improving the energy efficiency in 250,000 homes and 8,000 other buildings is highly complex as a result of different levels of ownership, building types including commercial and industrial buildings and responsibility for property maintenance</p> <p>Population growth, and government requirements, mean an increase in housing. With no action this will lead to an increase in emissions unless they are fitted with low carbon or carbon neutral heating systems and are built to high energy efficiency standards.</p> <p>New developments and buildings can also have a significant impact on the natural environment. From Winter 2023, all new developments will be required to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain</p>	<p>How we will deliver the objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of new carbon neutral homes and buildings being developed that deliver Biodiversity Net Gain. • Increase the energy performance of homes and buildings across the region • Reduce reliance on fossil fuel based heating systems. 	<p>Provide policy consistency for the sector through a national retrofit strategy</p> <p>Provide long term, sustainable funding for large scale retrofit programmes, including our Retrofit Accelerator</p> <p>Instil confidence in the retrofit supply chain by establishing and maintaining clear quality accreditation standards for retrofit installers</p> <p>Change National Planning Policy Frameworks to support the development of carbon neutral buildings and the use of land for renewable energy generation.</p>

Next year with our partners we will aim to:	Anticipated timescale
Increase the energy performance of homes and buildings across the region	
Run the Retrofit Accelerator Phase I Homeowner Advice Service to increase the scale and pace of retrofit, creating a hub for homeowners to access information on retrofit . Forecast to advise 10,600 households, resulting in 5,250 homes being surveyed and delivering 4,200 measures in 1,400 households over the next 2 years	Launch in Spring 2023
Expanding the domestic retrofit supply chain via the £2m Retrofit Accelerator Phase IIa, supporting a minimum of 350 small and micro businesses, and Phase IIb (£200k) to integrate retrofit understanding and awareness into our Future Bright coaching service, and other skills offerings	Launch in Summer 2023
Deliver the Innovative Housing Retrofit Scheme, insulating 50-75 hard-to-treat homes within the region; and seek funding to expand the scheme to further demonstrate new approaches for wider roll out (e.g. offsite manufacturing)	Throughout 2023/24
Carry out up to 400 free carbon surveys for small & medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to help them understand and reduce their energy use, carbon footprint and other environmental impacts	Throughout 2023/24
Provide c225 SMEs with grant funding to make energy saving improvements and install renewable energy via a new £2m Green Business Grant fund	From May 2023
Promote grant-funded domestic retrofit programmes in our region including those via the South West Net Zero Hub , Warm & Well in South Gloucestershire, Energy at Home in Bath & North East Somerset and City Leap domestic retrofit in Bristol	Throughout 2023/24
Work with public sector partners and the South West Net Zero Hub to secure funding, develop strategy and deliver decarbonisation projects on public land and buildings	Throughout 2023/24
Develop a range of sustainable funding mechanisms for retrofit and the transition to non-fossil fuel reliant heating within the region to secure private and government funding	Throughout 2023/24
Develop our retrofit approach by improving our knowledge on existing housing and retrofit requirements – working with funders to collect data needed in securing investment	Throughout 2023/24

Next year with our partners we will aim to:	Anticipated timescale
Increase the number of new carbon neutral homes and buildings being developed that deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) by:	
Publicly support Local Councils and the South West Net Zero Hub in adopting and enforcing net zero and BNG new build standards for new developments across the region through local planning policy	Bath & NE Somerset Council adopted Dec 2022. Bristol consultation in 2022, adoption in 2023. South Gloucestershire to follow
Review and coordinate regional development and adoption of innovative environmentally-positive design and construction approaches (such as Bristol Housing Festival establishing a Regional Centre of Excellence in Housing Innovation; and Design Codes incorporating wildlife habitats such as swift boxes)	Throughout 2023/24
Reduce reliance on fossil-fuel based heating by:	
Coordinate rollout of heat pumps with local councils and National Grid Electricity Distribution, to accelerate rollout and maintain electricity grid resilience to accommodate transition	Throughout 2023/24
Develop a heat pump engagement and collective buying scheme, with corresponding local supply chain support, targeting delivery of an additional 1000 heat pumps across our region over 2 years	By Q4 2023/24
Agree cross-border collaboration agreements to support expanding the Strategic Heat Main within City Leap and other heat networks across the West of England	During 2023

IN THE MEDIUM TERM WE WILL:	OVER THE LONG TERM, WE WILL:
<p>Medium Term Actions 2024-2028</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support retrofitting of over 1,400 additional homes through the Retrofit Accelerator, advising early adopter homeowners through the Homeowner Advice Service and supporting early adopter supply chain businesses through the Supply Side Market & Capacity Building Programme • Build the Retrofit Accelerator Green Skills programme to support residents to identify new green skills provision and access to it. This will facilitate progressions into and within work as well as support young people into green careers and pathways • Develop a range of sustainable funding mechanisms for retrofit and the transition to non-fossil fuel reliant heating within the region, including securing private and government funding and increasing community and regional purchasing schemes. • Support new low emissions developments that maximize the use of onsite renewable heat and energy and are linked with biodiversity objectives including increasing wildlife abundance and new habitat creation (through local and regional planning policy) • Test viability of setting requirements of achieving BNG requirements exceeding national 10% targets and carbon neutral (or reduced) construction and decommissioning for new buildings and infrastructure in the region • CA and UA using their unique position as strategic planning and housing authorities to raise awareness and understanding of retrofit options for various building types • Stimulate the market for non-fossil fuel heating systems encouraging the transition from gas and oil boilers through encouraging behaviour change, the innovation of new technology, and improving supply chain capacity for new energy systems. • Increase the number of Energy Performance Certificates for both housing and commercial buildings in the region, up from the current position of 44% to raise awareness of energy performance and the improvement measures required to retrofit to achieve 'grade C' to help reduce emissions from buildings. 	<p>Long Term Vision 2028-2030 for the region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the scale and pace of retrofit within the region to ensure that the majority of properties within the region achieving EPC C as a minimum, as a result of local interventions, improved national policy and access to funding. • Ensure new properties and buildings are carbon neutral across their lifetime, from construction and operation to decommissioning. • Deliver a widescale transition towards non-fossil fuel reliant heating systems across all buildings within the region. • Exceed 10% biodiversity net gain to increase wildlife abundance and protect green spaces across all new developments and infrastructure projects in the region where viable.

Low Carbon Buildings & Places Case Studies

Green Business Grant Case Study: Pentagon Sport South Ltd

Based in Bradley Stoke, Pentagon Sport design, manufacture and install playground and outdoor learning products and facilities for schools and nurseries. As part of a relocation to a new premises, they sought ways to improve energy efficiency within their new office and warehouse. Being located in a large warehouse poses significant decarbonisation challenges when balancing energy use and the need for the building to be well-lit and appropriately heated to suit their activities. They received a £3,420 Green Business Grant from the Combined Authority to replace almost 200 fluorescent lights with LED fittings, resulting in an estimated 70% reduction in lighting energy use and an annual carbon saving of 8.5 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.

"We were looking to make our premises as green as possible for both our own carbon footprint, reduce emissions, ensure a safe and comfortable workplace for our employees and also to reduce our costs. We believe that it is very important for SMEs to think about it... If all businesses made small changes it could have a big impact in the region."

Chris Argrave, Finance Manager, Pentagon Sport.



OUR STRATEGY FOR NATURE RECOVERY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Wildlife and the natural environment are in recovery, with their decline halted and in line with the West of England Nature Partnership the abundance of wildlife has increased by 30%

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The Challenge	Our focus	Our ask of government
<p>Habitats loss and degradation, pesticide use and pollution, a rapidly changing climate, and invasive species.</p> <p>Protecting and enhancing the natural environment of the West of England including key priority habitats such as woodland, rivers, wetland and grasslands is integral in maintaining the ecosystem services.</p> <p>A lack of accessible green space has broad impacts including on community health and wellbeing and climate resilience.</p>	<p>How we will deliver the objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality and connectivity of existing spaces for nature and wildlife (primarily through the development and delivery of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy) • Create new spaces for nature and wildlife • Enable business, other stakeholders and residents to contribute to nature's recovery including unlocking investment in nature-based solutions. 	<p>Provide capacity funding to produce Local Nature Recovery Strategies and their ongoing delivery</p> <p>Ensure sufficient funding is available to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain</p> <p>Establish training routes and frameworks to support anticipated increase in need for ecologists and nature recovery experts</p> <p>Increase funding available for the delivery of large scale projects.</p> <p>Ensure agricultural subsidies support sustainable, nature-friendly farming and enable nature recovery at scale</p>

Next year with our partners we will aim to:	Anticipated timescale
Improve the quality and connectivity of existing spaces for nature and wildlife by:	
Deliver improvements to existing natural green spaces such as through Common Connections, Chew Valley Lake, developing investable business cases for improvements at Bath Riverline and Waterspace Connected.	Throughout 2023/24
Deliver access improvements to existing water (blue) spaces including investment at Chew Valley Lake and developing business cases for improvements at Bath Riverline and Waterspace Connected.	Throughout 2023/24
Develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy that provides a coherent regional vision and map for nature's recovery, building on the West of England Nature Recovery Network, and helps direct investment effectively into the natural environment	Autumn 2023
Develop a regional agreement for public sector bodies to reduce the use of pesticides on their estates, with an aim of eliminating use altogether.	Throughout 2023/24
Provide residents access to volunteering opportunities in nature recovery projects and the natural environment jobs market via Pollinator Fund, Green Futures, Community Support Fund and other grassroots skills programmes	Throughout 2023/24
Plant more trees and create habitats along strategic corridors and rivers (incl. CRSTS and strategic nature recovery networks)	Throughout 2023/24
Develop a monitoring framework (data platform and ecological baseline) for the regions natural environment to enable us to measure progress towards our ambitions, including the possibility to use a wildlife index to measure abundance and diversity of wildlife amongst the current ecological network	December 2023
Set up a region wide project that aims to understand the health of, and management approaches applied to the region's protected sites.	Summer 2023
Create capacity that will enable UA and partner priorities (WENP prospectus) to be developed into investment ready projects, and source varied and innovative funding options.	Throughout 2023/24
Create new spaces for nature and wildlife by:	
Launch the second round of the Community Pollinator Fund to increase the number and quality of habitats for pollinators and bees across the region	Spring 2023
Provide evidence to support councils' local plans and planning policy to create new spaces for nature and wildlife and protect existing spaces linking in with regional biodiversity objectives, including those set out in Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Tree and Woodland Strategy.	ongoing

Next year with our partners we will aim to:	Anticipated timescale
Ensure that transport and planning projects delivered by the Combined Authority positively contribute towards nature's net recovery, including delivering at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain	Throughout 2023/24
Together with WENP and the Forest of Avon Trust, renew and continue to accelerate action in delivering the Forest of Avon Plan. Includes investment of £730,000 for the Forest of Avon Trust for woodland creation, including 50,000 broadleaf trees in diverse habitats	Throughout 2023/24
Work with Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership to identify actions and investment required to deliver the Bristol Avon Catchment Plan and the Bristol Avon Fish Recovery Strategy to improve the health, biodiversity and resilience of our water courses, wetlands and river catchments.	Throughout 2023/24
Enable business, other stakeholders and residents to contribute to nature's recovery, including unlocking investment in nature-based solutions by:	
Promote and embed the West of England Placemaking Charter for creating high quality, biodiverse places that support access to nature and encourage health and wellbeing	Throughout 2023/24
Develop and promote the biodiversity footprint concept, to engage and inform businesses about how they can make changes to their supply chain to support nature.	Throughout 2023/24
Hold further Bee Bold Awards and create targeted business campaigns to support businesses create habitats and support pollinators.	June 2023
Work with West of England Nature Partnership (WENP) and Natural History Consortium (NHC) to raise awareness of and engagement with the natural environment, and encourage conservation volunteering and pro-environmental behaviours (City Nature Challenge, Team Wilder, Festival of Nature)	Throughout 2023/24
Support the development of platforms that enable businesses to invest in the natural environment (e.g. Bristol and Avon Catchment Market)	Throughout 2023/24
Develop innovative new ways of observing and monitoring the natural environment	Throughout 2023/24
Using regional skills programmes including Multiply and Workforce for the Future to build skills required for ecology and natural environment sector.	Throughout 2022/23
Work with the agricultural community to understand needs and land use options to unlock investment for nature, aiming to create a coalition of agricultural partners signed up to support nature recovery	Throughout 2023/24
Develop an approach to enabling and collecting citizen science data, to engage people with nature and support decision making.	Throughout 2023/24

IN THE MEDIUM TERM WE WILL:	OVER THE LONG TERM, WE WILL:
<p>Medium Term Actions 2024-2028</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver over 375ha of improved natural green spaces by 2025/6 • Provide strategic guidance and support (including via Skills Connect, skills interventions and joint initiatives with delivery partners) to develop regional relevant skills required for nature recovery • Work with the Unitary Authorities to develop and implement planning policy to deliver a coordinated strategy on climate change adaptation and mitigation, including the management of natural capital and ecosystem services • Seek further public and private investment to support upscaling of measures to increase the abundance and distribution of species and quality and quantity of habitats. • Develop a natural capital approach to evidence and support the development of investment ready projects and inform decision making across the region. 	<p>Long Term Vision 2028-2030:</p> <p>Support the ambitions of the West of England Nature Partnership to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the abundance of wildlife from 2020 levels by 30% by 2030 • Increase our semi-natural broadleaved woodland cover by 2500ha (from 8,000 to 10,500 ha, or by 31%) • In addition to woodland, create 2000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site network • Close at least 40% of the Nature Recovery Network connectivity gaps through the creation of new habitat • Ensure all water catchments are in at least moderate ecological status, with half in good ecological status by 2030 • Ensure 70% of designated sites are in favourable condition by 2030.

Nature Recovery Case Studies

Tree Canopy Project

The Green Recovery Fund is funding the Tree Canopy project, to plant and establish 2000+ mature trees by 2025. This will deliver benefits directly where people live, on public open spaces, highways verges and green areas within residential developments. These benefits include increasing biodiversity; climate adaptation and resilience including cooling, shading and air quality.

Page 108 Delivery is being managed by South Gloucestershire Council, working with partners including Forest of Avon, Woodland Trust, Local Tree nurseries and contractors, West of England Nature Partnership and Town and Parish Councils.

Bee S13 Pollinators Project

The Community Pollinator Fund is funding the Bee S13 Pollinator Project which is engaging residents with pollinators in an urban area of south Bristol. A pollinator trail will take visitors through seven locations in the BS13 postcode, where green spaces are being transformed with pollinator friendly plants. Planting workshops will also be run to teach local children nature-friendly gardening, equipping them with the practical skills to take home and use in their own environments.



OUR STRATEGY FOR BUSINESS & SKILLS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Help all businesses become more sustainable and resilient to meet our 2030 objectives; and help low carbon sector businesses and ensure local people benefit from growth in the green economy

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The Challenge	Our focus	Our ask of government
<p>Businesses need to fully decarbonise their buildings and operations.</p> <p>The physical risk of climate change could have a detrimental impact on businesses, their supply chains and workforce.</p> <p>The UK Government estimates that the green economy could grow 11% each year, creating new market opportunities; however, the region is currently missing the skills required to deliver the 2030 net zero ambition.</p>	<p>How we will deliver the objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support businesses to transition to low emission, sustainable practices and adapt for climate resilience and support nature recovery • Prepare business for emerging green economy opportunities, including through innovation • Support local people to access green jobs and bring 23,000 green jobs across the region. • Supporting low carbon industries, such as those in the domestic and commercial retrofit and renewable energy sectors, to grow through business support and providing training opportunities for quality labour supply 	<p>Continue to provide funding for Growth Hub Net Zero Advisors to encourage businesses to decarbonise</p> <p>Encourage all businesses to make a climate resilience plan, to ensure that they understand their risks and liability against a changing climate to help ensure business continuity</p> <p>Launch further innovation funding rounds to promote low carbon goods and services</p> <p>Work with the Metro Mayor to create a trade campaign focussed on increasing investment and trade in low carbon goods and services in the West of England</p>

Next year with our partners we will aim to:	Status
Support businesses to transition to low emission, sustainable practices and adapt for climate resilience by:	
Carry out up to 400 additional free carbon surveys using £416k funding to help small & medium sized enterprises (SMEs) understand their energy use and low carbon solutions; and seek funding to widen the scope and number of businesses eligible for a survey	Throughout 2023/24
Deliver a new £2m Green Business Grant fund to help approx.225 SMEs to make energy saving improvements and install renewable energy, based on findings from a low carbon business evidence base	From May 2023
Increase our understanding of the scale of the challenge and support needed to decarbonise small & medium sized enterprises in the region, through commissioning a low carbon business evidence base and intelligence gathered from the Growth Hub	Throughout 2023/24
Pilot a Rooftop Generation Grant to encourage the use of larger business premises to boost solar PV generation capacity.	Launch in Autumn 2023
Deliver more carbon & nature literacy support for businesses to improve their understanding of climate and ecological emergencies and actions they can take to help decarbonise and build resilience through website resources and 4 events per year.	Throughout 2023/24
Develop a focussed net zero Growth Hub route to sit alongside the embedded activities already in place, to advise SME businesses on net zero journeys with a year-on-year increase in the number of businesses supported. .	Throughout 2023/24
Investigate the benefits and ways in which the Combined Authority could support a regional transition towards circular economy principles.	By March 2024
Explore opportunity to recognise businesses' positive actions through green digital badging, aligned to our Good Employment Charter (which has sustainability running through each of its pillars)	Throughout 2023/24
Develop a peer-to-peer support programme to promote innovation and environmental transition, including becoming nature positive, via mentoring, sharing best-practise and networking events	By March 2024
Ensure local people can access green jobs and bring 23,000 green jobs across the region by:	
Deliver green careers advice universally to school aged children and young people via the Careers Hub and seek funding to build on the Green Futures Fund pilot.	Throughout 2023/24
Use business engagement to understand what skills / knowledge they need in place to meet the 2030 ambitions to inform our skills provision including Skills Connect, Good Employment Charter and Skills Bootcamps.	Throughout 2023/24

Next year with our partners we will aim to:	Status
Use Skills Connect to support individuals to access information, advice and guidance on green jobs through the Retrofit Accelerator Phase IIb, FutureBright, Skills Connect and Green Skills Bootcamps	Throughout 2023/24
Deliver Workforce For The Future, aiming to support over 450 SME businesses and 1000 residents access skills and training including green skills	By September '23
Deliver Green Skills Bootcamps for residents as part of our £5.1m Wave 4 programme, focusing on retrofit; green transport; and organisational sustainability	Wave 4 Bootcamps launching from April '23
Publish and use the findings from the South West Skills Study from the South West Net Zero Hub to build on the West of England Green Skills Analysis Report to inform our provision of retrofit and green skills	By June 2023
Prepare business for emerging green economies by:	
Support 350+ domestic retrofit small and micro businesses through the Retrofit Accelerator Phase IIa, to raise awareness, train and increase accreditation	Launch in Summer 2023
Leverage national funding for large scale initiatives (such as demonstrators, networks, living labs) and support manufacturing and engineering industries to innovate new sustainable technologies and supply chains	Throughout 2023/24
Support SMEs to innovate new sustainable technologies through delivery of the Business Innovation Fund and Made Smarter programmes	Throughout 2023/24
Develop innovative green financial and delivery models, including those unlocking investment in nature-based solutions and supporting organisations in the West of England FinTech Strategy	Throughout 2023/24
Revise our regional procurement strategy to include environmental weighting alongside social value in procuring sourced goods and services.	By March 2024
Use Invest Bristol & Bath to create a campaign to attract new green businesses to the region, targeting a third of new businesses attracted to the region via Invest Bristol & Bath to be focused on green jobs	Throughout 2023/24

IN THE MEDIUM TERM WE WILL:	OVER THE LONG TERM, WE WILL:
<p>Medium Term Actions 2024-2028</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver multimillion-pound infrastructure projects to support our 2030 objectives and grow the economy including flood defences to protect and enable 19,400 jobs and £3.8bn of GVA. • Develop programmes to re-skill and up-skill existing trades/ industries (especially fossil fuel reliant) that will be implemented by 2025. • Work with all schools and colleges within the region to green their curriculums and ensure work experience and training opportunities aligned with identified green skills gaps, Building upon Skills Connect and the West of England Employment and Skills Plan. • Grow innovative climate and environment-related research and development businesses in the region • Deliver Digital Transformation Programme by April 2025 to support green skills development and business growth through the improvement of digital infrastructure and capacity within the region. 	<p>Long Term Vision 2028-2030:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that it is common practice for businesses in the region to operate sustainably, including through low carbon practices and recruitment, and in ways that protect and restore nature and that they are prepared for climate change. • Enable low carbon sector businesses to develop new sustainable products and services that support the delivery of renewables and domestic/commercial retrofit. This will include adoption of greener job descriptions and functions as per the Good Employment Charter. • Ensure that the region has the workforce and skills to deliver our 2030 objectives by providing training and reskilling opportunities to new green jobs, particularly targeting fossil-fuel reliant sectors and engineering. • Prepare our regional economy for a lack of energy security and local climate risks – including key regional infrastructure such as transport/buildings/IT infrastructure, health care, food, water.

Business and Skills Case Studies

Green Business Grants: Kingsway Laundry Ltd

Based in East Bristol, Kingsway Laundry is a self-service laundrette as well as providing laundry services to local businesses. Having already installed LED lighting and purchased an electric vehicle for collections and deliveries, they still faced challenges decarbonising due to their reliance on gas for tumble driers and water heating. They received £15,000 from the Combined Authority's Green Business Grant scheme, supported by the European Regional Development Fund and West of England Recovery Fund. This allowed them to replace their gas-fired water heater with an electric air-source heat pump, as well as install pipe insulation to improve heat retention. They also installed solar photovoltaic panels on their roof, with some of their water able to be heated by electricity generated on-site too. The estimated impact is a reduction of 6 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per year, and at least £350 off annual energy bills.

"We think being 'green' and responsible is incredibly important and being seen to do so, helps others to follow suit. It is also very important to our customers and business clients wanting to ensure their own laundry is being processed responsibly. With the price of gas going up so dramatically recently, moving from gas to electric water heating has helped us financially too." – Chris Hill, Company Director, Kingsway Laundry.

Climate and Biodiversity Festival

This collaborative programme of events ran between 24 September and 2 October 2022. It showcased, inspired and connected organisations, residents and communities across Bath and North East Somerset. Events included Repair Cafes, a Car Park Clean-up Challenge and Bike to the Park, and a Community Day. This brought together organisations supporting communities and residents in climate and biodiversity – including Families Acting on Climate Emergency; Transition Bath; Eco Together; Bath & West Community Energy; Climate Hub; Share & Repair Bath and the RSPB.

OUR STRATEGY FOR NET ZERO ENERGY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Decarbonise the energy system and increase local renewable energy production

The Challenge	Our focus	Government action required
<p>Renewable energy generation in the region has increased by 75% in five years, but represents a decreasingly low proportion of energy use [DESNZ 2021].</p> <p>Average domestic fuel bills have almost tripled in the last ten years - the largest increases last year, with domestic bills increasing by 61% and non-domestic even higher, pushing households into fuel poverty and businesses to closing.</p> <p>Government proposes the National Grid will be fully decarbonised by 2035 - however, no new grid connections are available until after 2030 – partly due to 1350MW of storage and 650MW of PV approved but not yet connected, versus our region's existing 357MW of capacity</p>	<p>How we will deliver the objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase renewable energy generation across the region, including through local, community focussed generation • Focus on delivering proven and building integrated renewable energy, such as heatpumps and rooftop solar generation • Work in partnership to develop new smart approaches to the decarbonisation, storage, management and distribution of energy. 	<p>Work with our region and National Grid to bring forwards generation approved to connect, and increase capacity through reinforcements and removing stalled projects</p> <p>Regulatory changes to treat localised generators and consumers (incl storage) as single entities, and to ensure an appropriate balance of storage vs generation</p> <p>Open further innovation funds non-technical barriers relating to uptake of retrofit within buildings; and build on our region's strength in future energy systems supporting technological advancements in energy-from-mines, hydrogen and energy storage, nuclear fusion and tidal</p> <p>Implementing smart solutions, clarifying legislation for private wire networks;</p> <p>Continue funding Net Zero Hubs and create funding schemes to derisk community energy generation schemes, providing loans or grants for development costs.</p>

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Next year with our partners we will aim to:	Status
Increase renewable energy generation across the region, including through local, community focussed generation by:	
Deliver £1.5m funding for Sustainable Innovative Finance Foundations for Wind Turbines (SIFFFT) to bring 10 sites to landowner agreement and 3 sites securing planning through a community led model across the region, providing a pipeline of up to 70MW of investable onshore wind projects with shared learning for other communities.	Throughout 2023/4
Rollout rooftop solar, including £569k for Bristol Energy Co-Op to install over 2MW PV targeting rooftops of SMEs, schools and community buildings; piloting a Rooftop Generation Grant scheme encourage the use of larger SME business premises to boost solar PV generation capacity; and launching a second round of solar bulk-purchasing solar PV scheme open to residents and businesses	Throughout 2023/4
Seek sustainable funding for free local energy advice provision for residents seeking help in coping with their energy bills	From April 2023
Fund the Local Energy Scheme round 2 capital projects and launch a third round for development and capital funding of over £600k to support community led projects, including 'smart' energy systems.	Throughout 2023/24
Support public sector partners across the region developing major capital projects through the South West Net Zero Hub provision of free local technical assistance	Throughout 2023/4
Work with National Grid Electricity Distribution and partners to bring forwards approved, but not yet operational, renewable electricity generation	Throughout 2023/4
Work with the UK Coal Authority to expand investigations in South Gloucestershire and Bristol's eastern fringe across the region's former coal workings across Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset	By April 2024
Explore innovative water sources of heating and cooling including from our harbours, rivers and sea	Throughout 2023/4
Input into Severn Estuary tidal energy commission via Western Gateway	Throughout 2023/4
Work in partnership to develop new smart approaches to the decarbonisation, storage, management and distribution of energy by:	
Increasing energy innovation funding coming to the region, working with partners such as our region's universities, R&D companies, Innovate UK and Energy Systems Catapult and National Grid (formerly Western Power Distribution)	Throughout 2023/24
Work with National Grid and our local councils to develop proposals to trial new flexible and other innovative solutions such as lower cost alternatives for grid reinforcement and to deliver additional renewable energy generation	Throughout 2023/24

Next year with our partners we will aim to:	Status
Investigate and support deployment of viable conjoined renewable electricity 'private wire' and virtual 'synthetic' networks connected to local communities	Throughout 2023/24
Review and collect evidence to develop regional heat and electricity decarbonisation pathway scenarios to net zero and the role different interventions will play (e.g. energy storage, renewable electricity, heat pumps and renewably fuelled heat networks)	Throughout 2023/24
Developing a coordinated approach with National Grid and local councils to locate new homes, buildings and infrastructure linked with renewable energy generation and storage to overcome grid constraints	Q1 2023/24
Engage communities and energy groups on the roles they can play in delivering smart energy solutions and provide information to them on our green careers and opportunities programmes	Throughout 2023/24

IN THE MEDIUM TERM WE WILL:	OVER THE LONG TERM, WE WILL:
<p>Medium Term Actions 2024-2028</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a community energy strategy for the region with appropriate financial and support mechanisms, including career and skills progressions, to empower communities' role in net zero energy and retrofit rollout • Grow the region's hydrogen economy focusing research and investment efforts where electrification is difficult in the aerospace, shipping, industrial and heavy-goods vehicle sectors • Drawing conclusions and progressing viable solutions on the region's potential for tidal energy with pan-regional initiatives including Western Gateway Commission and the Severn Estuary Partnership • Increase the amount of energy storage within the region by reflecting its strategic priority in decarbonising heat and facilitating renewable electricity generation, encouraging business innovation and seeking innovative funding to support installation of energy storage systems • Exploratory and initial capital infrastructure works to capture clean energy from former mine works and industrial areas in Avonmouth & Severnside for heating and possibly cooling buildings 	<p>Long Term Vision 2028-2030:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce reliance on the wholesale energy market, increasing self-sufficiency through demand reduction from retrofit and behavioural change, and the generation of more locally supplied renewable energy • Make the West of England the national Community Energy Hub - Increasing community energy to 10% of locally generated renewables • Increase proportion of renewable energy consumed locally through smart connected solutions • Deliver infrastructure enhancement projects to facilitate the roll out of more renewable generation taking into consideration ecological impacts and regional place

Energy Case Studies

Local Energy Scheme : Ambition Community Energy CIC Wind Turbine

Currently being installed – this is the largest onshore wind turbine in England at 150m that will result in 4.2 megawatts (MW) of installed capacity. The project was developed by the local community in Lawrence Weston, working collaboratively with its partner organisations. The West of England Combined Authority has awarded £500,000 capital grant from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to enable the project to be financially viable. Those involved are now seeking to develop more community wind power in our region via the SIFFFT project. The surplus, long-term income from energy generation will help Ambition Lawrence Weston, a local charity, deliver their Community & Climate Plan.

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Bristol City Leap

This is a newly formed joint venture between Bristol City Council and Ameresco, in partnership with Vattenfall. Over the next five years, City Leap will invest c£424m into low carbon energy infrastructure and 182MW of additional renewable energy capacity including solar, wind, heat networks, heat pumps and energy storage. This venture also seeks to invest in retrofitting the council's domestic and non-domestic estate and grow the region's economy, including through 450 new direct jobs.



OUR STRATEGY FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Take action to accelerate and ensure we are adapting to a changing climate and increase climate resilience across our region

The Challenge	Our focus	Our ask of government:
<p>We are already experiencing and cannot fully prevent the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Communities and organisations do not yet understand nor are prepared for climate change</p>	<p>How we will deliver the objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with key stakeholders in the region to ensure regional planning (Local Plans; Emergency Planning) considers climate impacts/ future resilience • Build the evidence base and understanding of the risks posed by climate impacts • Support both businesses and residents to build their resilience to climate change. 	<p>Involvement & resource to trial Climate Adaptation National Action Plan (NAP3) approaches at regional Combined Authority</p> <p>Provide access to funding needed for key infrastructure changes, such as flood defences, and ensuring a just transition</p>

Next year with our partners we will aim to:	Anticipated timescale
Work with Met Office to develop a regional 'Climate Pack' – identifying the anticipated future climate change for the region	Q1 2023
Work with the local councils and Local Resilience Forum run by Avon & Somerset Police to strengthen regional public service resilience to climate change	Throughout 2023/24
Coordinate regional review and application of West of England Sustainable Urban Drainage guidance for new buildings and infrastructure with unitary authorities	Throughout 2023/24
Convene regional conversations and collect evidence to understand the impacts of climate change and adaptations needed, particularly focused on those communities most vulnerable and least able to adapt.	Throughout 2023/24
Establish a regional steering group overseeing development of an Adaptation Plan distilling West of England priorities for early action from NAP3	Q2 23/24
Assess and ensure Combined Authority capital investments consider the impacts of and are integrating resilience to climate change impacts	March 2024
Identify and embed opportunities within advice to businesses (in particular, low carbon surveys and grants provision) to support them to build resilience to climate impacts	Throughout 2023/24
Ensure the Retrofit Accelerator and other retrofit projects consider and improve buildings' climate resilience	Throughout 2023/24
Deliver green and blue infrastructure and nature projects (in Nature Recovery section) to help address impacts of climate change	Throughout 2023/24
Support regional climate change risk assessments across the region's sectors to increase climate consideration & help standardise approach	Throughout 2023/24 & 24/25
Work with National Grid, Wessex Water, Bristol Water and other local infrastructure providers to understand regional infrastructure resilience to the impacts of climate change.	Throughout 2023/24
Develop a regionwide heat vulnerability assessment to show how risks vary across the region - learning from Bristol's approach to heat vulnerability mapping - to inform resilience-building measures [in communities, parks and green spaces, and through tree planting] to reduce the impact of heatwaves	By end of 2024
Build evidence on land used for food production in our region and how this could be impacted by climate change to develop a regional food production strategy	Throughout 2023/24
Support the Bristol Avon Flood Strategy feasibility work completed in last two years, commencing delivery of Phase 1 of flood defences, and coordinating a regional approach to flood defences and mitigations	Summer 2024

Next year with our partners we will aim to:	Anticipated timescale
Working with WENP and other partners to develop an approach to identify habitats and species at risk and the measures required to enable local threatened species to adapt.	Throughout 2023/24

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IN THE MEDIUM TERM WE WILL:	OVER THE LONG TERM, WE WILL:
<p>Medium Term Actions 2024-2028</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate evidence-base on the investment needed and economic opportunities arising from regional climate resilience – providing this in an accessible dashboard together with metrics and monitoring progress • Work with public health practitioners (NHS, Local Councils, not-for-profit organisations, etc) and retrofit programmes/supply-chains in targeting preventative measures for health impacts associated with climate change building on our social value work • Support development of regional emergency response plans for extreme climate events (flooding, droughts, heat waves, storms, etc) • Continue to support flood defence work in the region, helping to ensure the incorporation of climate resilience, including use of natural flood management solutions • Work with partners to review coastal flooding threat and adequacy of current and planned defences to protect coastal communities • Work with partners to deliver the Bristol Avon Catchment Plan to deliver resilience and nature recovery across our river catchments and wetlands • Work to help ensure utility infrastructure in our region considers and is resilient to impacts of climate change • Target nature-based solutions, green and blue infrastructure and tree planting works, linked to community volunteering and careers programmes such as Green Futures, to help protect people and the natural environment from the worst impacts of climate change • Work with partners to explore the opportunities for carbon sequestration in natural habitats, including wetlands. 	<p>Long Term Vision 2028-2030:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable people and businesses at most risk of catastrophic climate events (flooding and heat waves) are protected in emergency response plans • Help create a climate ready economy - businesses having emergency plans & business continuity plans to deal with extreme events, adaptation plan address climate risks while also being adaptive to ongoing change and uncertainties • Help create climate ready communities -West of England becomes a centre for excellence in climate resilience

Climate Resilience Case Study

Bristol Heat Vulnerability Map – Keep Bristol Cool

Bristol is the first UK city to develop an online tool of this kind. It explores where heatwaves could have the biggest impact on people's health and wellbeing. This shows wards with most vulnerability, taking into account multiple factors including age and deprivation. The Keep Bristol Cool mapping tool is for policy makers and practitioners such as urban designers, landscape architects, or emergency planners to explore how current heat vulnerability varies across different neighbourhoods, and how climate change may increase temperatures in the future. It gives insights into how urban heat risks vary across the city and within communities, and identifies the areas where high temperatures and heatwaves could have the biggest impact on people's health and wellbeing. This open-source tool is free to view here: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-and-mayor/policies-plans-and-strategies/energy-and-environment/the-keep-bristol-cool-mapping-tool>

The Resilient Frome

The Resilient Frome is a £6 million project funded by the Environment Agency Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme. The Resilient Frome is a regional partnership project managed by the River Frome Reconnected Project which will deliver resilience work across the Bristol Frome catchment from rural South Gloucestershire to central Bristol.

GOVERNANCE AND MONITORING

We must work together to ensure we maintain momentum, take the tough decisions needed and monitor our progress towards meeting the goals our local leaders have agreed for the region. To do this we must have clear governance and monitoring arrangements in place. With partners, we will continue to strengthen and improve our regional monitoring, working on a digital dashboard to increase transparency and accessibility of our and local council action on climate and nature.

To maintain the momentum required to deliver against our ambitions by 2030, we update the Combined Authority Committee on progress every six months (each September and March), following a review with the Mayor and the members of the Climate Action Panel. This reporting follows the Combined Authority's monitoring and evaluation framework.

Each year, we update the actions set out in our six themes, to ensure that we continue to develop a pipeline of actions that will meet the ambitions. This is done collaboratively with input from our partners, for adoption at Committee prior to each financial year starting.

This responsibility sits with the Combined Authority's Head of Environment, who manages the process, engaging Unitary Authorities through a dedicated Climate Working Group and a Natural Environment Officers Steering Group.

As actions are developed to the business case stage (where applicable), we will estimate the carbon reductions and ecological benefits they

will deliver with more precision and will evaluate these estimates during delivery. This approach makes sure that our actions evolve as we gain new learning and when things change nationally.

We will work with local councils and key stakeholders to continue to improve our understanding of the sources of carbon emissions, and progress made by government, businesses, and households. We will use this to assess the West of England's progress in achieving our shared regional priorities, including carbon neutrality and ensuring nature and wildlife are in recovery – and how these align with national targets and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

MEASURING THE REGION'S PROGRESS

To track the region's progress towards our ambitions of net zero and nature recovery, we will establish a dashboard of indicators summarising the current position for each of the six priority areas.

We will build and deliver a digital environmental action portal for the public to view and engage with our, UA and others' environment actions in one place. Currently, the public would need to read through our CESAP's c80 actions – and separately through local council's action plans, ranging up to 150 actions.

Providing these indicators in an accessible format will help to demonstrate where the region is on track, and where further progress is needed from the Combined Authority, government, and other partners. This communication tool will form a key part of engaging residents and businesses of the region in the challenges we face.

As far as possible, these indicators will draw on public statistics. In some areas, data are not currently available at a local level. We will work with our partners to identify suitable metrics, and will investigate where data-gathering is required to fill the gaps.

Public indicators for our action plan are included in the appendix. It is important to note that the covid-19 pandemic is having a significant impact on many of these indicators, and that the latest data available does not fully show these effects yet. Transport outcomes in particular have been heavily affected by covid measures, and do not necessarily reflect the underlying trends.

In addition, our projects and programmes will be based in evidence. Specific evidence-gathering will be conducted to inform the design of projects as they are developed.

GLOSSARY & APPENDIX



WEST OF ENGLAND NET ZERO SCOPE

DEFINITION OF A GREEN JOB

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

POTENTIAL FUNDING SCHEMES

CARBON OFFSET GUIDELINES

DRAFT INDICATORS OF PROGRESS



GLOSSARY & APPENDIX

West of England Net Zero Scope

The West of England declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and has set an ambitious goal for tackling climate change:

'In 2030, the West of England is net zero carbon'

There isn't a globally recognised definition of a net zero city or region. In line with national reported data, we will target emissions including the following:

- Scope 1 emissions: direct use of fuels within the region, for example in cars and gas boilers
- Scope 2 emissions: energy used within the region that is produced elsewhere, such as electricity used by regional businesses
- Certain scope 3 emissions including waste and transport produced within the region on an end-user basis.

We use the following working definition of a Net Zero region:

'A Net Zero region will set and pursue an ambitious target for all emission sources covered within scope 1 and 2 including selected scope 3 emissions, specifically including waste and transportation. Any remaining hard-to-decarbonise emissions can be compensated with certified greenhouse gas removal'

Definition of a green job

Our definition of what constitutes a green job is one that "will help to create the job functions, responsibilities, conditions, working practices and/or business processes which contribute towards reducing emissions, lowering the carbon footprint and protecting the environment."

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach that aims to leave the natural environment that is subject to development in a better state than before. It is often linked to planning applications and development through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraphs 170(d), 174(b) and 175(d) and the Natural Environment Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The Environment Act provides that all planning permission granted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be subject to a requirement for the developer to submit a biodiversity gain plan which shows how at least 10% net gain can be achieved. The net gain will be calculated using the approved Biodiversity Metric which was developed to help stakeholders assess changes in biodiversity value.

Under the Act, habitat identified to deliver the net gain must be secured for at least 30 years via obligations/conservation covenant and can be delivered on or off-site.

Carbon Offset guidelines

Carbon offset through purchased credits should only be considered as the final option when all other reduction or avoidance measures have been exhausted. The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) encourages reduction when transitioning to net zero, but ultimately net-zero is based on the ability to remove an equivalent amount of tCO_{2e} to what you emit. This does not apply to any offset capability that is the result of initiatives implemented within the green environment theme, such as additional tree planting or habitat restoration.

Prior to embarking on external carbon offset, there are a number of factors which must be considered:

- Limited availability of offsets on the market and increasing costs: The demand for offsetting is increasing, in particular from the private sector and high carbon industries. In some cases, nature-based offsets have increased more than threefold between June 2021 and January 2022.
- UK-based or international: UK-based schemes are approximately 10 times the cost of similar schemes overseas due to the increased costs of planning, manufacture, installation and monitoring.
- Nature based or technological offset: Whilst nature-based solutions have the potential to deliver additional biodiversity benefits they are becoming less popular due to their reliability and long term security.
- Offsetting through sequestration on land either owned by the Unitary Authorities or stakeholders would only be considered if it met the relevant standards, such as the Woodland Carbon Code or the Peatland Code and was independently verified.

Draft indicators of progress

The indicators below are intended to provide an overview of the region's progress in each of the six priority areas. They are not wholly within the control of the Combined Authority but provide a summary of where we are seeking positive change. In several areas further work is required to develop the indicators or identify sources of data. These areas have been noted in the framework below.

Note: the covid-19 pandemic will have a significant impact on many of these indicators, but the latest data available do not always show these effects yet. Transport outcomes in particular have been heavily affected by covid measures. Public transport usage has recovered from 2020 levels, but remains below 2019. However, the overall longer-term trend is positive.

1. Low carbon transport

How we will deliver	Indicator of progress	Where we are now	Year	Change in the last year	Source
Reducing car trips	Share of people who travel to work by car	52%	2022	▼ -8 ppts	Travel West Travel to Work Survey
Increasing cycling and walking	Proportion of adults who travel at least once a week by cycling	9%	2020/21	▼ -6 ppts	DfT
	Proportion of adults who travel at least once a week by walking	70%	2020/21	▼ -1 ppts	DfT
Increasing uptake of low carbon vehicles incl EVs	Share of vehicles with ultra low emissions	5.2%	Q3 2021	▲ from 3.2%	DfT
Increasing uptake of public transport	Bus trips per head per year	18.8	2020/21	▼ -67%	DfT
	Rail station usage (journeys to and from the region's stations)	16.4m	2020/21	▲ ambition	ORR
Outcome:	CO2 emissions from transport	2,205kt	2019	▼ -1.3%	DESNZ

2. Low carbon buildings and places

How we will deliver	Indicator of progress	Where we are now	Year	Change in the last year	Source
Increase number of net zero and low emissions homes and buildings being developed	Share of new homes with an Energy Performance Certificate rating of A	8%	2021	▲ 6 ppts	DLUHC
Increase energy performance of homes and buildings	Share of homes with an Energy Performance Certificate rating C or above	44% of certificates	2020	To be developed	DLUHC & Combined Authority estimates
Reduce reliance on carbon heating systems	Number of homes installing low-carbon heating systems?	-	-	To be developed	Micro Certification Scheme (MCS)
Outcome:	Domestic CO2 emissions	1,473kt	2019	▼ -1.8%	DESNZ

3. Nature recovery

How we will deliver	Indicator of progress	Where we are now	Year	Change in the last year	Source
Improve quality of existing spaces for nature and wildlife	Area covered by open green space	5,583 hectares 4% of the region's area	Oct 2019	No previous data	OS Open Greenspace
	Share of Sites of Special Scientific Interest with favourable status	68%	Mar 2022	-	Natural England
Create new spaces for nature and wildlife	Area covered by woodland	11,657 hectares 9% of the region's area	2019	▲ +0.3%	ONS and Forestry Commission Open Data
Enable business, stakeholders & residents to contribute to nature's recovery	Residents with at least 2ha accessible green space within 300m of home	366,000 32% of population	-	-	Natural England
	Activity, engagement or volunteering in natural spaces	-	-	-	To be developed

4. Low carbon business

How we will deliver	Indicator of progress	Where we are now	Year	Change in the last year	Source
Support businesses to transition to low carbon practices & adapt for climate resilience	Share of non-domestic buildings with an Energy Performance Certificate rating of A or A+	3%	2021	▲ +1 ppt	DLUHC
	Measure of carbon efficiency of business processes?	-	-	-	To be developed
Prepare business for emerging green economies	Number of businesses operating in low carbon sectors?	-	-	-	To be developed
Support local people to access green jobs	Number of green job advertisements	5,723	2021	▲ +63.7%	Burning Glass Labour Insights
Outcome:	CO ₂ emissions from industry & commercial	1,082kt	2019	▼ -9%	DESNZ
	CO ₂ emissions from public sector	208kt	2019	▼ -6%	DESNZ

5. Renewable energy

How we will deliver	Indicator of progress	Where we are now	Year	Change in the last year	Source
Increase local, community focussed, energy generation	Locally generated renewable electricity	319,843 MWh	2021	▼ -12%	DESNZ
	Renewable electricity generated by community schemes?	-	-	-	To be developed
Work in partnership to develop new smart approaches to decarbonisation, storage, management & distribution of energy	Measure of readiness of grid for net zero?	-	-	-	To be developed
Outcome:	Locally generated renewable electricity as a proportion of total electricity consumption	11%	2019	▲ +0.6 pts	DESNZ – source 1 and source 2

6. Climate Resilience (Source: Met Office Climate Pack)

How we will deliver	Indicator of climate impacts from average baseline of 1981-2000	What is projected in 2030?	What is projected in 2050?	What is projected in 2080?
Resilience in summer	Average temperature change in °C	+1.0 to +2.2	+1.7 to +3.9	+3.1 to +7.6
	Max temperature change in °C	+1.1 to +2.6	+2.0 to +4.5	+3.5 to +8.9
	Change in precipitation (rainfall)	-7% to -29%	-12% to -42%	-23% to -62%
Resilience in winter	Average temperature change in °C	+0.7 to +1.6	+1.1 to +2.6	+1.7 to +4.6
	Max temperature change in °C	+0.7 to +1.7	+1.2 to +2.9	+1.8 to +5.1
	Change in precipitation (rainfall)	+6% to +19%	+9% to +27%	+16% to +51%
Resilience to rising sea levels	Projected sea level rise in metres	+0.14 to +0.19	+0.24 to +0.36	+0.42 to +0.72



REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

DATE: 17 MARCH 2023

REPORT TITLE: INVESTMENT FUND PROGRAMME

DIRECTOR: STEPHEN FITZGERALD, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF INVESTMENT AND CORPORATE SERVICES

AUTHOR: PETE DAVIS, HEAD OF GRANT MANAGEMENT AND ASSURANCE

Purpose of Report

1. To update on the overall programme and headroom.

Recommendations

- The Committee is asked to:
 1. Approve the Strategic Outline Case for Bath Central Riverside and the award of £548k to develop the masterplan by March 2025, as set out in paragraph 2.6.
 2. Approve the funding application for Walking and Cycling Scheme Development for completion by March 2025 and the award of £200k as set out in paragraph 2.6.
 3. Approve the Feasibility and Development Funding application for CRSTS South Gloucestershire Council Specialist Support and the award of £670k as set out in paragraph 2.6.
 4. Approve the allocation of up to £670k for CRSTS resourcing in Bath and North East Somerset Council and delegate the approval of the detail through a Feasibility and Development Funding application to the Combined Authority Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Directors of Infrastructure of the constituent Councils, as set out in paragraph 2.6.

5. Amend the approved capital programme for individual project approvals agreed at the January Committee and within this report, as set out in appendix 2.
6. To note that a provision of £4m has been set aside to manage programme risks as set out in paragraph 2.8.

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.

Background / Issues for Consideration

2. As reported to the Committee in January, in order to re-establish a five-year programme, the time horizon for the Investment Fund programme has been extended by a further three years to March 2026. The total funding over the period to March 2026 amounts to £450m including overprogramming of some £40m (10% of funds unspent). The £450m of Combined Authority funding available up to March 2026 is made up of:

	£m
• £30m of Investment Fund per annum x 10 years (16/17 to 25/26)	300.0
• Transforming Cities Funding (to be spent by March 2023)	103.0
• One year succession to Local Growth Funding for 21/22	7.4
• Structured over-programming of delivery against spend	39.6

Investment Fund Headroom

- 2.1 With the approvals made at the Combined Authority Committee meeting in January the headroom within the £450m Investment Fund programme to 25/26 stands at **£9.4m**. A summary of all the approved and allocated funding across the Investment Fund and Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) is shown in Appendix 1 and is summarised in Figure 1, which includes the approvals proposed to this Committee. The changes through the approvals included in this report, or elsewhere on the agenda, are summarised in Figure 2. It should be noted that funding of £16.2m for schemes in the current programme (£9.96m MetroWest Phase 1 and £6.245m MetroWest Phase 2) extends beyond the current investment period into 26/27 and beyond and would need to be accommodated when the programme is extended into future years.

Transforming Cities Fund

- 2.2 The £80m Transforming Cities Fund element of the Investment Fund programme has a hard end date for spend of March 2023. The balance of the £103m TCF award has now been rolled into the £540m City Region Sustainable Transport programme (CRSTS) and is bound by this deadline. As reported in the Transforming Cities Fund report in January, in order to achieve full £80m spend it is recommended that a number of new projects be included in the TCF programme. At the CA Committee meeting in September 2022, £5m

from the TCF was allocated to deliver bus stop upgrades of which £1.056m has been awarded to deliver improvements within the TCF timeframe. The balance of funding of £3.944m is returned to the headroom to help meet new calls to ensure full TCF spend.

Figure 1: Summary of Investment Programme to 2026 by Priority Theme

Funding Awards and Allocations £000s	Jan 2023	Mar 23
<i>Transport Infrastructure</i>		
Approved Awards and Allocations	132,940	137,521
Associated unallocated funds	17,611	16,271
Total Investment in Transport Infrastructure	150,551	153,792
<i>Housing, High Streets and Green Infrastructure</i>		
Approved Awards and Allocations	87,601	82,262
Associated unallocated funds	423	423
Total Investment in Housing Infrastructure	88,024	82,685
<i>Business and Skills</i>		
Approved Awards and Allocations	134,193	140,510
Associated unallocated funds	17,718	17,718
Total Investment in Business and Skills Infrastructure	151,911	158,228
<i>Leverage Match Fund / Other</i>		
Funding put aside to respond to external funding opportunities	9,061	9,061
Approved CA set up, operating costs and elections up to 2026	9,768	9,768
Provision for Inflation (see paragraph 2.3)	8,252	4,810
Provision for CRSTS (see paragraph 2.2)	23,000	23,000
Programme Risk (see paragraph 2.8)	-	4,000
Headroom	9,433	4,656
Total Investment Programme up to March 2026	450,000	450,000
Total Awards and Allocations post March 2026 (see paragraph 2.1)	16,203	16,203

Provision for Inflationary Impact

- 2.3 At the Committee meeting in September 2022, it was agreed to include £11.6m within the programme to reflect the expected impact of the current high levels of inflation on the Investment Fund schemes. Calls on this allocation agreed at the Committee in January total £3.35m leaving a balance of £8.25m. As set out in paragraph 14, the Arena Infrastructure Package has utilised a further £3.443m on this provision which has reduced the balance to £4.8m. This provision is

being kept under review across all programmes in consultation with the Unitary Authorities, and regular reports will be provided to the Committee, along with recommendations to make additional provision as required.

Figure 2: Summary of Funding Approvals at this Committee

Para	Project/Programme	Amount (£000's)	Change to Headroom (£000's)	Headroom Balance (m)
Position including decisions at the January Committee				9.4
2.2	Bus Stop Improvements	3,944	+3,944	13.4
2.5	Land Acquisition Fund	219	+219	13.6
2.5	Development Infrastructure Fund	3,108	+3,108	16.6
2.5	Love Our High Streets	1	+1	16.6
2.6	Bath Central Riverside	548	-548	16.1
2.6	Walking and Cycling Scheme Development	200	-200	15.9
2.6	CRSTS Capacity	1,340	0	15.9
2.7	Green Recovery Fund	6,000	-6,000	9.9
2.8	Programme Risk	4,000	-4,000	5.9
2.10	Tap On Tap Off	307	+307	6.2
2.10	Bath Riverline Phase 1	101	+101	6.3
2.10	Alveston Hill Cycleway	218	+218	6.5
2.10	Portway Station	1,600	-1,600	4.9
2.11	Cycle Hangers	200	-200	4.7
2.13	West of England Business Support Programme	34	-34	4.7

Sub-Funds

- 2.4 At the Committee meeting in July 2022, it was agreed to create a window until the end of the financial year to enable any proposals to come forward seeking to access the balance of the Love Our High Streets programme, Land Acquisition Fund and Development Infrastructure Fund

2.5 As set out in paragraph 2.13, a Full Business Case for the Hanham High Street project drawing on £394k of the balance of the Love Our High Streets funding was approved through delegation in February. Given that no further business cases have come forward the following balances are to be returned to the headroom in line with the previous Committee decision.

Programme	Amount
Land Acquisition Fund	£219k
Development Infrastructure Fund	£3.108m
Love Our High Streets	£1k

Business Cases

2.6 A number of business cases or funding applications have been submitted seeking approval at this Committee.

- **Bath Central Riverside** – a Strategic Outline Case has been submitted by Bath and North East Somerset Council for the Bath Central Riverside project. This seeks development funding for a package of works to bring forward regeneration of an area within the Enterprise Zone and bounded by the Podium in the north, the River Avon in the east, the train station in the south, and the rest of the city centre to the west. The focus in the northern portion is on cultural regeneration and improving movement, whilst in the southern area a mixed-use quarter is planned including an ‘innovation district’ and residential development. Public realm improvement is planned in both areas. Funding of £548k is sought for studies, a masterplan and to produce Full Business Cases with match funding of £232k. The Assessment Summary Table is shown in Appendix 3 and the Strategic Outline Case is published on the Combined Authority [website](#).

Recommendation to approve the Strategic Outline Case for Bath Central Riverside and the award of £548k to develop the masterplan by March 2025.

- **Walking and Cycling Scheme Development** – a [Feasibility and Development Funding Application](#) has been produced by the Combined Authority seeking £200k to fund continued development of walking, cycling, & wheeling policy and strategy for the West of England providing a pipeline of schemes and a strong strategic background to support funding submissions to secure investment from central government. It is expected this work will principally centre on continued development and delivery of the Investment Plan for the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, including aspects such as cycle storage and Liveable Neighbourhoods. The funding will contribute to finalising maps of existing and proposed cycle schemes, support the delivery of schemes in development, engage the public on priorities for future schemes and work up some scheme designs.

Recommendation to approve the funding application for Walking and Cycling Scheme Development for completion by March 2025 and the award of £200k.

- **City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Capacity** - the CRSTS programme provides an unprecedented level of transport investment for the area and this requires additional resources both within the Combined Authority and the Councils to support programme and project delivery. Building upon the £450k per year capacity funding to 24/25 agreed at the Combined Authority Committee in July, a Feasibility and Development Funding [application](#) has been submitted by South Gloucestershire Council seeking £670k from the Investment Fund revenue to provide specialist resources to cover areas such as communications and engagement, property and finance, over the duration of the CRSTS programme

It is also proposed that an equivalent allocation is made to Bath & North East Somerset Council, the approval of the detail of which, via a funding application, is proposed to be delegated to the Combined Authority Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Directors of Infrastructure of the constituent Councils. Discussions continue about how the projects in Bristol are best resourced across the Council and the Combined Authority and this will be brought back to the next Committee meeting. These awards would be drawn from the funding provision within the Investment Fund programme made for CRSTS development work and pipeline at the Combined Authority Committee in January 2022, of which the balance stands at £3.34m

Recommendation to approve the Feasibility and Development Funding application for CRSTS South Gloucestershire Council specialist support and the award of £670k.

Recommendation to approve the allocation of up to £670k for CRSTS resourcing in Bath and North East Somerset Council and delegate the approval of the detail through a Feasibility and Development Funding application to the Combined Authority Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Directors of Infrastructure of the constituent Councils.

Expanding the Green Recovery Fund

- 2.7 As set out elsewhere on this agenda, it is proposed to extend the Green Recovery Fund by £6m which would need to be accommodated within the Investment Fund headroom.

Programme Risk

- 2.8 Recent experience has highlighted that significant issues can arise for schemes in development and particular in delivery which can have major costs implications. Whilst provision has been made in the programme for inflationary pressures, there are often other contributory factors, as illustrated by recent projects. On this basis, and to be prudent, it is proposed to make provision of £4m within the programme for such risks.

Recommendation to note that a provision of £4m has been set aside to manage programme risks.

Future4WEST

- 2.9 Work continues on the Future4WEST SOC so a proposition that conforms to the requirements of the West of England Local Growth Assurance Framework can be presented to committee. This includes technical review of the SOC work recently carried out.

Change Requests

- 2.10 The following projects within the Investment Fund programme seek changes to their funding which impact on the headroom as set out in the Delivery Assurance report on this agenda:

- **Tap On Tap Off** - £307k funding reduction reflecting lower TCF.
- **Bath Riverline Phase 1** – reduction in funding of £101k as a result of scope change.
- **Alveston Hill Cycleway** – reduction of TCF spend of £218k and request for additional City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).
- **Portway Station** – request for £1.6m TCF to address cost pressures.

- 2.11 In addition to these, a change request to increase the scope of the Cycle Hangers project to include hangers in B&NES drawing on the £200k of TCF was approved by the Combined Authority Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Directors of Infrastructure of the constituent Councils in February.

Together these projects would reduce the headroom by £974k bringing the total available to **£4.7m**.

Capital Monitor

- 2.12 The budget forecast for the Combined Authority and Mayoral capital programme is summarised in Appendix 2 which shows the budget profile together with the latest forecast and the expenditure incurred this year to date. It should be noted that for grant funded projects, which represent a large portion of the programme, claims are made quarterly in arrears and so the year to date figures will underrepresent the actual spend. The figures include the impact of the change requests reported for approval in the Delivery Assurance report on this agenda.

Recommendation to amend the approved capital programme for individual project approvals agreed at the January Committee and within this report as set out in appendix 2.

Delegated Decisions

- 2.13 The following decisions related to funding through previously agreed Investment Fund allocations have been taken since the last report.

- **Regional Recovery and Adaptions Fund**

At the Committee meeting in April 2022, a further £5m was added to the Regional Recovery and Adaptions Fund and the approval of applications or business cases was delegated to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils.

City Centre Economic Development and Markets Development –

Bristol City Council submitted an [application](#) for £165k from the High Streets Catalyst funding to provide resources to the support the delivery of the recommendations emerging from the City Centre Retail and Leisure Study, specifically, producing an implementation plan to address - promoting a mix of uses to support a vibrant city centre, including diversifying the leisure and cultural offer; and exploring meanwhile use of vacant units, including those previously occupied by department stores. The application was approved through the granted delegation in September

- **West of England Business Support Programme** – an allocation of £4.8m from the Investment Fund headroom was approved at the Committee meeting in January with a delegation to approve the Full Business Case granted to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils. The programme will draw on £5.834m from the Investment Fund including £1m of the funding for regional recovery measures and was approved by the Chief Executives in line with the granted delegation in March. The Full Business Case is published on the Combined Authority [website](#).
- **Arena Infrastructure Package** – at the Committee meeting in January it was agreed to delegate the approval of the Full Business Case for the Arena Infrastructure Package and the award of up to £10.081m to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils following a report to the Programme Review Board (PRB) and subject to the PRB's unanimous recommendation. The Full Business Case was subsequently updated to reflect changes since Outline Business Case approval, including the cost increase of £3.443m largely attributed to inflation, and this was approved by the Chief Executives in line with the granted delegation in March. The £10.08m funding for the scheme to be met through the existing allocation of £6.637m and the provision for inflation (£3.443m). The Assessment Summary Table is shown in Appendix 4 and the Full Business Case is published on the Combined Authority [website](#).
- **Hanham High Steet Project** – as reported to the CA Committee in January, a Full Business Case for the Hanham High Street project has been submitted to draw on £394k of Love Our High Streets funding. This project aims to improve the high street environment and will comprise public realm improvements including improved paving, cycle infrastructure, and trees, shrubbery, and planters with integrated seating. This will be alongside areas of refurbishment and enhanced signage and wayfinding. It

is planned to complete the project by March 2024. The Assessment Summary is shown in Appendix 5 and the Full Business Case is published on the Combined Authority [website](#).

- **Retrofit Accelerator Supply Side Market and Capacity Building** – a delegation for the approval of business cases through the Green Recovery Fund was granted to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils in September 2022. Complementing the previously approved Retrofit Accelerator Phase 1 project, a Full Business Case has been produced for a supply side market capacity building project which will provide a business support offer aimed at the large number of small ‘traditional’ building, repairs and maintenance businesses that currently operate in the home extension / small scale new build market. It aims to support and encourage them to become capable and confident, and ideally qualified and accredited, in working with homeowners who want to retrofit their properties and/or to introduce non-fossil fuel-based heating systems. The funding of £2m was approved by the Chief Executives in February. The Assessment Summary is shown in Appendix 6 and the Full Business Case is published on the Combined Authority [website](#).
- **ISTART** – at the CA Committee meeting in July 2002 the Outline Business Case for ISTART was approved and the funding for Phase 0 of the project was delegated to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils. The project is a collaboration between the University of Bath, Bath Spa University, Bath College and Bath & North East Somerset Council and aims to deliver the integration and co-location of skills, innovation and research activity, which will encourage collisions between academic insight, business application and learning which together will drive innovation. The Phase 0 Implementation Plan was approved through the granted delegation in January with a funding award of £1.361m.

Consultation

- 3 Engagement has taken place with officers in the West of England Combined Authority Constituent Unitary Authorities. Section 151 Officers across the region have been fully engaged as have the Chief Executive Officers in helping to inform the prioritised projects for investment.

Other Options Considered

- 4 All Business Cases are required to set out in detail the full range of options considered and the reason the preferred option has been identified.

Risk Management / Assessment

- 5 Specific risk assessments will be carried out as part of any feasibility studies for projects in development and business cases are required to set out the way

that risks will be managed and provide a risk register. All projects underway will maintain a specific risk register as part of the project management and monitoring arrangements.

- 5.1 Financial risks are managed through the process for considering cost increases as set out in the Combined Authority Investment Strategy. The overall Investment Fund and Transforming Cities Fund programme are regularly reviewed.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 6 For projects seeking funding through the Investment Fund, scheme promoters are required to include as part of their Full Business Case, an equality and diversity assessment and plan. These assessments are published as part of the Business Case on the Combined Authority website.

Climate Change Implications

- 7 The Combined Authority's Climate Emergency Action Plan has been considered in the production of this report. Points of particular relevance have been added to this report and reviewed by the Head of Environment.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Roger Hoare, Head of Environment

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate

- 8 The financial implications for each proposal are set out in the body of the report. The Investment Fund allocations and awards are accommodated within the overall spending limit of £450m available up to March 2026.
 - 8.1 The Combined Authority statutory chief finance officer will determine the appropriate use and apportionment of funding between the Transforming Cities Fund and Investment Fund within the overall funding available.
 - 8.2 Supporting economic growth is central to this funding stream, and promoters are required to include an economic case within the FBC for each scheme which sets out how the project will deliver benefits including creating jobs and GVA growth as well as delivering wider impacts. In line with agreed processes these FBCs are published on the Combined Authority website at the point of decision making.
 - 8.3 Where there is slippage from the indicated dates of completion in the recommendations or body of this report, a review will be triggered by the Programme Review Board as soon as awareness of any delay occurs.

Advice given by: Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim Director of Investment and Corporate Services (Section 73 Officer)

Legal Implications

- 9 There are no additional legal implications arising from this report. Legality will be verified for individual projects through relevant due diligence prior to approving formal allocations.

Advice given by: Stephen Gerrard, Interim Monitoring Officer, West of England Combined Authority

Human Resources Implications

- 10 There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report.

Land / Property Implications

- 11 All land and property implications are set out within the specific business cases and dealt with by scheme promoters.

Advice given by: Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim Director of Investment and Corporate Services (Section 73 Officer)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Investment Fund Programme

Appendix 2 Capital Budget Forecast for 2022/23

Appendix 3 Bath Central Riverside - Assessment Summary Table

Appendix 4 Arena Infrastructure Package - Assessment Summary Table

Appendix 5 Hanham High Steet Project - Assessment Summary Table

Appendix 6 Retrofit Supply Side Assessment Summary Table

West of England Combined Authority Contact:

Report Author	Contact Details
Pete Davis	Pete.davis@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Transport Infrastructure Projects – Awards and Allocations to 25/26 (£000s)

	Jan 2023	Mar 2023
Feasibility Studies		
A420 to Bath Highway Improvements	200	200
Bristol Temple Meads Masterplan	2,000	2,000
Winterbourne/Frampton Cotterell Bypass and Coalpit Heath/Westerleigh Bypass Study	413	413
Regional Operations Capability – Phase 1	75	75
Strategic Rail Investment	250	250
Improving Access to Bath from the East	200	200
10 Year Rail Delivery Plan Scheme Development	470	470
Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership	537	537
East Bristol Mini-Holland	79	79
Business Case Development		
MetroWest Phase 2	13,663	13,663 [#]
Charfield Station	4,123	4,123
MetroWest Phase 1	5,902	5,902 ^{##}
Future 4 West	3,361	3,361
Integrated Smart Ticketing	300	300
Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure	100	100
Manvers Street Regeneration	250	250
Bus Infrastructure Programme and Park & Ride	4,150	4,150
Bristol to Bath A4 Strategic Corridor	2,434	2,434
Bath Quays Bridge Cycle/Pedestrian links	1,865	1,865
Scholars Way Walking and Cycling Route	152	152
Old City and King Street	2,172	2,172
East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood	712	712
Strategic Cycle Route - Thornbury to A38 via Alveston	125	125
Yate Spur Phases 5 and 6	5,891	5,891
Fieldings Bridge	50	50
Silver Street/Fosseway walking route	62	62
Bath Sustainable Walking & Cycling Links	62	62
Concorde Way / Dovercourt Depot	400	400
Thornbury – Grovesend / Gillingstool (Phase 2)	100	100
Ring Road – Filton to MOD	145	145
Keynsham Road to Bitton	145	145
Electric Vehicles Charging Strategy	200	200

A37/A367 Sustainable Transport Corridor	500	500
Access for All Step Free Station Proposals Phases 1 and 2	500	500
Hengrove Metrobus Extension Corridor	60	60
Regional Cycle Hangers	100	100
Alveston Hill Cycleway	393	175
A432 Multi Modal Corridor	225	225
Walking and Cycling Scheme Development	-	200
CRSTS Specialist Resoure SGC	-	370

Schemes in Delivery		
Real Time Information System Upgrade	559	559
Lockleaze Sustainable Transport Improvements	3,915	3,915
Cribbs Patchway Cycle Links	2,856	Complete
Cribbs Patchway MetroBus Extension	26,151	27,161
Integrated Transport Authority Functions	1,000	1,000
On-Bus Contactless Bank Card Payment	416	416
Wraxall Road Roundabout Improvements	6,887	6,887
Future Transport Zone*	3,655	3,655
Yate A432 Park and Ride	4,651	4,651
On Bus Tap On, Tap Off	1,200	893
Metrobus Consolidation	1,828	1,828
A4 Portway Park & Ride Expansion	942	942
Access for All Mid-Tier	468	468
Bristol Bridge Signals Junction and Car Park VMS Project	510	510
Bedminster Green Highway Improvements Project	4,130	4,130
Advanced Bus Stop Upgrade Programme	1,056	1,056
Arena Infrastructure Package	7,387	10,830
A4018 Corridor Improvements	700	700
Old Market Gap	283	283
Cycle Hangers	361	561
SGC Sustainable Transport Package	510	510
Portway Station	-	1,600
Thornbury High Street	-	400
Emersons Green Local Transport Enhancements	-	856

Allocations		
Bus Stop Upgrades	3,944	-
CRSTS Capacity B&NES	-	670

Completed Projects	7,169	10,024
Total of all Awards and Allocations:	132,940	137,521
Associated Unallocated Funds	17,611	16,271
future4WEST	13,639	13,639
Regional Operations Centre	175	175
Bristol to Bath Strategic Corridor	457	457
CRSTS Pipeline	3,340	2,000
Total	150,551	153,792

Note: * Excludes DfT funding of £24.366m.

Excludes £6.245m for MetroWest Phase 2 in period from 26/27

Excludes £9.958m for MetroWest Phase 1 in period from 26/27

Housing, High Streets and Green Infrastructure Projects – Awards and Allocations to 25/26 (£000s)

	Jan 23	Mar 23
Feasibility Studies		
Bedminster High Street Improvement	275	275
Strategic Planning Shared Evidence Base	5,750	5,750
OPE8 Housing Enabling Fund	500	500
South Gloucestershire High Streets Catalyst Phase 2	225	225
Business Case Development		
Masterplanning: business case development	275	275
Masterplanning: North Fringe of Bristol	500	500
Masterplanning: South West Bristol	500	500
Masterplanning: Brislington and North Keynsham	250	250
Green Infrastructure	300	300
East Fringe Masterplan (including Junction 18a)	310	310
Sevenside Masterplan	270	270
Parkway Station Masterplan	320	320
Frome Gateway and Bristol City Centre Delivery Plans	800	800
HREF – South Gloucestershire Council Capacity	750	750
Temple Quarter Infrastructure Programme	2,226	2,226
B&NES Housing and Regeneration Enabling Fund	750	750
B&NES Strategic Masterplanning	1,345	1,345
Development of the strategic evidence base to inform Spatial Plan Making	900	900
Bristol Avon Flood Strategy	482	482
Chew Valley Lake Recreational Trail (Northern Section)	150	150
Bath Creative Quarter	145	145
Milsom Quarter	2,475	2,475
Western Harbour Feasibility	279	279
Bristol Harbour Place Shaping Strategy	283	283
Bristol Temple Quarter Joint Delivery Team	6,863	6,863
Waterspace Connected Phase 1	296	296
City Centre Economic Development & Markets Development	-	165
Schemes in Delivery		
Whitfield Tabernacle Stabilisation Works	682	682
North Keynsham Land Acquisition Fund	5,975	5,975
Bath City Centre High Streets Renewal Project	1,235	1,235

Bristol City Centre & High Streets Recovery & Renewal	2,920	2,920
Bottle Yard Studios - Hawkfield Business Park	11,953	11,953
Kingswood Regeneration Project	3,560	1,294
Thornbury Hospital (Land Acquisition Fund)	3,806	3,806
Common Connections	999	999
Midsomer Norton High Street Market Square	1,095	1,095
Bath Local Centres High Street Improvement Scheme	295	295
Hengrove Park Enabling Works	19,831	19,831
Hanham High Street	-	394

Allocations		
Love Our High Streets	396	-
Land Acquisition Fund	219	-
Development Infrastructure Fund	3,018	-
LAF and DIF Repayments*	-8,297	-8,297
Completed Projects	12,696	12,696

Total of all Awards and Allocations:	87,601	82,262
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Associated Unallocated Funds	423	423
Green Infrastructure	423	423

Total	88,024	82,685
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Note: Includes Bath Riverside repayment. Repayment element for Bottle Yard Studios - Hawkfield Business Park, and repayment for Thornbury Hospital site to be included.

Business and Skills Projects – Awards and Allocations to 25/26 (£000s)

	Jan 23	Mar 23
Feasibility Studies		
Cultural Strategy	60	60
CEIAG Research and Improvement Project	50	50
Building Employment and Enterprise Skills	20	20
Local CEIAG Action Research Activities	20	20
5G Logistics	179	179
Jobs Connect	200	200
Post-16 Education and Skills Estate Analysis	50	Complete
SEND Careers Information and Guidance Collaboration Pilot	20	Complete
Skills Connect Pilot	285	285
HGV Driver Training Project	220	220
Cultural Compact Start-Up Investment	270	370
High Streets Strategic Review	25	25
Climate Emergency and Capacity	536	536
Local Nature Recovery Strategy	330	330
Local Energy Scheme Pilot	150	119
Business Case Development		
Somer Valley Enterprise Zone and Infrastructure	1,820	1,820
Quantum Technologies Innovation Centre+	34,974	34,974
Energy Strategy Action Planning / Climate Change Planning	250	250
I-START	850	850
The Coach House BAME Enterprise Hub	97	97
West of England Visitor Economy Recovery Project	254	254
Bath River Line - Bristol Bath Railway Path Extension	75	75
High Street Renewal Catalyst Fund	660	660
Bath Central Riverside	-	548
Schemes in Delivery		
Realising Talent	499	499
South West Institute of Future Technology	500	500
Business Innovation Fund	242	242
Workforce for the Future	4,171	4,171
WE Work for Everyone	1,300	1,300
Future Bright Plus	3,600	3,600

South Bristol Enterprise Support	483	483
Centre for Digital Engineering Technology & Innovation	5,000	5,000
LIS Productivity Challenge Delivery Programme	3,557	3,557
South Bristol Workspace	5,172	5,172
Reboot West	720	720
Low Carbon Challenge Fund Extension	2,243	2,243
Innovation for Renewal and Opportunity	6,317	6,317
Small Business Resilience Grant Programme	837	837
Culture and Creative Economy Recovery Fund	2,000	2,000
Digital Skills Investment Programme	2,000	678
Community Support Fund	1,500	1,337
Bath River Line Phase 1	1,198	1,098
Community Pollinator Fund	1,458	1,458
Careers Hub 21/22 and 22/23-24/25	1,065	1,065
Business Growth and Adaptions Fund	1,500	1,500
Business Start Up School	500	500
Retrofit Accelerator	3,000	3,000
Regional Low Carbon Delivery Programme	4,995	4,995
Hydrogen Sustainable Transport Economy Accelerator	1,300	1,300
GRF Nature Recovery Bidding Round	4,373	4,373
GRF Renewable Energy Bidding Round	2,121	2,121
Skills Connect and Priority Skills Fund	3,000	4,485
I-START Phase 0	-	1,361
Retrofit Accelerator – Supply Side	-	2,000

Allocations		
Green Recovery Fund	10,448	14,480
Retrofit Set Up Programme	200	200
Economic Recovery Measures	4,874	3,709
I-START	1,491	130
Albion Dock	5,000	5,000
West of England Business Support Programme	4,800	4,834

Completed Projects	1,234	1,304
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Total of all Awards and Allocations:	134,193	140,510
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Associated Unallocated Funds	17,718	17,718
Somer Valley Enterprise Zone	14,893	14,893
Bath River Line	2,377	2,377
I-START	449	449

Total	151,911	158,228
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Appendix 2

Combined Authority and Mayoral Capital Programme 2022/23

Investment Fund / Transforming Cities	22/23	22/23			23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	TOTAL		Notes
	Current budget	YTD spend	Forecast	Variance	Profile	Profile	Profile	Profile	Profile	Lead	
CA Managed Programmes											
MetroWest Ph 2	2,883	1,396	2,596	(287)	5,932	-	-	-	8,815	CA	£1.2m expected to be invoiced by contractors
Contactless Card Payment - On Bus	62	2	2	(60)	-	-	-	-	62	CA	No further spend anticipated for 22/23
MetroBus Consolidation Package (Bus Strategy)	1,828	603	1,286	(542)	-	-	-	-	1,828	CA	Awaiting claims from UAs
Low Carbon Challenge Fund Extension	38	10	38	(0)	1,024	-	-	-	1,062	CA	No variance
Step Free Stations	250	33	108	(142)	211	-	-	-	461	CA	Expecting to incur £60k of supplier costs.
Cycle Hangars	560	76	410	(150)	-	-	-	-	560	CA	Awaiting claims from UAs plus outstanding invoices from suppliers
Bath Sustainable Transport Walking and Cycling Link	62	-	62	-	-	-	-	-	62	CA	Now part of Bath Sustainable Transport Walking and Cycling Links project
Somer Valley to Bristol and Bath (Consultation & OBC)	500	16	294	(206)	-	-	-	-	500	CA	Several invoices expected from suppliers and UA.
Business Growth and Adaptations Fund	967	169	967	0	33	13	-	-	1,013	CA	No variance
EV Tap On Tap Off	540	264	540	-	67	-	-	-	607	CA	Slippage
Bus Stop Upgrades	576	9	572	(4)	-	-	-	-	576	CA	Awaiting claims from UAs
Access for All Mid-Tier	200	43	195	(5)	246	-	-	-	446	CA	Small variance
Regional Low Carbon Delivery Programme	-	-	-	-	2,220	1,525	-	-	3,745	CA	Future profile
Sub Total CA Management Programmes	8,466	2,622	7,070	(1,396)	9,733	1,538	-	-	19,736		

Investment Fund / Transforming Cities	22/23	22/23			23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	TOTAL		
	Current budget	YTD spend	Forecast	Variance	Profile	Profile	Profile	Profile	Profile	Lead	Notes
UA Managed Programmes											
Bath Quays Walking and Cycling Routes	286	45	286	-	-	-	-	-	286	B&NES	Awaiting claims from council
North Keynsham Land Acquisition Fund	448	-	448	-	-	-	-	-	448	B&NES	Awaiting claims from council
Bath Riverline Phase 1	20	-	20	-	928	-	-	-	948	B&NES	Resolution of condition of approval included in Delivery Assurance report on this agenda and budget adjusted for reprofiling
Bath City Centre High Streets Renewal Project	667	23	667	-	296	255	184	-	1,402	B&NES	Q2 claim being processed for £67k
Fielding's Bridge	50	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	50	B&NES	Awaiting claims from council
Silver Street/ Fosseway Walking Route	62	-	62	-	-	-	-	-	62	B&NES	Awaiting claims from council
LOHS Bath Local Centres	25	-	25	-	17	2	-	-	44	B&NES	Claims received to Q3 but no capital claimed
Midsomer Norton High Street Market Square Project	45	15	45	-	735	265	-	-	1,045	B&NES	Awaiting claims from council
Milsom Quarter	50	-	50	-	586	173	-	-	809	B&NES	No capital claimed to Q2
Scholars Way Walking and Cycling Route	72	-	72	-	-	-	-	-	72	B&NES	Awaiting claims from council
Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (inc. A37 to A362 Improvement)	861	-	861	-	266	-	-	-	1,127	B&NES	Claim to Q2 being processed for £104k
Old City and King Street	204	-	204	-	-	-	-	-	204	BCC	Awaiting claims from council
East Bristol (St George) Liveable Neighbourhood	558	-	558	-	-	-	-	-	558	BCC	Awaiting claims from council
South Bristol Industrial Light Workspace	3,720	1,634	3,720	-	1,160	-	-	-	4,880	BCC	Budget adjusted to reflect reprofiling in Delivery Assurance report on this agenda
Bottle Yard Studios - Hawkfield Business Park	3,360	990	3,360	-	90	-	-	-	3,450	BCC	Budget adjusted to reflect reprofiling in Delivery Assurance report on this agenda
Concorde Way / Dovercourt Depot	350	-	350	-	-	-	-	-	350	BCC	Awaiting claims from council
Strategic Cycle Route Connecting Thornbury with the A38 viaduct	60	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	60	BCC	Awaiting claims from council
Bristol to Hengrove Metrobus Extension – Outline Business	60	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	60	BCC	Awaiting claims from council
Hengrove Park Enabling Infrastructure	1,958	-	1,958	-	7,592	10,280	-	-	19,830	BCC	Claim being processed for £899k to Q3
Portway Park and Ride	942	-	942	-	-	-	-	-	942	BCC	Awaiting claims from council
Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood Cycle Links (CPNN)	28	28	28	-	-	-	-	-	28	SGC	No variance
A432 Multi Modal Corridor	225	-	225	-	-	-	-	-	-	SGC	Awaiting claims from council
Charfield Station	1,000	305	778	(222)	2,014	-	-	-	3,014	SGC	Claims to Q2 received for 22/23
FEAS I Wraxall Road Roundabout Improvements and Signal	145	-	34	(111)	-	-	-	-	145	SGC	Awaiting claims from council
Cribbs Patchway Metrobus Extension	4,000	2,320	3,750	(250)	-	-	-	-	4,000	SGC	Claims received to Q2
Yate A432 Park & Ride	206	125	206	-	-	-	-	-	206	SGC	Claims received to Q3
Strategic Cycle Route Connecting Thornbury with the A38 viaduct	63	43	66	3	-	-	-	-	63	SGC	Claims received to Q2
Strategic Cycle Route Connecting Yate with the East Fringe (M4)	57	24	55	(2)	-	-	-	-	57	SGC	Q3 claim being processed for £2.5k
Whitfield Tabernacle Stabilisation (Love our High Streets)	14	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	14	SGC	Awaiting claims from council
Thornbury Hospital Site	169	-	169	-	-	-	-	-	169	SGC	Awaiting claims from council
Grovesend Road - Gillinstool	80	33	67	(13)	-	-	-	-	80	SGC	Claims received to Q3
Filton to MoD	125	50	94	(31)	-	-	-	-	125	SGC	Claims received to Q3
Keynsham Road	130	43	83	(47)	-	-	-	-	130	SGC	Claims received to Q3
Emersons Green Local Transport Enhancements	537	-	354	(183)	319	-	-	-	856	SGC	Budget adjusted to reflect reprofiling in Delivery Assurance report on this agenda
Common Connections	66	-	66	-	182	238	50	-	536	SGC	Claims received to Q2 but no capital claimed
Kingswood Regeneration Project	819	385	385	(434)	3,701	3,040	-	-	7,560	SGC	Claims received to Q2
A38 Multi-Modal Corridor	400	90	400	-	-	-	-	-	400	SGC	Swop of funding from CRSTS
Thornbury High Street	400	-	400	-	-	-	-	-	400	SGC	Funding swop with EDF agreed at January 2023 Committee
Alveston Hill	175	8	175	-	238	-	-	-	413	SGC	Budget adjusted to reflect reprofiling in Delivery Assurance report on this agenda
Quantum Technologies Innovation Centre (QTIC+)	5,650	-	5,650	-	2,600	15,150	11,511	-	34,911	UoB	This will be an accrual as full approval expected in April
Subtotal UA Managed Programmes	28,086	6,161	26,796	(1,290)	20,724	29,403	11,745	-	89,958		
Subtotal Capital Investment funded	36,552	8,783	33,866	(2,686)	30,457	30,941	11,745	-	109,695		

WECA Capital – other	22/23	22/23			23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	TOTAL	Lead	Notes
	Current budget	YTD spend	Forecast	Variance	Profile	Profile	Profile	Profile	Profile		
Future Transport Zones (FTZ)	7,962	2,286	2,700	(5,262)	13,075	-	-	-	21,037	CA	Reprofiling expected
Active Travel Fund	-	-	-	-	4,051	1,737	-	-	5,788	CA	No variance
City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)	-	-	-	-	16,600	78,850	174,300	145,250	415,000	CA	Reprofiling to reflect drawdown of TCF
Highways and Transport Grants	25,000	25,000	25,000	-	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	125,000	CA	No variance
European Regional Development Fund	900	616	900	-	586	-	-	-	1,486	CA	No variance
Bristol Temple Quarter	5,750	1,717	2,641	(3,109)	14,500	20,340	20,000	31,000	91,590	CA/BCC	Change request in progress. Significant delays around the collaboration agreement.
Subtotal West of England CA Capital - Other	39,612	29,619	31,241	-8,371	73,812	125,927	219,300	201,250	659,901		
Grand Total	76,164	38,402	65,107	-11,057	104,269	156,868	231,045	201,250	769,596		

Appendix 3 Business Case Assessment Summary Table

Scheme Details		Appraisal Summary		Recommendation/ Conditions	
Project Name	Bath Central Riverside	Strategic Case	<p>The focus of this Strategic Outline Case is to refine initial concepts and strategies and to identify viable and feasible opportunities to stimulate the market and bring about the regeneration Bath Central Riverside.</p> <p>The future redevelopment of the area forms part of a comprehensive strategy to regenerate the Bath Enterprise Zone, with the Local Plan policy proposing around 9,000m² of new commercial space and up to 60 residential units plus public realm infrastructure.</p> <p>There is strong alignment with national and local planning policies, specifically the National Planning Policy Framework, B&NES Core strategy and the B&NES Placemaking Plan. There is also fit with regional strategy such as the Cultural Plan and Placemaking Charter.</p>	Funding Source(s)	Investment Fund
Scheme Promoter	Bath & North East Somerset Council	Subsidy Control	The subsidy control position should be developed for future business cases. Any funding would be given on a 'no subsidy' basis.	Approval Requested	Strategic Outline Case

Date of Submission	20/1/23	Economic Case and Value for Money	<p>The economic case follows a sound methodology and reports reasonable vfm, although given this project is at an early stage the benefits and costs are provisional. However, there is a reasonable expectation that good vfm could be achieved as further business cases come forward.</p> <p>A letter has been provided by the B&NES S151 officer confirming approval of the business case and the value for money statement.</p>	Grant Award	£548,250
Funding Requested	£548,250 (£232k 23/24 and £316k 24/25)				
Total Scheme Cost	£780k (Internal Staff £105k; Consultants £429k; Other Costs £246k)	Risk	<p>A risk register has been provided which identifies the key risks for the project. This should continue to be developed as the project progresses into separate future business cases.</p> <p>An allowance of 15-20% (excluding salaries) has been included as contingency.</p>	Grant Recipient	B&NES
Match Funding %	30%	Delivery	<p>Match funding of £232k is provided by the Council and a developer contribution.</p> <p>It is planned the next business case will be submitted in January 2024 with overall completion of this phase in March 2025.</p>	Payment Basis	Quarterly in arrears on expenditure incurred

<i>Scheme Description</i>	<i>Recommendation to the Committee</i>	Approval of the Strategic Outline Case
The project seeks development funding for a package of works to bring forward regeneration of an area within the Enterprise Zone and bounded by the Podium in the north, the River Avon in the east, the train station in the south, and the rest of the city centre to the west. The focus in the northern portion is on cultural regeneration and improving movement, whilst in the southern area a mixed-use quarter is planned including an 'innovation district' and residential development. Public realm improvement is planned in both areas.	<i>Conditions of Approval</i>	None

Record of Approval

<i>West of England Combined Authority Committee</i>	
<i>Date of Meeting</i>	17 March 2023
<i>Decision</i>	

Appendix 4 Business Case Assessment Summary Table

Scheme Details		Appraisal Summary		Recommendation/ Conditions	
Project Name	Arena Infrastructure Package	Strategic Case	<p>The Arena (formerly North Fringe) Infrastructure Package incorporates a number of elements to mitigate existing problems in the North Fringe, facilitate growth and to ensure the infrastructure is in place ahead of the opening of the YTL Arena.</p> <p>These interventions were identified in the YTL Arena Transport Strategy (2021), in response to identified issues across the walking and cycling and highway networks.</p> <p>The package will enable travel to and from the Arena in a safe and sustainable manner. Furthermore, the packages provide transport infrastructure to support the wider development of the Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood which is allocated for the development of 5,700 homes, 50 hectares of employment land and a range of other uses.</p> <p>The scheme supports the overarching principles of the Joint Local Transport Plan for sustainable travel and for establishing a well-connected sustainable transport network which makes sustainable modes the natural way to travel, and also aligns with Core Stagey objectives.</p>	Funding Source(s)	Investment Fund
Scheme Promoter	South Glos Council	Subsidy Control	The scheme is not economic in nature.	Approval Requested	Full Business Case

Date of Submission	5/12/22	Economic Case and Value for Money	<p>The package presents a BCR of 2.34:1 categorised as high value for money.</p> <p>Whilst there can be confidence in this categorisation, there are some risks to this, including the disruption to traffic and other users during construction of the active travel facilities, some limitations to the traffic modelling including the geographic extent and that cycling and walking demand being derived solely from Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT) data with no observed data to validate this.</p> <p>There are various factors which mitigate against these issues, including that no benefits have been claimed from the traffic management package for AM and Inter Peak periods and limitation of the appraisal period to 20 years.</p> <p>A letter has been provided by the SGC S151 officer confirming approval of the business case and the value for money statement.</p>	Grant Award	£10,080,128 (beyond the £750k previously awarded)
Funding Requested	£10,080,128 (£193k 22/23, £3.762m 23/24, £6.095m 24/25, £15k 25/26 and £15k 29/30)				
Total Scheme Cost	£10.88m (Construction £7.57m; Other £3.31m)	Risk	<p>Significant increases in cost estimates have occurred between Outline Business Case (OBC) and Full Business Case (FBC). This is explained to be due to a combination of factors including cost inflation, additional highway works required for the walking and cycling package and service diversion costs being substantially greater than estimated at OBC stage.</p> <p>Whilst the FBC includes the completed detailed designs for the active travel package, cost estimates are still largely based on preliminary designs (albeit updated to take account of recent cost inflation) and not all C3 estimates for utilities have been received.</p> <p>Risk provision of £1.45m is included which represents around 20% of estimated construction cost, but with designs for the walking and cycling package still to be costed in detail and procured there is a risk this will not be sufficient. A further 11% inflation allowance (£0.86m) is included which may mitigate this to some extent.</p>	Grant Recipient	SGC

Match Funding %	7%	Delivery	<p>Match funding of £803k is in place through S106.</p> <p>All land is within the highway boundary and therefore no land acquisition is required.</p> <p>The top two risks in the QRA relate to service diversions, although it is noted that no separate allowance is provided in the programme for these which could result in an extension of the construction programme and completion date of October 2024.</p>	Payment Basis	Quarterly in arrears on expenditure incurred
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Scheme Description	Recommendation to the Chief Executives	Approval of the Full Business Case
The package includes walking and cycling improvements on four routes including segregated cycle provision, widened footways and signage and wayfinding, together with a package of traffic management improvements involving new and upgraded signals, relocating bus stops and traffic management systems.	Conditions of Approval	None

Record of Approval

West of England Combined Authority Chief Executives	
Date of Meeting	8 March 2023
Decision	

Appendix 5 - Business Case Assessment Summary Table

Scheme Details		Appraisal Summary		Recommendation/ Conditions	
Project Name	Hanham High Street Improvements	Strategic Case	<p>The proposed improvements include a package of measures aimed at improving the attractiveness of the high street. These measures aim to increase footfall, and therefore spend on the local high street, as well as improving the journey ambience of the street.</p> <p>There is alignment with the Recovery Plan, the objectives of the Love Our High Streets programme and the South Gloucestershire Core Strategy objective to strengthen the vibrancy and vitality of traditional town centres including Hanham.</p>	Funding Source(s)	Love Our High Streets (Investment Fund)
Scheme Promoter	South Gloucestershire Council	Subsidy Control	The scheme is not economic in nature.	Approval Requested	Full Business Case
Date of Submission	11/10/22	Economic Case and	In order to assess the potential benefit that may be brought as a result of public realm improvements, the Pedestrian Environment Review System (PERS) has been used to assess the quality of the existing urban	Funding Award	£394,292

Funding Requested	£394,292 profiled in 23/24	Value for Money	<p>realm conditions and the potential levels of improvements. This assessment has then been quantified using Transport for London's Valuing the Urban Realm Toolkit (VURT), to assess the monetary benefit of pedestrian journey ambience improvements.</p> <p>A 15% uplift in pedestrian levels is assumed as a result in the core scenario to which journey ambience benefits have been applied.</p> <p>The Benefit to Cost ratio looking at the project through this lens is reported to produce low value for money</p> <p>However, it is stated when wider not monetised benefits are taken into account it is expected by the Council that the overall Value for Money category of the scheme is considered to be Medium/High.</p> <p>The business case and value for money has been signed off by the SGC S151 Officer.</p>		
Total Scheme Cost	£394k (Internal Staff £93k, Construction and Refurbishment £224k; Other Costs £77k)	Risk	<p>A Quantified Risk Assessment has been undertaken to capture the five key risks, with allowance of £17k in the costings for risk.</p> <p>All of the interventions contained within the proposed package are contained within the highway boundary and therefore do not require any land acquisition or planning permission.</p>	Grant Recipient	South Gloucestershire Council
Match Funding %	0%	Delivery	<p>The proposed scheme in its entirety will be directly delivered by SGC's StreetCare Service.</p> <p>It is planned the implementation of the works will commence upon approval with project completion in March 2024.</p>	Payment Basis	Quarterly in arrears on expenditure incurred

<i>Scheme Description</i>	<i>Recommendation to the Chief Executives</i>	Approval of the Full Business Case
This project aims to improve the high street environment and will comprise public realm improvements including improved paving, cycle infrastructure, and trees, shrubbery, and planters with integrated seating. This will be alongside areas of refurbishment and enhanced signage and wayfinding	<i>Conditions of Approval</i>	None

Record of Approval

<i>West of England Chief Executives</i>	
<i>Date of Meeting</i>	8 February 2023
<i>Decision</i>	Approval of the Full Business Case

Appendix 6 - Business Case Assessment Summary Table

Scheme Details		Appraisal Summary		Recommendation/ Conditions	
Project Name	Retrofit Accelerator – Supply Side Market and Capacity Building	Strategic Case	<p>It is planned to create a holistic retrofit accelerator offer with three main elements – a homeowner advice service (already approved and in delivery), this supply side market capacity building project and direct financial support for homeowners. These are considered intrinsically linked and all required if progress is to be made towards net zero ambitions.</p> <p>This supply side market capacity building project will provide a business support offer aimed at the large number of small ‘traditional’ building, repairs and maintenance businesses that currently operate in the home extension / small scale new build market.</p> <p>The project shows good fit with strategy and is relatively uncomplicated in its approach.</p>	Funding Source(s)	Green Recovery Fund (Investment Fund)
Scheme Promoter	West of England Combined Authority	Subsidy Control	<p>It is stated that grants to intermediary delivery partners will be allocated either as Minimal Financial Assistance or will be designed in such a way to achieve a ‘flow through’ of grant to programme beneficiaries, leaving no residual financial benefit in the intermediary delivery body.</p> <p>A full subsidy control assessment should be made at the time applications are received and before grant is awarded.</p>	Approval Requested	Full Business Case

Date of Submission	25/11/22		It is expected that a further 300 retrofits per year will be achieved by this intervention (beyond the funded retrofit accelerator), 600 in total.		
Funding Requested	£2m profiled £701k 23/24 and £1.299m 24/25	Economic Case and Value for Money	<p>It is stated that, based on evidence from whole house retrofit programmes, a properly retrofitted property will yield savings of, on average, 2-2.5 tonnes of CO2e per year, and that the value of a tonne of CO2e is £245 (from BEIS Green Book supplementary guidance).</p> <p>Given not all retrofits will be whole house, low/medium/high scenarios are presented based on 1.5, 2.25 and 3 tonnes of CO2e saved per house respectively.</p> <p>The medium scenario presents benefits to costs of 1.65:1, rising to 2.2:1 if high impact could be achieved beyond typical evidence from previous programmes.</p> <p>The business case and value for money has been signed off by the CA Director of Infrastructure</p>	Funding Award	£2m
Total Scheme Cost	£2m (Internal Staff £310k; Interventions £1.591m; Marketing £49k; Monitoring and Evaluation £50k)	Risk	<p>A risk register has been provided which includes 5 risks, of which the highest rated is the risk of low uptake of service by intended beneficiaries.</p> <p>No separate allowance for risk or contingency has been made within the costings, although the grant funding for the interventions is at this stage a scalable sum.</p> <p>The £1.591m funding for the interventions as simply the balancing figure from the £2m allocation after other costs have been deducted and there is no detailed assessment as to whether this is at an appropriate level at this stage, but a case is made that despite this, a deliverable and impactful programme can be delivered.</p>	Grant Recipient	N/A

Match Funding %	0%	Delivery	<p>It is planned that the programme will be delivered by a range of intermediary partners selected through an open call process for grant funding. The details of this process, and the services offered by the accelerator, will be informed by engagement with a reference group of UA officers and a consultation group of current sector partners.</p> <p>It is planned that mobilisation will commence in March, with programme end in Jan 2025. It appears that some funding will need to be reprofiled back to 25/26 to cover evaluation activities planned at this time.</p>	Payment Basis	N/A
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Scheme Description	Recommendation to the Chief Executives	Approval of the Full Business Case
The project will deliver a business support programme aimed at the micro and small /sole trader builder, repairs, maintenance and improvements (RMI) sector to support and encourage them to become capable and confident, and ideally qualified and accredited in working with homeowners who want to retrofit their properties and/or to introduce non-fossil fuel-based heating systems during extension / renovation or other building works. The programme also seeks to provide the target beneficiaries with new support networks and peers who can provide retrofit services at the right time.	Conditions of Approval	None

Record of Approval

West of England Chief Executives	
Date of Meeting	22 February 2023
Decision	Approval of the Full Business Case



REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

DATE: 17 MARCH 2023

REPORT TITLE: INVESTMENT FUND DELIVERY ASSURANCE

DIRECTOR: STEPHEN FITZGERALD, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF INVESTMENT AND CORPORATE

AUTHOR: PETE DAVIS, HEAD OF GRANT MANAGEMENT AND ASSURANCE

Purpose of Report

1. To consider changes to schemes within the Investment Fund programme against the agreed delivery assurance principles.

Recommendations

- The Committee is asked to approve the change requests for schemes within the current programme as set out in Appendix 1.

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.

Background / Issues for Consideration

Delivery Assurance and Budgetary Principles

2. The Combined Authority Committee agreed to delegate approval of changes within stated tolerances for schemes within the approved Investment Fund programme to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils. To support delivery of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, a set of delegations are also in place to the Combined Authority Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Directors of Infrastructure of the constituent Councils for schemes within the infrastructure portfolio.

- 2.1 At the Combined Authority Committee meeting in July, a set of delivery assurance and budgetary principles were agreed to drive the delivery of projects and good practice. Key to the application of these principles is the establishment of a Programme Review Board (PRB) comprising the Combined and Unitary Authority S73/S151 officers and Directors. This Board oversees overall programme management and identifies and agrees which projects require review and support to improve delivery, provides overall strategic direction for the recovery of the project, helps to resolve conflicts and manage risks, and promotes learning and the sharing of practice.
- 2.2 The PRB met in February and recommended the approval of a number of change requests. These change requests were considered against the agreed budgetary principles, and in particular those below:
- *Where there is delay, it should not be assumed that funding can automatically be moved between years, or that if significant change occurs that funding automatically continues. A full impact assessment would need to be undertaken to ensure the financial and contractual impacts are clearly understood prior to final decision by the Committee.*
 - *Where projects are stalled or significantly delayed, redeploying those resources to projects that will provide more certain or immediate benefits should be considered.*
 - *For projects over a certain threshold with significant delays or cost increase, where there is no consensus amongst the Programme Review Board on whether to agree to the change or delay, then a separate report to the Combined Authority Committee will be prepared setting out the pros and cons.*
 - *All material changes to budget or profile should be challenged by the Programme Review Board. Formal submission of change requests should be preceded by updates and early warning, in order that the change and options can be understood and agreed.*
 - *Where programme delays are reported, change requests should set out the full extent of delays since that at original approval, and not just the latest change, together with the mitigation that has been, or will be, undertaken to avoid any further delays in future.*
- 2.3 The change requests recommended for Committee approval are set out in Appendix 1. In addition, one change was approved through the granted delegation to the Combined Authority Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Directors of Infrastructure of the constituent Councils, which is shown in Appendix 2.
- 2.4 The following projects propose changes to their overall funding:
- **Bath Riverline Phase 1** – reduction in funding of £101k as a result of scope change.

- **Portway Station** – request for £1.6m TCF to address cost pressures.
- **WE Work for Everyone** – reduction in European Social Fund and Bristol City Council match funding of £406k.
- **Cotham Hill** – request for £295k City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding to address cost pressures.
- **Local Energy Advice Support Pilot** – project delivered £31k under budget.
- **Tap On Tap Off** - £307k funding reduction reflecting lower Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) spend.
- **Priority Skills Fund** – increase of £1.485m reallocated from the Digital Skills Investment Programme and Community Support Fund projects.

2.5 The following report significant delay (more than 6 months) or reprofiling funding between financial years (£500k plus):

- **Bath Riverline Phase 1** – 14 months delays and reprofiling £928k.
- **Portway Station** – 7 months delay to operational date.
- **WE Work for Everyone** – reprofiling back £541k.
- **South Bristol Light Industrial Workspace** – reprofiling back £550k.
- **Housing and Regeneration Enabling Fund (HREF) – South Gloucestershire Capacity** – 15 months delay to completion and reprofiling of £571k.
- **Yate Spur Phases 5 and 6** – 10 months delay to Full Business Case.
- **Alveston Hill** - 10 months delay to Full Business Case.
- **A432 Multi Modal Corridor** – 7 months delay to Full Business Case.
- **Energy Strategy – Climate Action Plan** – delays of up to 34 months. Further confirmation was requested to give confidence this project is now on track and resourced to deliver against the revised programme.
- **Tap On Tap Off/ Contactless Bus Card Payment** – delays of up to 12 months and reprofiling.
- **Innovation for Renewal and Opportunity** – reprofiling back £758k. The PRB requested a deep dive into this project at a future meeting.

2.6 The following have an impact on spend for the time limited Transforming Cities Fund:

- **Tap On Tap Off** – reduction in TCF spend of £307k.

- **Yate Spur Phases 5 and 6** – reduction in TCF spend for development (£427k) and delivery (£902k) to swap with Investment Fund.
- **Alveston Hill Cycleway** – reduction of TCF spend of £218k and request for additional CRSTS.
- **Emersons Green Local Transport Enhancements** – reduction in TCF spend of £319k to swap with Economic Development Fund.
- **Charfield Station** - reduction in TCF spend of £222k to swap with Investment Fund.
- **Cycle Hangers** – increasing scope and additional £200k TCF to include hangers in Bath & North East Somerset drawing on the headroom (already approved, see Appendix 2).

Consultation

- 3 Engagement has taken place with officers in the West of England Combined Authority and constituent Unitary Authorities including consideration at the Programme Review Board.

Other Options Considered

- 4 All Change Requests are required to set out in detail the full range of options considered and the reason the preferred option has been identified.

Risk Management / Assessment

- 5 All projects underway maintain a specific risk register as part of the project management and monitoring arrangements. Key risks are included in regular Highlight Reports.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 6 For projects seeking funding through the Investment Fund scheme promoters are required to include as part of their Full Business Case, an equality and diversity assessment and plan. These assessments are published as part of the Business Case on the Combined Authority website.

Climate Change Implications

- 7 The Combined Authority's Climate Emergency Action Plan has been considered in the production of this report. Points of particular relevance have been added to this report and reviewed by the Head of Environment.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Roger Hoare, Head of Environment

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate

- 8 The financial implications of the change requests detailed within this report are affordable within the overall funding as previously approved by the CA Committee.

Advice given by: Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim Director of Investment and Corporate Services (Section 73 Officer)

Legal Implications

- 9 There are no additional legal implications arising from this report.

Advice given by: Stephen Gerrard, Interim Monitoring Officer, West of England Combined Authority

Human Resources Implications

- 10 There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report.

Land / Property Implications

- 11 All land and property implications are set out within the specific business cases and dealt with by scheme promoters.

Advice given by: Advice given by: Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim Director of Investment and Corporate Services (Section 73 Officer)

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Change Requests for Schemes within the Current Programme Recommended for Committee Approval

Appendix 2: Change Request Approved through Delegation

West of England Combined Authority Contact:

Report Author	Contact Details
Pete Davis	Pete.davis@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Change Requests for Schemes within the Current Programme Recommended for Approval

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Project	Bath Creative Quarter
Funding awarded	£145,200
Source:	Investment Fund (IF)
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding Reprofiling £113k from 22/23 to 23/24. Revised profile £32,410 22/23 & £112,790 23/24
Milestones:	Delays of 3-6 months across all milestones including 6 months to completion and Final Report (to Jul 23).
Stated reason for change: Submission of the application was too late for April Committee and needed to go to July meeting. In addition delays arose due to it not being possible to appoint as single tender return as this failed to meet the brief, and also project resource constraints.	

Project	Bath River Line
Funding awarded	£1,048,490
Source:	IF
Scope:	Removal of scheme elements requiring planning consent.
Cost/ Spend:	£100,628 decrease to overall funding. Reprofiling £928k from 22/23 to 23/24 Revised profile £20,000 22/23 & £927,862 23/24, total £947,862
Milestones:	Changes to several milestones by 9-14 months including project completion by 14 months to May 25.
Stated reason for change: Removal of the elements requiring planning consent to enable the remaining project elements to proceed to delivery. The planning application for section 6 Bath Spa Campus proposed to be submitted in 2023 subject to the outcomes of the Fielding's Bridge feasibility study, and if approved, the original plan for the interventions at BSU will be delivered as part of a later phase.	

Project	ISTART
Funding awarded	£850,000
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding. Reprofiling £269k from 21/22 to 22/23 Revised profile £50k 19/20, £207k 20/21, £324k 21/22 & £269k 22/23
Milestones:	Change to a number of milestones and completion dates.
Stated reason for change: New project phasing and associated programme as a result of business case approval process and phased approach.	

Bristol City Council

Project	City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal
Funding awarded	£2,920,000
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding. Reprofiling £461k from 22/23 to 23/24 Revised profile £123k 21/22, £1.419m 22/23 and £1.378m 23/24
Stated reason for change: Delay in developing design and detailed costing for street scene and greening investment. This work is now progressing, and closer working with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to increase capacity is being considered.	

Project	Portway Station
Funding awarded	£1.553m
Source:	Getting Building Fund (GBF) £779k / Economic Development Fund (EDF) £774k
Cost/ Spend:	Additional £1.6m Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) Revised profile: pre 22/23 £779k (GBF), 22/23 £2.374m (£774k EDF, £1.6m TCF), total £3.153m
Milestones:	Delay of 7 months to operational date (Apr 23)
Stated reason for change: Further delays in the rail infrastructure programme and the entry into service certification programme have now shifted the likely opening date. Reasons for this include delays to completing the platform works, delays to securing power and communications connections and the resultant impact on testing and commissioning, and the entry into service process. Cost increases as a result of design changes due to Great Western Railways operator requirements, core platform design changes, additional scope, Network Rail cost increases and additional costs to support the prolongation of programme including the entry into service process.	

Project	Cotham Hill
Funding awarded	£350k
Source:	Active Travel Fund (ATF)
Cost/ Spend:	Additional funding of £295k City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) to underwrite decision on possibility of further ATF funding from Active Travel England. Revised profile: ATF £146k 22/23 and £204k 23/24, total £350k CRSTS £288k 23/24 and £7k 24/25
Stated reason for change: Consultation feedback and design refinement has increased costs. The Council have confirmed that with the cost increase the project continues to provide 'high' Value for Money at 2.1	

Project	We Work for Everyone
Funding awarded	£1,300,000
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	Reduction in match funding of £406k being £203k ESF and £203k from BCC with no change to IF funding Reprofiling £541k from 20/21 and 21/22 to 22/23 and 23/24 Revised profile £26k 20/21, £315k 21/22, £585k 22/23 & £374k 23/24, total £1.3m
Outputs:	24% reduction in enrolments into the programme (to 1,850) and 14% reduction in jobs achieved (to 529)
Milestones:	Delay of 10 months to project start and closure brought forward by 3 months.
Stated reason for change: Due to the pandemic the programme started later than anticipated, implementation took longer than planned and therefore delivery began over 10 months later. This has also been compounded by the closure of the ESF programmes being brought forward from Mar 2024 to Dec 2023.	

Project	South Bristol Light Industrial Workspace
Funding awarded	£5,171,648
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding. Reprofiling £550k from 22/23 to 23/24 Revised profile £292k 21/22, £3.72m 22/23 & £1.16m 23/24, total £5.172m
Milestones:	Delay of 3 months for the construction completion and workspace occupancy (to Jun and July 23 respectively)
Stated reason for change: A delay of some 2 months was experienced in award of the construction contract due to withdrawal of the first placed bidder and appointment of the second placed bidder. One additional month delay has been incurred due to the contractor having a slightly longer construction programme.	

Project	Bottle Yard Studios- Hawkfield Business Park
Funding awarded	£11,817,783
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding. Reprofiling £90k from 22/23 to 23/24 Revised profile £8.368m 21/22, £3.36m 22/23 & £90k 23/24, total £11.818m Reduction of match funding of £79k to £1.69m Changes in cost headings to drawn down contingency
Stated reason for change: Reduction in match funding as a result of a larger Photo Voltaic array being provided, to be installed and owned by a third party, offset to some extent by additional match funding for other elements.	

South Gloucestershire Council

Project	Housing and Regeneration Enabling Fund (HREF) – South Gloucestershire Council Capacity
Funding awarded	£750,000
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding. Reprofiling £4571k from 21/22 - 22/23 to 23/24 - 24/25 Revised profile £179k 22/23, £488k 23/24 and £83k 24/25
Milestones:	Extension of project completion to Jun 2024
Stated reason for change: Changing focus of sites post the completion of the Yate masterplan and the outputs to be produced. Extension to programme to ensure sufficient capacity in the project team and that, where appropriate, additional time has been included for engagement with relevant stakeholders including the public.	

Project	Yate Spur Phases 5 and 6
Funding awarded	£645,500
Source:	Transforming Cities Fund
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding. Reprofiling £427k from 22/23 to 23/24 and swop of TCF for Investment Fund Revised profile £68k 21/22, £151k 22/23 (total TCF £219k) & £427k 23/24 Investment Fund. Allocation of £5.245m for the delivery of the scheme (£902k TCF and £4.343m Investment Fund) to swop to IF
Milestones:	Delays to several milestones by 9-11 months including submission of Full Business Case by 10 months to Oct 23.
Stated reason for change: Delay to release of funding for the FBC and in receiving detailed quote from the consultants has caused a significant delay to the programme, amplified by missing the window for undertaking ecological surveys in 2022.	

Project	Alveston Hill Cycleway	
Funding awarded	£392,663	
Source:	TCF	
Cost/ Spend:	Increase in overall budget by £19,815 through use of balance of OBC development award (no change across the two awards). Reprofiling £218k TCF from 22/23 to 23/24 to swop to IF Revised profile £175k 22/23 & £238k 23/24, total £412,478	
Milestones:	Delays to several milestones by 9-11 months including submission of Full Business Case by 10 months to Oct 23.	
Stated reason for change: Delay to release of funding for the Full Business Case has caused a significant delay to the programme, amplified by missing the window for undertaking ecological surveys in 2022.		

Project	Emersons Green Local Transport Enhancements	
Funding awarded	£6.493m	
Source:	LGF/GBF/EDF/TCF	
Cost/ Spend:	No change in overall funding Reprofiling £319k TCF from 22/23 into EDF in 23/24.	
Milestones:	Delay of three months (to Dec 23) to Completion of Newlands Bridge refurbishment and approaches	
Stated reason for change: The signing of the Deed of Variation to the Section 106 agreement and release of the associated funding remains outstanding. A detailed cost estimate and programme cannot be completed until there is certainty of the developer funding being released.		

Project	A38 Multi Modal Corridor	
Funding awarded	£2.031m	
Source:	CRSTS	
Cost/ Spend:	Reprofiling £419k from 22/23 into 23/24 Revised profile £400k in 22/23 and £1,630,642 in 23/24, total £2.031m	
Milestones	Delay of 7 months to Full Business Case submission (to Mar 24)	
Stated reason for change: Delay as a result of a two stage consultation requirement due to impact of the pre-election period and impact on design element.		

Project	Charfield Station
Funding awarded	£4,123,000
Source:	TCF/IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding Reprofiling £222k TCF from 22/23 to 23/24 to become IF Revised profile £1.109m pre-22, £778k 22/23 & £2,236k 23/24
Stated reason for change Delay in commencement of detailed design work (station and highways). Detailed design can commence following determination of the planning application which is being considered by committee on 2nd March.	

West of England Combined Authority

Project	Energy Strategy – Climate Action Plan
Funding awarded	£250k
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding Reprofiling £85,761 from 21/22 into 22/23 and 23/24 Revised profile £49,001 20/21, £115,239 21/22, £23,159 22/23 and £62,601 in 23/24.
Milestones:	13-34 months delay across 3 milestones including a 34-month delay to the Emergency Action Plan Evidence Base, from June 2020 to April 2024.
Stated reason for change: The change has occurred due to the changing nature of the challenges that this project is attempting to tackle, combined with the creation of the Environment Directorate and pressures on the new team.	

Project	Local Energy Advice Support Pilot
Funding awarded	£150k
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	Reduction in total funding from £150k to £118,503 Revised profile £118,503 in 22/23. Proposed funding returned to the Green Recovery Fund
Milestones:	No changes to milestones
Stated reason for change Obtaining multiple quotes after the initial cost estimate resulted in savings of £17,908 for printing leaflets. Negotiating with the charity CSE also reduced the cost for local energy advice support by £13,589, reducing the overall project cost by £31,497.	

Project	Tap on Tap off
Funding awarded	£2m (£1.2m IF and £800k CRSTS)
Source:	IF and CRSTS
Cost/ Spend:	Reduction in total IF from £1.2m to £893,154 Reprofile £800,000 CRSTS from 23/24 into 24/25 Revised profile £286,845 21/22, £539,809 22/23, £66,500 23/24 and £800,000 in 24/25, total £1,693,154. £306,846 to be returned to headroom.
Milestones:	4-12 months delays across 4 milestones including upgrades to 90% of buses from Dec 22 to Jul 23 and 9 months delay upgrading 100% of buses from Mar 23 to Dec 23.
Stated reason for change: Delays to bus contract awards and a reduction in eligible vehicles operating/forecast to be operating in the area. TCF funding will not be available for phase 1 spend in 23/24 so alternative funding from existing integrated ticketing and contactless upgrade budgets has been identified. The reprofiling of CRSTS spend from 23/24 to 24/25 is as a result of revised timescales for delivery of national multi-operator back-office systems.	

Project	Integrated Ticketing
Funding awarded	£300,000
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding Reprofiling £83,416 from 22/23 into 23/24 Revised profile £24,000 19/20, £52,732 20/21, £93,889 21/22, £45,963 22/23 and £83,416 in 23/24
Milestones:	6 months delay to multi-operator scheme refresh agreed from Mar 22 to Sep 22. Two new milestones added to reflect key outcomes from refresh activities including the updated agreement and rollout support BSIP/EP and Tap on Tap off.
Stated reason for change: Amendment of milestones and spend to reflect the longer timeframe for delivery and the need to ensure they reflect the delivery of linked activities (Bus Service Improvement Plan/Enhanced Partnership and Tap on Tap off) going into 23/24.	

Project	Contactless Bus Card Payment
Funding awarded	£415,704
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding Reprofiling £61,278 from 19/20 into 22/23 and 23/24 Revised profile £258,146 19/20, £2,464 20/21, £32,071 21/22, £81,328 22/23 and £41,695 in 23/24
Milestones:	10-12 months delay across 2 milestones including extended support to Tap on Tap off and EP from Dec 22 to Dec 23 and project closure and operator handover from Mar 23 to Jan 24.

Stated reason for change: Error in reported spend for 19/20 which has now been corrected, with the difference used to reflect the forecast spend in 22/23 and 23/24. Changes in milestones to ensure alignment with BSIP/EP and Tap on Tap off activities and to reflect the change in timescales/delays to bus contract awards.

Project	Digital Skills Investment Programme (DSIP)
Funding awarded	£2m
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	Reallocating £1,321,973 from the DSIP programme to the Priority Skills Fund reducing the overall DSIP total from £2m to £678,027. Revised profile £381,473 21/22, £272,595 22/23 and £23,959 in 23/24, total £678,027.
Milestones:	No change to milestones
<p>Stated reason for change: As approved by CEOs in Nov 2022, the DSIP underspend of some £1.32 million will be merged with the Priority Skills Fund to continue to deliver digital skills outcomes at a baseline/lower level and medium/higher level where there is high demand. Some reduction in DSIP delivery spend was caused by delivery partners underperforming on progression of participants after the bootcamp.</p>	

Project	Community Support Fund (CSF) - previously Community Recovery Fund
Funding awarded	£1.5m
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	Reallocating £163,161 from the CSF programme to the Priority Skills Fund reducing the overall CSF total from £1.5m to £1,336,839. Revised profile £54,302 21/22, £1,223,960 22/23 and £58,577 in 23/24, total £1,336,839.
<p>Stated reason for change: As approved by Chief Executives in Nov 2022, the CSF underspend of some £163k will be merged with the Priority Skills Fund. This will ensure that CSF will continue to directly support communities facing multiple barriers to engaging with provision, supporting pre-engagement activity that progresses residents into sustained skills and employability outcomes. The PSF will respond to regional gaps and need identified through Labour Market Intelligence and information generated through the Skills Connect Hub and spoke delivery, whilst also aligning with the Employment and Skills Plan.</p>	

Project	Skills Connect and Priority Skills Fund
Funding awarded	£3m
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	Increase in total funding from £3m to £4,485,134 due to the reallocation of £1,321,973 from the DSIP programme and £163,161 from the Community Support Fund.

	Revised profile £256,000 2022/23, £1,717,394 2023/24, £2,197,322 2024/25 and £314,418 2025/26 total £4,485,134.
Stated reason for change: Reflecting the Change Requests submitted for the DSIP and CSF projects.	

Project	Bus Service Improvement Plan/Bus Service Improvements
Funding awarded	£537,000
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding Reprofiling £400,033 from 21/22 into 22/23 Revised profile £136,967 21/22 and £400,033 in 22/23
Milestones:	2 months delay to 1 milestone – the Start of EP (to access BSIP funding) from November 22 to January 23.
Stated reason for change: Delays in central Government's decision making resulted in the CA and North Somerset Council not receiving official confirmation of funding until Nov 2022 despite receiving the indicative decision in Apr 22. The Department for Transport advised the CA and NSC to postpone the statutory process for making the Enhanced Partnership until the funding was officially confirmed.	

Project	Innovation for Renewal & Opportunity (IRO)
Funding awarded	£6,716,714 (reduced to £6,316,714 following Oct Committee)
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding Reprofiling £757,850 from 22/23 into 23/24 and 24/25 Revised profile £345,492 21/22, £905,696 22/23, £4,214,239 23/24 and £851,287 in 24/25, total £6,316,714.
Milestones:	Delays of 3-6 months across 2 milestones. 6 months delay to the Angel Research completion from Dec 22 to Jun 23 and 3 months delay to Innovation in Infrastructure/MMC from Mar 23 to Jun 23
Stated reason for change: The IRO review identified Angel Research/Funding and the Innovation in Infrastructure/MMC projects for a reshape which is due for completion in Jul 23 causing slippage of milestones. Whilst spend for both Made Smarter and Business Innovation Fund is underway, they naturally depend on uptake and applicant eligibility. The move of these projects as well as the IP for growth to the Business and Skills directorate will be beneficial for speedy, agile delivery.	

Project	Retrofit Accelerator Phase 1
Funding awarded	£3m
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding or profile
Milestones:	5-8 months delay across 3 milestones with operational appointments delayed from Oct 22 to Mar 23 and agreeing and launching the Marketing plan from Oct 22 to Apr 23.

Stated reason for change: The original plan to award this grant directly was amended to an open call for potential delivery providers from Jul to Sep. This has had a knock-on effect for all appointment and Marketing launch milestones.

Project	Metrobus Consolidation
Funding awarded	£1,827,973
Source:	IF
Cost/ Spend:	No change to overall funding or profile
Milestones:	2-7 months delay across 5 milestones related to construction completion at various sites including a 6 month delay to SGC Lyde Green from Sep 22 to Mar 23 and 7 months delay to UWE construction from Aug 22 to Mar 23.
Stated reason for change: Delays occurred due to general supply chain challenges, primarily relating to core materials such as bus shelters and street furniture. Land adoption challenges also delayed Lyde Green and utility diversions took longer than initially anticipated. Despite the delays, all schemes are currently on track for site completion by March 2023 to allow funding through TCF.	

Appendix 2

Changes Approved through Delegation

Project	Cycle Hangers
Funding awarded	£361k (development and delivery)
Source:	TCF
Scope:	Inclusion of additional 20 cycle hangars across Bath & North East Somerset by March 2023
Cost/ Spend:	Increase in funding of £200k from TCF. The commissioning from this budget of an addendum to the original FBC to prove Value for Money on the investment, to be approved at Directors Revised profile £561k in 22/23.
Milestones:	New milestones added included delivery completion in Mar 23.
Stated reason for change: Opportunity to utilise TCF underspend.	



REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

DATE: 17 MARCH 2023

REPORT TITLE: INDICATIVE MEETINGS TIMETABLE 2023/2024 AND MANAGING THE PERIOD PRIOR TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

DIRECTOR: STEPHEN GERRARD, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF LAW AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

AUTHOR: VICKI YULL, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & SCRUTINY MANAGER

Purpose of Report

- 1 To consider the indicative dates for West of England Combined Authority, West of England Joint Committee, and West of England LEP Board meetings for the 2023/2024 year.
- 1.1 To agree a date for the 2023 Annual Meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Committee.
- 1.2 To put in place provisional arrangements for decision-making in the period between the May 2023 election date and the Annual Meeting, should the need arise.

Recommendation

1. That the indicative Timetable of Meetings for 2023/2024 as set out in Appendix 1 be endorsed for formal agreement by the West of England Combined Authority Committee at its Annual Meeting in June 2023, subject to any changes arising following consultation.
2. That the date of the Annual Meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Committee be agreed as 16 June 2023.
3. That the Interim Acting Chief Executive be delegated the authority to act, at his discretion, in response to any matter requiring decision prior to the Annual Meeting, subject to no objections by the Chief Executive Officers of the Constituent Councils.

Reasons for recommendation

- To enable the appropriate planning of meetings to take place in accordance with Standing order A8.1, and to assist Members in planning their work and other commitments, the West of England Combined Authority Committee is asked to consider and endorse the provisional Timetable of Meetings for 2023/2024 in advance of its Annual Meeting in June 2023.
- The date for the Annual Meeting is not currently set. In accordance with Standing Order A7.1 which states that the Combined Authority will normally hold an Annual Meeting every year between 1 March and 30 June, the Committee is being asked to agree 16 June 2023 as the date for its Annual Meeting.
- Given the period of time elapsing between the date of the election on 4 May 2023, and the proposed date of 16 June 2023 for the West of England Combined Authority Committee Annual Meeting, and given that the membership of the Combined Authority and its Committee's will not be confirmed until following the Annual Meetings of all the authorities concerned, it would be prudent to have provisional arrangements in place to allow for any decision-making required in response to emergency situations which may arise during that period.

Voting arrangements

- Decision requires unanimous agreement of Committee Members in attendance, or their substitutes (one vote representing each Authority) and including the West of England Combined Authority Mayor.

Background / Issues for Consideration

- 2 The proposed Timetable is still liable to variation. There are external factors that can alter schedules, for example additional General Elections, public health issues, or the need to hold public days of mourning.
- 2.1 The Annual Meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Committee should follow the Annual Meetings of the constituent Councils. The dates published for the Annual Meetings of the constituent Councils have been checked, resulting in the date of 16 June 2023 being suggested.
- 2.2 It is the convention for meetings of the West of England Joint Committee to begin immediately following the ending of West of England Combined Authority Committee meetings. Therefore, members are invited to note that the Annual Meeting of the West of England Joint Committee would also take place on 16 June 2023.
- 2.3 Delegation is sought to grant the Interim Acting Chief Executive of the West of England Combined Authority, subject to consultation with the Chief Executive Officers of the Constituent Councils, the power to act in an emergency given the comparatively long period between the election date in May 2023 and the proposed Annual Meeting date in June 2023. For the avoidance of doubt, it is not anticipated that there will be a need for decisions during that period, but it would be prudent to delegate this authority to the Interim Acting Chief

Executive at his discretion to cover for any eventuality that may occur.

Consultation

- 3 The Metro Mayor will be invited to submit his views on the draft Timetable which will be incorporated into the final version taken for adoption to the Annual Meeting in June 2023.
- 3.1 All constituent Councils will be invited to submit views which will be incorporated into the final version taken for adoption to the Annual Meeting in June 2023.
- 3.2 North Somerset Council will similarly be asked to comment on any dates proposed for the West of England Joint Committee and its views will be incorporated into the final version taken for adoption to the Annual Meeting in June 2023.
- 3.3 The Chair of the West of England Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be consulted on the provisional dates indicated in the draft timetable and their views will be incorporated into the final version taken for adoption to the Annual Meeting in June 2023.
- 3.4 The Chair of the West of England Combined Authority Audit Committee and relevant officers will be consulted on the provisional dates indicated in the draft timetable to ensure they align with any other agreed timetables or deadlines.
- 3.5 The dates set by the West of England LEP Board for its meetings in the 2023/2024 year will be incorporated into the final version taken for adoption to the Annual Meeting in June 2023.

Other Options Considered

- 4 It is good practice to publish a draft timetable for the subsequent year as early as is practicable.
- 4.1 It is also good practice to put provisional arrangements in place for decision-making to occur should the need arise during a period following an election when the membership of the Combined Authority is not confirmed.

Risk Management/Assessment

- 5 Members are reminded that any early provisional timetable can only be indicative and that the final version will not be determined until the Annual Meeting in June 2023.
- 5.1 Any risk posed to the Combined Authority during the period of instability following the election and prior to its Annual Meeting would be mitigated by delegating authority to the Interim Acting Chief Executive to take emergency decisions should the need arise.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 6 Any implications arising from the need to take emergency decisions during the

period indicated above would be considered as part of that decision-making process.

Climate Change Implications

7 Any implications arising from the need to take emergency decisions during the period indicated above would be considered as part of that decision-making process.

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate:

8 Any implications arising from the need to take emergency decisions during the period indicated above would be considered as part of that decision-making process.

Legal Implications:

9 Any implications arising from the need to take emergency decisions during the period indicated above would be considered as part of that decision-making process.

Human Resources Implications:

10 There are no exceptional legal considerations.

Land/property Implications

11 Any implications arising from the need to take emergency decisions during the period indicated above would be considered as part of that decision-making process.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Provisional Timetable of Meetings June 2023 to June 2024.

Background papers:

None.

West of England Combined Authority Contact:

Report Author	Contact Details
Vicki Yull	Vicki.Yull@westofengland-CA.gov.uk

West of England Combined Authority – Provisional Timetable of Meetings – June 2023 to June 2024

Appendix 1

	JUN 2023		JUL 2023		AUG 2023		SEP 2023		OCT 2023		NOV 2023		DEC 2023		JAN 2024		FEB 2024		MAR 2024		APR 2024		MAY 2024		JUN 2024				
Mon															1	B. Hol					1	B. Hol							
Tues				1											2						2								
Wed				2							1				3						3			1					
Thurs	1			3							2				4		1				4			2	Election				
Fri	2			4			1				3		1		5		2		1		5			3					
Sat	3		1	5			2				4		2		6		3		2		6			4			1		
Sun	4		2	6			3		1		5		3		7		4		3		7			5			2		
Mon	5		3	A	7		4	T&HP	2	O&S	6		4	A	8	T&HP	5		4	A	8		6	B. Hol		3			
Tues	6		4		8		5		3		7		5		9		6		5		9			7			4		
Wed	7		5		9		6		4		8		6		10		7		6		10			8			5		
Thurs	8		6		10		7	S&B	5		9		7		11	S&B	8		7		11			9			6		
Fri	9		7		11		8		6	CA	10		8		12		9		8		12			10			7		
Sat	10		8		12		9		7		11		9		13		10		9		13			11			8		
Sun	11		9		13		10		8		12		10		14		11		10		14			12			9		
Mon	12	O&S	10		14		11		9		13		11		15	O&S	12		11	O&S	15			13			10		
Tues	13		11		15		12		10		14		12		16		13		12		16			14			11		
Wed	14		12		16		13		11		15		13		17		14		13		17			15			12		
Thurs	15		13		17		14		12		16		14		18		15		14		18			16			13		
Fri	16	CA	JC	14		18		15		13		17		15		19		16		15	CA	19			17		14	CA	JC
Sat	17		15		19		16		14		18		16		20		17		16		20			18			15		
Sun	18		16		20		17		15		19		17		21		18		17		21			19			16		
Mon	19		17		21		18	A	16		20		18		22	O&S	19	T&HP	18		22			20			17		
Tues	20		18		22		19		17		21		19		23		20		19		23			21			18		
Wed	21		19		23		20		18		22		20		24		21		20		24			22			19		
Thurs	22		20		24		21		19		23		21		25		22	S&B	21		25			23			20		
Fri	23		21		25		22		20		24		22		26	CA	JC	23		22			24			21		21	
Sat	24		22		26		23		21		25		23		27		24		23		27			25			22		
Sun	25		23		27		24		22		26		24		28		25		24		28			26			23		
Mon	26		24		28	B. Hol	25		23		27		25	B. Hol	29		26		25		29			27	B. Hol		24		
Tues	27		25		29		26		24		28		26	B. Hol	30		27		26		30			28			25		
Wed	28		26		30		27		25		29		27		31		28		27					29			26		
Thurs	29		27		31		28		26		30		28				29		28					30			27		
Fri	30		28				29		27				29						29	B. Hol				31			28		
Sat			29				30		28				30						30								29		
Sun			30						29				31						31								30		
Mon			31						30																				
Tues									31																				

- CA West of England Combined Authority Committee – 1.00pm
- JC West of England Joint Committee – 3.00pm
- A West of England Combined Authority Audit Committee – 10.30am
- T&HP Joint meeting of Transport Board and Housing & Planning Board 1.00pm

- O&S West of England Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 10.30am
- LEP West of England LEP Board – 9.30am
- S&B Joint meeting of Skills Board and Business Board – 1.00pm

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**REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE**

DATE: 17 MARCH 2023

**REPORT TITLE: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY AND
MAYORAL BUDGET FORECAST OUTTURN 2022/23**

**DIRECTOR: STEPHEN FITZGERALD, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF
INVESTMENT AND CORPORATE SERVICES AND
SECTION 73 OFFICER**

**AUTHOR: SELONGE RUSSELL, HEAD OF FINANCE AND
DEPUTY SECTION 73 OFFICER**

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report presents the revenue budget financial forecast information for the West of England Combined Authority and the Mayoral budget for the financial year 2022/23 based on data from the period April 2022 to January 2023.

Recommendations

- That the West of England Combined Authority Committee:
 1. Reviews and comments on the Mayoral Fund revenue budget and forecast as detailed in Appendix 1.
 2. Reviews and comments on the Combined Authority revenue budget and forecast as detailed in Appendix 2.
 3. Approves that the Combined Authority undertake a line-by-line budget review on all funding programmes with progress to be reported back to the Committee in June 2023.

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.

Background / Issues for Consideration

Mayoral Fund Revenue Budgets

2. Appendix 1 details the Mayoral Fund's forecast revenue position for the 2022/23 financial year based on actual information to the end of January 2023, which is forecast to deliver a balanced position at year end – a projected £10k overspend on staffing costs (the result of a higher than anticipated local government pay award being offset by an equivalent increased contribution from the West of England Combined Authority Investment Fund).

West of England Combined Authority Revenue Budgets

- 2.1 Appendix 2 details the Combined Authority's revenue forecast position for the 2022/23 financial year based on actual information to the end of January 2023.
- 2.2 Significant additional funding has been achieved during the year against that originally budgeted and has resulted in corresponding increases in planned expenditure. Excluding transfers from reserves, forecast income of £93,190k is expected for the year compared to an original budget of £64,745k – an increase of £28,445k (43.9%). The forecast expenditure (excluding transfers to reserves) of £94,299k compares to an original budget of £64,700k – an increase of £29,599k (45.7%).
- 2.3 The net change in forecast income and expenditure (excluding transfers to/from reserves) of £1,154k will be financed by an equivalent change in transfers to/from earmarked reserves (£2,140k additional transfer from reserves offset by an increase in transfers to reserves of £986k).
- 2.4 The most significant forecast variances to the Combined Authority's revenue budget position are set out in further detail below.

Transport Levy and Operations

- 2.5 The current forecast is for the Transport Levy to have a forecast function cost of £23,691k – an in-year overspend of £2,782k.
- 2.6 Additional funding of £1,848k partly offsets that variance in expected costs and is balanced by a net drawdown of reserves totalling £934k (itself comprising a £1,347k drawdown from the Supported Bus Service Reserve and a transfer to the Transport Levy Reserve of £413k). Further analysis of the budget and forecast is set out in Figure 1 overleaf:

Figure 1: 2022/23 Transport Levy Forecast v Budget

Function	Current Budget 22/23 <i>(£,000's)</i>	Forecast 22/23 <i>(£,000's)</i>	Variance <i>(£,000's)</i>
Team and Operational costs	1,308	1,417	109
Contribution from the Combined Authority *	(452)	(561)	(109)
Community Transport grants	1,653	1,711	58
Concessionary Fares	14,870	10,848	(4,022)
Real Time Information (RTI)	412	412	-
Supported Bus Services	2,576	9,325	6,749
Metrobus	87	87	-
Updating Bus Stop Information	177	175	(2)
Travelwest	26	25	(1)
Integrated Ticketing	252	252	-
Forecasted Function Cost	20,909	23,691	2,782
Additional Funding			
S106 Funding **	-	(464)	(464)
Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG) **	-	(1,147)	(1,147)
Revenue from Supported Buses Contracts			
Lost Mileage Claim Back from Operators	-	(237)	(237)
Drawdown from Supported Bus Service Reserve	-	(1,347)	(1,347)
Transfer to Transport Levy General Reserves	-	413	413
Net Function Cost	20,909	20,909	(2,782)
* <i>Overheads and Recharges</i>			
** <i>BSOG Grant & S106 funding are not levy related</i>			

Share of Forecast Transport Levy by Local Authority

Authority	2022/23 Levy <i>(£,000's)</i>
B&NES	5,194
BCC	10,261
SGC	4,014
Total Levy	19,469
NSC *	1,440
Total	20,909

* NSC element reduced by £518K vs budget as payments are made on actuals for concessionary fares.

- 2.7 Prior to the pandemic, reimbursement to bus operators for accepting concessionary travel passes was based on the number of journeys made by pass-holders. With the onset of coronavirus in March 2020 and the imposition

of lockdown, bus patronage fell sharply and, as part of its package of emergency support to bus operators, Government directed local authorities to continue to pay bus operators for concessionary travel based on pre-pandemic patronage levels rather than actual use.

- 2.8 The Government support package was modified during 2020 such that bus operators were required to operate at least 90% of their pre-pandemic mileage to qualify for full reimbursement. In respect of those who were unable to meet that threshold, local authorities were allowed to reduce reimbursement payments to reflect the actual percentage of pre-pandemic mileage operated. These arrangements continued until March 2022.
- 2.9 The most recent Government guidance is to transition back to reimbursement for actual travel over the course of 2022-23. In April 2022, reimbursement was capped on 90% of pre-pandemic patronage and that percentage cap is reduced every two months until it reaches 65% in February 2023, as detailed in *Figure 3*. From the point where actual use meets the declining percentage, reimbursement will revert to actual use.

Figure 2: Table showing the scale down of LTA pre-Covid concessionary reimbursement payments

Month	Maximum amount of pre-pandemic patronage in equivalent month to be reimbursed unless actual travel is higher	Actual concessionary travel in West of England Combined Authority Area compared to equivalent quarter prior to pandemic
April 2022	90%	65%
May 2022	90%	
June 2022	85%	
July 2022	85%	63%
August 2022	80%	
September 2022	80%	
October 2022	75%	63%
November 2022	75%	
December 2022	70%	
January 2023	70%	-
February 2023	65%	
March 2023	65%	

- 2.10 Whilst overall bus patronage in our region has recovered to roughly 75% of its pre-pandemic level and seems to have stabilised, bus use by concessionary pass holders has recovered to only 60% and shows little sign of further improvement at this stage.

- 2.11 The Committee in January 2022 approved transferring the anticipated underspend in 2021/22 to a specific one-off earmarked reserves to invest in further support to regional bus services to protect routes, particularly in rural areas and other communities not well served by public transport, during 2022/23.
- 2.12 The increase in the Supported Bus Services primarily relates to price variances. With continued uncertainty surrounding future bus patronage and costs associated with re-tendering existing bus routes unknown, it is important that a reasonable reserve is maintained to manage any peaks and troughs throughout 2022/23 and in the medium term. Forecasted underspending and potential demands against the transport reserve will be regularly reviewed throughout the year with the Constituent Unitary Authority Section 151 Officers kept fully apprised. This sits alongside the significant work on the opportunities that the Bus Services Improvement Programme and the connected City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement will provide the region in the future.

UK Community Renewal Fund

- 2.13 As reported to the Committee in July 2022, as a forerunner to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund the Government awarded some £220m nationally through the UK Community Renewal Fund.
- 2.14 This programme aims to support innovative responses to local challenges and needs, including removing barriers that people face in accessing skills and labour market opportunities, building the evidence base for future interventions and exploring the viability of new ideas.
- 2.15 Following the submission of shortlisted applications by the Combined Authority, four projects were selected for funding by Government as shown in the table below. The deadline for the completion of the delivery of these projects and funding spend was the end of December 2022. All projects have submitted final claims and either final or interim evaluation reports.

Figure 3: Shortlisted Applications

Project Name	Lead	Funds Awarded	Funds Claimed	Evaluation Report Submitted
Skills for Green Jobs and Entrepreneurship	University of the West of England	£760k	£679k	Final
Futureproof: scaling up	Centre for Sustainable Energy	£113k	£113k	Final
South Gloucestershire Council Community Renewal Fund	South Gloucestershire Council	£950k	£950k	Interim (Final in June)
Bath and North-East Somerset Social Enterprise Programme	School for Social Entrepreneurs	£594k	£590k	Final

Variations on Project Spend

- 2.16 Since the budget was set, various Investment Fund revenue schemes have been reviewed and rephased over financial years with a revised three-year revenue forecast for all investment fund projects totalling £64,473k (of which £44,517k is managed directly by the Combined Authority and £19,956k managed through third parties) is detailed in Appendix 3.
- 2.17 In year spend on Government funded projects is forecasted to be £12,815k higher than originally budgeted with the main variations being various new approved projects which have been added since the budget was approved in January 2022 as detailed in Appendix 4.
- 2.18 £5.1m revenue has been awarded by DFT for 2022/23 (there is an expectation of award of £2.5m for 23/24 and 24/25. Beyond 24/25 will be subject to future spending reviews) to the Combined Authority to prepare for the significant five-year City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.

Interest on Balances

- 2.19 An income budget of £1.6m was set in relation to the interest that the Combined Authority earns from investing cash balances held. Whereas interest rates have dropped to record low levels over recent months, through a number of 'forward deal' investments and longer-term placements in property and equity funds, we continue to significantly out-perform this income target. The forecast position for 2022/23 is a treasury surplus of £1,700k.
- 2.20 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has announced that the IFRS 9 statutory override in local government will be extended for another two years until 31 March 2025. IFRS 9 is the standard covering financial instruments and requires fair value movements in certain assets to be reflected in budgets.

Inflation

- 2.21 An update of the programmes with significant inflationary pressures was reported to the Combined Authority Committee as part of the Combined Authority Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (January 2023). A further review has commenced, and we continue working with the UAs to establish the inflationary impact on Investment Fund projects managed by the UAs as part of the ongoing work in this area.

Drawdown from Reserves

- 2.22 Drawdowns from earmarked reserves of £2,307k are included in the forecast income for 2022/23 as detailed in Figure 4 overleaf.

Figure 4: Drawdown from Earmarked Reserves

Transfer from Reserves	(£,000's)
Mayoral Capacity Fund	177
Delays in Programme Delivery Recovered Overhead	681
Supported Bus Services	1,347
Brexit	82
Other	20
Total Reserves Forecast Drawdown	2,307

- 2.23 In addition to the above, the Combined Authority 5% share of pooled business rates retained in the region have been reported net rather than gross. The £3,405k of Section 31 grants receivable in 2021/22 together with £568k of the £777k Business Rate Retention Reserve is expected to be drawn down in order to reflect the timing differences in business rate yield impacting on the revenue account from current and prior years. Considering the use of these reserves, the pooling gain from 2022/23 is expected to be zero compared to a budgeted income of £600k.
- 2.24 A final position regarding business rate pooling gain will not be known until each unitary authority in the pool closes their 2022/23 accounts and reports on their end of year position. As such the use of reserves outlined above is subject to further change.
- 2.25 The Combined Authority General Reserve, as at 31 March 2023, is expected to remain at £2,370k which is 3.7% of the 2022/23 revenue budget. The future revenue position remains uncertain whilst core operating costs are funded through temporary sources such as Mayoral Capacity Fund.
- 2.26 Although there is no explicit guidance on the appropriate level of unearmarked financial reserves that an authority should retain, general practice suggests that these should be in the region of 5% of the annual net revenue budget. In approving the 2023/24 revenue budget, members of the Combined Authority were advised that general reserves on that basis would need to increase to around £5,700k for that margin to be achieved.

Specific Grants and Reserves

- 2.27 The West of England Combined Authority continues to attract a variety of specific grants and funding through several different sources. The revenue budget for 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Forecast, as approved in January 2022, set out all revenue budgets and anticipated spend up to the period to March 2024.

Program of Effectiveness and Efficiency

- 2.28 When the 2023/24 budget was set at the meeting of the combined authority on 27 January it was agreed that the Interim Chief Executive should work with

UA Chief Executives on a programme of effectiveness and efficiency reviews to be agreed, including the delivery timescales for such reviews, which will include appropriate value for money testing with external validation where appropriate. It is currently planned that these reviews should ultimately cover each area of the CAs operation on a program.

- 2.29 It is also noted that the 2023/24 budget proposals were approved with the exception of the £8m staffing increase, of which 10% will be withheld to enable further work to be undertaken to assess the relevant need against pressures on services. The remaining funds will be released following the unanimous approval of the Combined Authority Chief Executive and Chief Executives of the Constituent Councils. This work is currently ongoing.
- 2.30 A detailed line by line budget review of each funding programme will be carried out and the outcomes/progress reported back to Committee in June 2023. The scope of this work will include ensuring funding is spent in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions of the grant funding, reviewing value for money on each programme, a re-profiling exercise and establishing an internal gateway review process.

Summary Revenue Budget position for West of England CA

- 2.31 The Combined Authority is expecting to receive £28,445k of additional funding over that anticipated in the original budget. Against that, corresponding increases in activity allowed by such funding is forecast to be £29,599k higher than originally planned – an increase in net expenditure of £1,154k.
- 2.32 This net additional forecast cost is funded by a change in the transfers to/from earmarked reserves (£2,140k additional use of reserves and £986k additional transfers to reserves). The overall balancing of the budget by using earmarked reserves results in the level of general reserves remaining unaltered to the 2022/23 brought forward balance of £2,370k.

Consultation

- 3 Consultation has been carried out with the Monitoring Officer, Chief Executives, and S151 Officers across the three constituent unitary authorities. Regular meetings are held with the Finance Directors across the region in terms of material financial matters.

Other Options Considered

- 4 Value for Money and appropriate use of resources are constantly considered when monitoring and managing all revenue and capital budgets.

Risk Management / Assessment

- 5 This report forms a core part of the West of England Combined Authority's governance and risk management process. The forecast presented in this report takes account of known financial risks and their potential impact on the financial position. The specific financial risks that we currently face include:

- a) The Russian invasion of Ukraine and continuing international supply chain challenges have caused a sharp increase in inflation.
- b) Direct service delivery risk regarding transport services – particularly with regard to the financial pressures faced by bus operators due to falling patronage, and income, as a continuing result of the Covid pandemic.
- c) Unemployment has fallen, notwithstanding the end of the furlough scheme, and recruitment has risen, resulting in a very tight labour market and rising wage rates that still represent real terms cuts to public sector pay that increase recruitment and retention issues.
- d) Business Rate Retention funding – although the assumption is that the current 100% Business Rates Retention pilot will roll forward, we will not be able to accumulate a contribution to the Core Funding from budgeted revenue business rate growth.
- e) Potential for abortive capital costs to become chargeable to revenue.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 8 The public sector equality duty created under the Equality Act 2010 means that public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 8.1 The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:
 - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
 - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- 8.2 The general equality duty therefore requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.
- 8.3 All key service delivery functions continue to be delivered by the relevant constituent councils and impact assessments for service delivery, particularly highways and transport are included as appropriate within their individual Budget reports.

Climate Change Implications

- 7 Much of the West of England Combined Authority's approved investment on building the infrastructure within the region will have a positive impact on climate change. Specifically, stepped change and improvements to rail and bus services along with an investment in cycling and walking facilities will help to reduce our carbon footprint.
- 7.1 Consideration of climate issues are incorporated within the assessed criteria that is used by the West of England Combined Authority to determine priority financial allocations from investment funding.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Roger Hoare, Head of Environment

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate

- 8 The financial implications are contained within the body of the report.
- 8.1 The impact of Covid has had a significant impact on the region and resulted in changes to the way CA funds have been utilised. The UK and global economy are continuing to feel the effects of Covid and broader pressures, with significantly increasing inflation rates impacting families, communities, employers and businesses and the probability of continued economic decline through negative growth.
- 8.2 In recent months the economic outlook has, as previously reported, become less positive. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and continuing international supply chain challenges have caused a sharp increase in inflation. Residents and businesses across the region are facing significantly higher prices. Observers including the Bank of England and Office for Budget Responsibility have revised downwards their forecasts for economic growth over the next two to three years. For the Combined Authority, this both increases the costs of delivery, and shapes future priorities as the region's challenges shift.
- 8.3 With continuing uncertainty around the national economic outlook, an ongoing review of CA funding allocations has been taking place to consider where additional budget pressures might be felt, particularly due to inflation, and to identify action that can be taken to minimise any impact of the current economic climate.

Advice given by: Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim Director of Investment & Corporate Services

Legal Implications

- 9 This report monitors how the Combined Authority, and the Mayoral Fund are performing against the financial targets set in January 2022 through the

Budget setting process in accordance with the West of England Combined Authority Order 2017 and the Combined Authorities Financial Order 2017.

Advice given by: Stephen Gerrard, Interim Strategic Director - Legal Services

Human Resources Implications

- 10 All spend on staffing is within the budget and resources as approved by the West of England Combined Authority committee. Fixed term contracts are applied for staff who are engaged on projects which have time limited funding, (i.e. specific grants).

Advice given by: Alex Holly, Head of Human Resources

Appendices

Appendix 1: Mayoral Fund Revenue Forecast

Appendix 2: West of England Combined Authority Revenue Forecast

Appendix 3: Revised 3-year forecast revenue spend on Investment Fund projects

Appendix 4: Variations in spend on Government Funded Projects.

West of England Combined Authority Contact:

Report Author	Contact Details
Selonge Russell	selonge.russell@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

(West of England) Combined Authority Mayoral Forecast 2022/23 based on the period April 2022 to January 2023:

	Budget 2022/23 (£,000's)	Forecast 2022/23 (£,000's)	Variance (£,000's)
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Staff (a)	213	223	10
Supplies & Services	62	62	-
Premises	13	13	-
Support Services	11	11	-
	299	309	10
Mayoral Election Transfer to reserve	346	346	-
Mayoral Revenue Expenditure	645	655	10
<u>Income</u>			
Contribution from West of England Combined Authority Investment Fund	645	655	10
Total Income	645	655	10
Surplus/Deficit	-	-	-

Note:

(a) Increases reflect inflationary pay increases.

APPENDIX 2

(West of England) Combined Authority Revenue Forecast 2022/23 based on the period April 2022 to January 2023:

	Budget 2022/23 (£,000's)	Forecast 2022/23 (£,000's)	Variance (£,000's)
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Staff (a)	9,646	11,520	1,874
Staff Recharge (Capital & LEP) (b)	(2,382)	(114)	2,268
Net Revenue Staff	7,264	11,406	4,142
Supplies & Services (c)	9,127	16,746	7,619
Third Party Payments (d)	48,986	66,826	17,840
Overhead	(677)	(679)	(2)
Transfer to Reserves (e)	212	1,198	986
Total Expenditure	64,912	95,497	30,585
<u>Income</u>			
Levy Transport Function (f)	21,427	20,909	(518)
Business Rate Retention	600	-	(600)
Government Grants (g)	19,565	32,380	12,815
Investment Fund (h)	21,553	35,849	14,296
Other Contribution (i)	-	752	752
Interest on balances	1,600	3,300	1,700
Transfer from Reserves	167	2,307	2,140
Total Income	64,912	95,497	30,585

Note:

- a Staff salary has increased due to the increased government grants, additional roles are funded by specific grant funding.
- b There has been a reduced recharge to Capital & LEP primarily due to a large portion of the CRSTS salary costs being revenue rather than capital related as originally anticipated.
- c & d Have increased due the increases in income from Government Grants and Investment fund.
- e £413k is a transfer to the Integrated Transport Authority general reserve. The other £785K is a transfer the Treasury Reserve to cover the risk of capital losses and/or lower financial returns in future years.
- f Breakdown in Figure 3
- g Breakdown in Appendix 4
- h Breakdown in Appendix 3
- i Contributions from UAs towards projects as well as some recharges to Bus Operators for not running services.

APPENDIX 3

Investment Fund / Transforming Cities Programme	Spend profile 22/23	Spend profile 23/24	Spend profile 24/25	Total
	<i>(£000's)</i>	<i>(£,000's)</i>	<i>(£,000's)</i>	<i>(£,000's)</i>
Economy, Data and Culture	337	-	-	337
Bus Service Improvement Plan	437	-	-	437
Low Carbon Challenge Fund Extension	422	-	-	422
West of England HGV Driver Training Project	141	72	7	220
WoE Visitor Economy Recovery	91	-	-	91
Business Growth and Adaptations Fund	465	16	6	488
Business Innovation Fund (Research and Innovation Challenge Fund)	63	45	-	108
LIS Productivity Challenge	1,435	823	195	2,453
Innovation for Renewal and Opportunity	2,064	3,578	730	6,372
Culture and Creative Economic Fund CR	503	70	60	633
Cultural Compact Start-Up Investment	80	190	-	270
Workforce for the Future	826	1,621	-	2,447
Future Bright Plus	1,416	1,100	-	2,516
Digital Skills Investment Programme CQ	851	573	-	1,424
Community Recovery (Support) Fund	1,138	220	-	1,358
Post-16 Education and Skills Delivery Infrastructure Analysis	14	-	-	14
All Age Access Hub Pilot (Skills Connect Pilot)	148	137	-	285
5G Logistics	41	-	-	41
High Streets – Strategic Review	25	-	-	25
West of England Talent Retention Platform	37	70	-	107
Local Energy Advice Support Pilot	150	-	-	150
Regional Low Carbon Delivery Programme	95	513	591	1,200
Retrofit Accelerator	521	1,002	988	2,511
Local Nature Recovery Strategy Development	110	220	-	330
MetroBus Consolidation Package	-	-	5	5
Bristol to Bath Strategic Corridor	1,737	-	-	1,737
Regional Cycle Hangar	100	-	-	100
Strategic Master Planning West of England Combined Authority CA business case	75	-	-	75
Green Infrastructure	129	-	-	129
North Fringe Masterplan - Urban Living Opportunity	227	-	-	227
South West Bristol Infrastructure Investment Plan	307	-	-	307
SDS/LTP Shared Evidence Base	1,040	602	250	1,892
SDS/LTP Shared Evidence Base	347	201	83	631
MMC / Housing Innovation / Housing Delivery Strategy	125	125	-	250
ITA Functions	123	150	-	273
Strategic Rail Investment	65	25	-	90
Strategic Rail Investment	65	25	-	90
Bus Infrastructure Programme	1,966	-	-	1,966
Mayoral Office & Elections	655	617	621	1,893
future4WEST Strategic Outline Business Case (SOC) Development	1,031	-	-	1,031
Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure (East)	57	-	-	57
Integrated Smart Ticketing	129	-	-	129

Investment Fund / Transforming Cities Programme	Spend profile 22/23 (£000's)	Spend profile 23/24 (£,000's)	Spend profile 24/25 (£,000's)	Total (£,000's)
Future Transport Zone	2,138	1,454	-	3,592
10 Year Rail Delivery Plan	340	80	40	460
EV Charging Infrastructure	100	100	-	200
Visitor Economy (Talent Institutes - Feasibility Study)	13	-	-	13
Community Pollinator Fund	229	580	649	1,458
Regional Tourism - Feasibility Study	80	-	-	80
Skills Connect and Priority Skills Fund - SGC	256	1,294	1,450	3,000
Business Start Up School	46	244	209	500
BTQ JDT	94	-	-	94
Investment Fund managed through West of England CA	22,884	15,747	5,885	44,517
FEAS W High Streets Kingswood	27	-	-	27
Charfield Station	1,000	2,014	-	3,014
Coalpit Heath/Westerleigh Bypass and Frampton Cotterell/ Winterbourne Bypass	73	-	-	73
Realising Talent (NEET)	118	-	-	118
We Work for Everyone	381	17	-	397
South Bristol Enterprise Support	195	-	-	195
Centre for Digital Eng, Tech and Inn (DETI)	856	-	-	856
Manvers Street Regeneration	250	-	-	250
Strategic Master Planning - North Keynsham	-	142	-	142
Reboot West	330	233	36	598
High Street Catalyst	290	-	-	290
East Fringe Master Plan	155	39	-	194
Sevenside Master Plan	120	-	-	120
Parkway Station Master Plan	190	-	-	190
Frome Gateway & City Centre	565	-	-	565
Milsom Quarter Masterplan	221	1,044	402	1,667
The Coach House BAME Enterprise and Social Enterprise Hub	57	-	-	57
North Fringe Public Infrastructure Package	497	-	-	497
Bristol City Centre & High Streets	1,880	917	-	2,797
Bottle Yard Studios - Hawkfield Business Park	25	25	-	50
Bath City Centre High Streets Renewal Project	48	48	48	144
Temple Quarter Regeneration Programme	1,662	-	-	1,662
Bath River Line-Bristol Bath Railway Path Extension	70	-	-	70
Common Connections	120	103	109	332
B&NES Housing & Regeneration Enabling Fund	1,345	-	-	1,345
Bristol Avon Flood Strategy – Active Travel & Green Infrastructure Greenway	313	169	-	482
Evidence to support Transition from Spatial Development Strategy to Local Plan Making	570	330	-	900
Chew Valley Lake Recreational Trail (Southern Section)	150	-	-	150
East Bristol Mini-Holland	79	-	-	79
LOHS Bath Local Centres	89	129	18	236
Midsomer Norton High Street Market Square Project	0	40	10	50

Investment Fund / Transforming Cities Programme	Spend profile 22/23 (£000's)	Spend profile 23/24 (£,000's)	Spend profile 24/25 (£,000's)	Total (£,000's)
Western Harbour Feasibility	279	0	0	279
Bristol Harbour Place Shaping Strategy	220	63	0	283
Yate Spur Phases 5 & 6	453	0	0	453
Hydrogen Sustainable Transport Economy Accelerator	107	482	495	1,085
Bath Creative Quarter	145	0	0	145
City Centre Economic Development and Markets Development	86	79	0	165
Investment Fund managed through third parties	12,965	5,873	1,118	19,956
Total Investment Fund	35,849	21,620	7,004	64,473

APPENDIX 4

Government Grants

Project	Budgeted <i>(£,000's)</i>	Forecast <i>(£,000's)</i>	Variance <i>(£,000's)</i>
Business Innovation - ERDF	836	688	(148)
Adult Education Budget	16,364	15,960	(404)
Workforce for the Future	-	826	826
Skills Bootcamps Wave 3	-	2,840	2,840
Multiply	-	1,344	1,344
CRSTS	1,025	2,817	1,792
Supported Bus Services	-	1,147	1,147
Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body	180	180	-
Mayoral Capacity Funding	1,000	1,000	-
Combined Authority (M10)	160	160	-
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	-	1,236	1,236
5G Logistics	-	419	419
Mini-Holland Feasibility	-	79	79
Bus Service Improvement Plan	-	3,164	3,164
Active Travel Revenue Fund	-	20	20
Active Travel Social Prescribing	-	70	70
Zero Emissions Transport City	-	430	430
	19,565	32,380	12,815

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REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

DATE: 17 MARCH 2023

REPORT TITLE: AUDIT ACTION PLAN: FEEDBACK FROM AUDIT AND OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND PROGRESS REPORT

DIRECTOR: JESS LEE, HEAD OF STRATEGY AND POLICY

AUTHOR: RACHEL PYKETT, HEAD OF POLICY

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report sets out progress and next steps on the Combined Authority's route to improvement following the external audit report from Grant Thornton and the emerging action plan in response discussed by the Combined Authority Committee in December 2022. The report:
 - Sets out the progress on phase 1 of the Solace peer challenge review of the action plan including Terms of Reference and themes of the response. The independent reviewer will attend the committee to present his phase 1 findings.
 - sets out feedback from the Audit Committee on the emerging action plan (the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny committee will report back in the meeting), as set out in appendix 4.
 - requests formal approval of the emerging action plan in the light of feedback, as set out in appendix 3.
 - provides an update on progress against the emerging action plan since December, as set out in table 1.

Recommendation

- The Committee is recommended to:
 1. Consider feedback from the Audit and Overview & Scrutiny Committees and approve the action plan as a living document that will continue to be refined as work continues.
 2. Note progress in delivering the emerging action plan.

3. Agree in principle the broad areas as set out in paragraph 2.3 and presented by the Solace peer reviewer, and delegate to the Combined Authority Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Executives of the Unitary Authorities, to incorporate into the action plan as appropriate.

Reasons for recommendation

- Following discussion in December it was agreed that the Audit Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be asked to provide feedback on the emerging action plan before it is agreed by the committee.

Voting arrangements

- This 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.

Background / Issues for Consideration

- 2 At the Combined Authority Committee meeting on 9th December 2022, committee resolved to “Agree that the action plan be presented to both the Audit Committee and the Scrutiny & Overview Committee as a matter of urgency to consider and review from their differing constitutional positions and report any feedback to the Combined Authority Committee”.
- 2.1 Following the acceptance of the Grant Thornton Audit findings, the Metro Mayor wrote to the Secretary of State to make him aware of the report and the Committee’s proposed course of action in response. The Minister of State has since responded and the exchange of letters is attached at appendix 1.
- 2.2 Committee also discussed asking the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace) to undertake a peer challenge review of the emerging action plan. The terms of reference for that review are attached at appendix 2. It is anticipated that this will also help with broader improvement suggestions beyond those outlined in the emerging action plan.
- 2.3 The independent peer reviewer will attend the Committee to discuss his initial findings, covering the following broad areas:
 - Purpose of the West of England Combined Authority
 - Strategic approach to the region
 - The West of England Combined Authority as a management organisation
 - LEP/business and partners
 - Operating principles and processes
 - Meetings, portfolios and project evaluation
 - Constitution
 - Wider structures including the Joint Committee
 - Progress on the action plan
- 2.4 Following discussion the Committee will want to consider which areas it would

like to focus on for the next phase of the work.

- 2.5 Committee resolved that the emerging action plan should be presented to Audit Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Committee for review and feedback to the Combined Authority Committee. The emerging action plan as presented to the Committee in December is attached at appendix 3.
- 2.6 Audit Committee reviewed the emerging action plan on 2nd March. The report of the Audit committee is attached at appendix 4. Where the points raised by the Audit Committee can be addressed through the report on progress against the emerging action plan, these have been included. Committee will want to consider the more general points raised and the frequency with which it wants Audit Committee to consider progress.
- 2.7 Overview & Scrutiny Committee will have reviewed the emerging action plan on 13th March. As a consequence of the timing of the meeting, it was not possible to include feedback in the body of this report, however the feedback will be included in the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee's statement to the Combined Authority Committee.
- 2.8 Since the December Combined Authority Committee meeting, progress has been made against the emerging action plan. An update on progress against all actions is set out below in Table 1.

Table 1: progress against the emerging Action Plan

Recommendation	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale	March 2023 update
<p>SR1 <i>The Mayor and members of the Combined Authority represented by the Council Leaders, must commit to improving their working relationship and demonstrate that significant progress has been made within a reasonable timeframe to be determined by the Mayor and Combined Authority. This should include a role for independent mediation and the constructive consideration of advice arising from this process (SR1)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders will continue to regularly meet with the Combined Authority Mayor as required to both address any concerns early and to identify opportunities. A programme of activities to agree regional priorities will take place in 2023. This will involve free and frank discussion regarding the allocation of existing resources in the context of new and emerging challenges, such as inflationary pressures, to primarily focus on the delivery of projects. A Regional Priorities workshop which leaders have all agreed to attend is scheduled for January. Board members will be involved at an earlier stage in setting a strategic regional direction Consideration of appropriate attendees (wider than Mayors, Leaders and CEOs) to attend the regional prioritisation workshop will be made (including regional finance officers (S.151) officers, Directors for Infrastructure, and independent voice(s)), to ensure the workshops results in meaningful outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a programme of activities to discuss regional priorities with leaders, senior officers and board members Regional priorities paper to be considered by Combined Authority Committee in March 2023. Timely Committee meetings to be held To allow for maximum participation leaders & senior leaders will be given advance notice of meetings. Agendas and Papers will be issued in good time in advance of meetings taking place. 	<p>March 2023, and Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As agreed at Committee on 9th December, activity to discuss regional priorities has progressed. This has included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayors and Leaders discussion on 20th February that considered priorities, approaches to investment and steps to take in agreeing regional priorities. CEOs will oversee a programme of work focusing on: development of a regional economic strategy to underpin prioritisation; refinement of the regional priorities; the funding landscape and investment options; driving delivery. This programme of work will involve relevant directors, s151s etc and independent voices where appropriate. A forward plan covering all democratic dates for 2023/24 including committee meetings will be presented to the Committee in March for comment with a view to ratification at the AGM in June. Papers for meetings will continue to be issued in line with statutory requirements for public meetings. Individual papers are developed jointly by officers across the UAs and the CA, we are working to bring these together for senior officer consideration at an earlier stage.

Recommendation	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale	March 2023 update
<p>SR2 - <i>A formal protocol should be agreed between member organisations within the Combined Authority to commit to consultation on key proposals, that they should define, at an earlier stage. Combined Authority members should engage effectively in this process, to help mitigate points of contention before they are published and debated in public. This should include a commitment to deliver proposals on a reasonable timetable</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Officers will meet collectively and individually with their counterparts as policies and projects progress, from conception to delivery and evaluation. The Combined Authority will ensure that Cabinet Members from the Unitary Authorities can request briefings with senior CA officers as required. Any existing regular meetings will continue in line with agreed arrangements. An officer delivery board has been established and meets twice a month to review progress on agreed projects and to provide challenge and support to ensure more timely delivery on all projects where relevant. These boards will continue and will report directly to regular joint CEO meetings. This process will be reviewed to further strengthen the board if necessary. To help support driving delivery of key projects, proposals will include a commitment to deliver on a reasonable timetable (agreed by the Committee), which will be included in relevant papers going forward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a programme of activities to discuss regional priorities with leaders, senior officers and board members Regional priorities paper to be considered by Combined Authority Committee in March 2023. Timely Committee meetings to be held To allow for maximum participation Mayors, Leaders & Senior Officers will be given advance notice of all meetings. Agendas and Papers will be issued in good time in advance of all meetings taking place (public and private) to enable proper consideration and informed debate to take place in the meeting). Papers detailing proposals will contain agreed timetables for delivery. A forward plan of decision making for public meetings will be 	<p>March 2023 and ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The actions noted above in relation to progress on SR1 will also contribute to addressing the issues highlighted under SR2. From the beginning of the new committee cycle, the Combined Authority Chief Executive will offer briefings to all Local Authority member portfolio holders in advance of committee meetings. The Programme Delivery Board and infrastructure directors board continue to meet to focus on reviewing agreed projects, providing challenge and support to delivery. A requirement will be added to the template for committee papers from the beginning of the next cycle to outline the timetable on which spending is planned to be undertaken. An 'audit on delivery' will be undertaken to review progress of all the projects and programmes agreed through the Combined Authority to ensure they are on track, that spend is profiled accurately and that the outcomes agreed at the outset are delivered. Going forward, a gateway review process will be implemented on all projects funded through the combined authority and funding will be released in phases subject to successful passing of the gateways.

Recommendation	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale	March 2023 update
		maintained and published.		
<p>SR3 - <i>In future, in all circumstances, including where there is a potential conflict of interest affecting individual statutory officers adequate steps must be taken to ensure the statutory duties of these officers is effectively discharged.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The protocol will be shared with UA Leaders, Chairs of Audit and Scrutiny for comment before being adopted and published. The protocol will be published on the Combined Authority's website and shared with Combined Authority officers. The Combined Authority Monitoring Officer will brief senior officers regarding the implications of the protocol. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the unlikely situation that a similar circumstance arises, the Mayor and Unitary Authority Leaders will be briefed by the Chief Executive on a confidential basis. 	January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Combined Authority Director of Law and Governance has circulated the protocol setting out the action that will be taken in the event of a potential conflict of interest affecting individual statutory officers and this is published on the website Statutory officers are aware of the protocol and its implications. The Statutory Officers of the Combined Authority (Acting interim CEO, Interim s73 and Director of Law and Governance) meet on a monthly basis.
<p>KR1 - <i>The future management structure of the Combined Authority should be reviewed in order to ensure it is fit for purpose in the context of new funding awards and strategic priorities and this must include appropriate consultation and agreement by the CA Committee.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new Senior Leadership Structure of the Combined Authority will be developed in 2023. The Combined Authority will use expert support to determine necessary skills and appropriate structures are in place so as to recruit suitably skilled permanent staff at pace. It will be agreed in line with the Constitution by the West of England Combined Authority Committee Process regarding Senior Officer appointments to be guided by external expert support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new senior leadership structure will be developed by Combined Authority Officers in consultation with expert support (a third party) A new senior leadership structure will be implemented by October 2023 following engagement and consultation with the Constituent member organisations. All Senior Officer roles will have permanent 	New senior structure to be implemented by October 2023.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A schedule of recruitment to senior roles currently filled on an interim basis is underway, supported by external expert support. The Independent peer review will consider the leadership structure of the Combined Authority, and the leadership structure will be reviewed in the light of that. At their January meeting, CA Committee approved an uplift in the CA staffing budget to reflect the significant increase in programmes and delivery required. 10% of the proposed uplift will be withheld to enable further work to be undertaken to assess the relevant need against pressures on services. The remaining funds will be released following the unanimous approval

Recommendation	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale	March 2023 update
		appointments as soon as practicable.		<p>of the Combined Authority Chief Executive and Chief Executives of the Constituent Councils. This work is currently ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An organisation design and workforce strategy is under development and a broad programme of areas of work has been agreed by the Combined Authority Corporate Leadership Team. This will include a focus on a number of aspects including the delivery culture of the organisation. • A Governance Board has been established, chaired by the Interim Director of Resources. The board consists of senior officers across the organisation that have aspects of governance as key parts of their roles. The group will support the CLT (Corporate Leadership Team), and the purpose is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and advise on all aspects of Corporate Governance across the Combined Authority • Ensure that Corporate Governance issues are properly addressed throughout the organisation. • Ensure that the Mayor, Audit Committee, and other politicians have assurance that the Combined Authority are fully addressing Governance Issues. • Communicate awareness of Corporate Governance issues throughout the organisation so that staff act in accordance with key corporate governance issues (for example, health and safety, equalities legislation and financial responsibilities).

Recommendation	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale	March 2023 update
<p>KR2 – <i>The Constitution of the Combined Authority should be revised to define the conditions under which it is acceptable for other officers and members to seek independent legal advice, without reference to the Monitoring Officer and/or Head of Legal Services.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The West of England CA Monitoring Officer will provide wording for the constitution at the next suitable meeting of the Combined Authority Committee (no later than March) in consultation with the Monitoring Officers of the Unitary Authorities. Such a change would require unanimous support of the Mayor and Leaders at a West of England Combined Authority Committee meeting. 	<p>Constitution updated to reflect new protocol.</p>	<p>March 2023 or as soon as is practically possible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A paper will be taken to the Combined Authority Committee meeting in March addressing this action.
<p>IR1 <i>That consideration of relationships with the Chief Executive Group should be incorporated into any relationship development and mediation work undertaken.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Officers will continue to meet collectively and on a 1:1 basis going forward. All Senior officers will work collaboratively and engage in meaningful consultation when developing solutions and proposals to help leaders to mitigate points of contention where possible ahead of Combined Authority Committee meetings. Where possible, matters of contention will be flagged with all senior officers in good time to allow for solutions to be developed ahead of Combined Authority meetings. All Senior Leaders will commit to promote a culture of respect and understanding at all times. Where relationships require support, Senior Leaders will seek mediation at an early stage to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Officers and CEOs will continue to meet regularly at a regional level. Areas of contention will be shared with partners in good time to enable solutions to be developed where possible. Agendas and Papers will be issued in good time in advance of meetings taking place. 	<p>March 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fortnightly CEOs meetings continue to take place to allow for discussion of regional issues. In addition, the acting CEO of the Combined Authority will now have regular 1:1 meetings with the other UA CEOs in their areas. Alongside CEO meetings, a wide range of officer groups are in place to support collaboration and the preparation of papers for CEOs. In particular, regular meetings are in place that bring together: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directors of Infrastructure (weekly informal meetings with a formal meeting on a monthly basis)

Recommendation	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale	March 2023 update
	<p>ensure good working practice continue and solutions can be developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A forward plan of decisions and activities to help with planning / resourcing / engagement for CEOs meeting will be developed. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Directors of Business & Skills (weekly touch base with a longer session every 4 weeks) ○ S151 officers (fortnightly meeting in addition to the other Boards they sit on) ○ other Directors as required (for example through the Programme Review Board which meets monthly) ○ Directors/senior staff leading on environment (bi-monthly meetings but Head of Environment also attends infrastructure Directors monthly meeting)
<p>IR2 <i>That the constitution be reviewed, as previously considered by Combined Authority Members. This should incorporate the new Monitoring Officer protocol but also focuses on the specific ambiguities raised in the recent legal advice including the definition of statutory roles,</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution will be revised to include the new Monitoring Officer protocol. • Regional MOs to meet regularly to discuss any matters regarding the constitution that need addressing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution will be revised to include the new Monitoring Officer protocol and wider issues identified in IR2. 	<p>March 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal review of the constitution will be informed by the outcome of the peer challenge review. • Regional Monitoring Officers meet when necessary, this meeting can be called by any of the Monitoring Officers in the region.

Recommendation	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale	March 2023 update
<p><i>delegated powers, managing conflicts of interest, decisions on all senior staffing matters including restructure and severance. The results should be reported to committee and used alongside the points we have raise basis for revision. There may be value in reviewing other Combined Authority constitutions to optimise the opportunity to improve the document in these areas.</i></p>				
<p>IR3 <i>That the performance reviews of the senior officers be formally recorded, including reasonable steps taken to manage issues and</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal actions put in place to ensure Performance reviews are formally recorded. • Consideration of the GT Auditing Culture report made by the Head of HR in consultation with UA HR leads (and others as relevant), and recommendations for improvement made for consideration by the constituent member CEO group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reviews to be formally recorded. Head of HR to provide confirmation process has been implemented by January. Process for managing senior management performance shared with UA partners. 	<p>January and March 2023 respectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next performance review process for all CA officers is due to take place in the first quarter of the 23/24 financial year. Reporting on the next round will be monitored by the Governance Board. • There is no separate senior management performance policy, those roles are subject to the same policy as all Combined Authority staff.

Recommendation	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale	March 2023 update
<i>provide access to resources to enable skills development as appropriate.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process agreed by March 2023 for the recording and sharing of key organisation performance indicators and information with member organisations relating to organisational culture and health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive staff survey results and feedback at all levels of the organisation. Results shared with CA lead members and CEOs on a regular basis. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Governance Board will agree the KPIs to capture and report on organisational health, processes etc. The peer challenge review will consider issues of the culture of the Combined Authority.
<i>IR4 – That the Monitoring Officer role retains its current seniority at Director level in any future restructure or that sufficient safeguards are implemented to protect the authority and influence of the role.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring Officer to be confirmed at Director Level in any future leadership structure. Any change would require a vote of the West of England Combined Authority Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring Officer role retains its current seniority at Director level in any future restructure. Any change would require a vote of the West of England Combined Authority Committee. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Independent peer review will consider the leadership structure of the Combined Authority.

Consultation

- 3 This report brings together input from the Audit and Overview & Scrutiny committees. The independent peer review process has involved 1:1 confidential interviews with a wide range of regional stakeholders including Leaders, Mayors, CEOs and Directors from the Unitary Authorities and the Combined Authority. As work to implement the emerging action plan continues, political leaders and officers at all levels will be involved.

Risk Management / Assessment

- 4 Failure to address the issues highlighted in the Grant Thornton Audit report will hamper the Combined Authority failing to deliver for the residents of the West of England. It may also impact on the highly successful track record of attracting additional funding from Government for the region.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 5 There are no specific equality implications arising directly from this report at this stage.

Climate Change Implications

- 6 The Combined Authority's Climate Emergency Action Plan has been considered in the production of this report and there are no specific implications at this stage.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Roger Hoare, Head of Environment

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate

- 7 There are no direct financial implications arising directly from this report at this stage. The implementation of the action plan will inevitably have medium term financial implications.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim Director of Infrastructure and Resources

Legal Implications

- 8 There are no legal implications additional to those reported to Committee on 12th December in relation to the Grant Thornton VFM report arising from this report at this stage.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Stephen Gerrard, Interim Director of Law and Governance

Human Resources Implications

- 9 Aside from the HR actions identified in the action plan, there are no further direct HR implications arising from the report at this stage.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Alex Holly, Head of People and

Assets.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Exchange of letters between Metro Mayor and Ministers

Appendix 2 – Terms of reference for independent peer challenge review

Appendix 3 – Emerging action plan as considered by Committee in December 2022

Appendix 4 – Feedback on emerging action plan from Audit committee

West of England Combined Authority Contact:

Report Author	Contact Details
Jess Lee	Jessica.lee@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

ministerial.correspondence@levellingup.gov.uk

9 December 2022

Dear Michael,

Today the West of England combined authority committee met and considered a Best Value Inspection report from our External Auditors Grant Thornton and an Action Plan.

I am pleased to say the meeting made up of myself, and representatives from each of Bristol City Council, Bath and North East Somerset council and South Gloucestershire council unanimously accepted the action plan which was also endorsed by the auditors. The plan was also welcomed by the LEP chair.

My officers have been in discussion with your officials over a number of months in this respect. I welcomed Grant Thornton's report as it will help the areas of improvement I recognise as needing that focus. The Action Plan has had considerable input from all our unitary authorities.

I have also instructed my officers to engage with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) to undertake a peer challenge review in respect of the action plan and its delivery and have asked for the help of both my Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committee Chairs through their formal committees to both challenge constructively and help ensure the delivery of the plan. Both Chairs are from the Unitary Authorities and from different political parties to further support that independence and willingness I have to engage in our improvement journey. I have additionally asked to receive reports quarterly on delivery of the Action Plan and any related emerging issues or changes needed to the 'living' plan to my committee following the reports to both the Audit and Scrutiny Committees. Both Chairs will be asked to speak at the main committee.

The West of England Combined Authority is relatively young and has had much support from your Government and a good relationship with officials from various departments.

We are a region made up of different political parties and that both brings constructive challenge and robust challenge and my role is to ensure it does not boil over that helpful challenge. I have always favoured open public debate as I know many politicians and our residents and business leaders do.

I have attached the report and the Action Plan and my officers will continue that regular engagement with your officials.

Yours ever,

Dan

Dan Norris, Metro Mayor for the West of England

Tel: +44 (0)117 428 6210

3 Rivergate, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EW

Email: mayor@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Mayor Dan Norris

By email only

mayor@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

Lee Rowley MP

*Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Local Government and Building Safety*

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing
and Communities**

Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

24 February 2023

Dear Mayor Norris,

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of State on 9 December 2022 in which you set out the outcome of your External Auditors report and the authority's position on the auditors' findings. This area falls within my portfolio and as such the Secretary of State has asked that I respond.

I welcome your acceptance of the findings of the auditor's response and in particular welcome your commissioning of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) to undertake a peer challenge review. However, you will understand I remain concerned about the scale of challenges the authority faces. The issues around governance, partnership relations and instability within the senior officer team are particularly concerning and need to be addressed quickly.

On 24 January, the government issued Best Value Notices to two authorities, a new approach of engagement and monitoring of authorities of concern. It is in circumstances such as those which WECA find themselves where we will consider if a notice is necessary to ensure the improvements are delivered. I wish to see a robust, wide ranging and timely peer review from SOLACE which both diagnoses the issues in your authority and, where possible, provides assurance on the Action Plan and its delivery that you have developed locally. I will look to the SOLACE review before considering if any further action is necessary.

I encourage you to continue engaging with DLUHC officials, including on the SOLACE review, to provide assurances on the Authority's Action Plan and its delivery. Officials will be in touch to arrange a suitable touchpoint in the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,

LEE ROWLEY MP

Appendix 2

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDEPENDENT PEER CHALLENGE REVIEW

The review will include consideration of:

- The extent to which there is a consistent view of the role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority
- how the CA and its constituent members can improve their ability to set a clear and agreed ambition for the region and their partnership.
- the working relationships and supporting architecture required to enable effective collaboration both between politicians and between chief officers across the CA and its constituent member organisations.
- the role of statutory officers in circumstances when a potential conflict is identified.
- In the light of the above, whether there is sufficient appropriate leadership and capacity to be able to deliver the ambition, objectives and statutory responsibilities of the West of England Combined Authority

The report produced as part of this review will include consideration as to whether the existing action plan resulting from the recent value for money audit report requires any amendment. The action plan sets out the intention to report on progress swiftly including with reports back to the Combined Authority Committee initially at the March meeting to ensure agreement ahead of pushing on with delivery. The fortnightly meeting of CEOs will receive updates on the work as it progresses.

In order to answer these questions, the following areas will be considered:

- the operation, culture and structure of the Combined Authority, and of the constituent Unitary Authorities insofar as it relates to regional partnership working;
- the effectiveness of arrangements in place to support the required collaboration between political and organisational leadership of the Combined Authority and constituent members;
- the capacity and/or capability to provide the Combined Authority with clear and effective strategic direction;
- adequacy and use of resources and the impact of governance on the Combined Authority's ability to deliver best value;
- the appropriateness of the Governance arrangements of the Combined Authority to enable delivery, including the constitution and the schemes of delegation;
- the culture of openness, transparency and trust within and between the officers and members of the Combined Authority Committee and Unitary Councils;
- openness to robust, constructive, high support challenge;

- the effectiveness of working relationships and engagement with partners, including North Somerset.

This work will provide conclusions on the action needed to improve the ability of the CA and its constituent authorities to:

- effectively develop and agree overarching strategies and associated delivery plans for the region
- establish clarity of purpose for what the Combined Authority is there to do and that constituent authorities will agree to provide the landscape, operational freedoms and support the Combined Authority in seeking to achieve
- put the right arrangements in place to enable positive collaboration between the Combined Authority organisation and constituent authorities
- support Combined Authority committee members to provide clear and effective leadership and direction for the benefit of the region
- improve the capability of the Combined Authority to be an effective organisation, working as part of a broader local system

Appendix 3 - Action Plan for consideration by West of England Combined Authority Committee Dec 2022

Recommendation	Accepted	Issues to be addressed	Response	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale
SR1 <i>The Mayor and members of the Combined Authority represented by the Council Leaders, must commit to improving their working relationship and demonstrate that significant progress has been made within a reasonable timeframe to be determined by the Mayor and Combined Authority. This should include a role for independent mediation and the constructive consideration of advice arising from this process (SR1)</i>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture & behaviour • Mediation & Relationships • Communication • Internal Decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recognise there have been strained relationships. Work is ongoing to promote greater understanding among West of England partners. • This is part of a longer-term ongoing conversation which will require engagement at all levels between the Combined Authority and Unitary Authorities and LEP as we develop, improve and embed new working practices to adapt and reflect changing circumstances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders will continue to regularly meet with the Combined Authority Mayor as required to both address any concerns early and to identify opportunities. • A programme of activities to agree regional priorities will take place in 2023. This will involve free and frank discussion regarding the allocation of existing resources in the context of new and emerging challenges, such as inflationary pressures, to primarily focus on the delivery of projects. A Regional Priorities workshop which leaders have all agreed to attend is scheduled for January. • Board members will be involved at an earlier stage in setting a strategic regional direction • Consideration of appropriate attendees (wider than Mayors, Leaders and CEOs) to attend the regional prioritisation workshop will be made (including regional finance officers (S.151) officers, Directors for Infrastructure, and independent voice(s)), to ensure the workshops results in meaningful outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a programme of activities to discuss regional priorities with leaders, senior officers and board members • Regional priorities paper to be considered by Combined Authority Committee in March 2023. • Timely Committee meetings to be held • To allow for maximum participation leaders & senior leaders will be given advance notice of meetings. • Agendas and Papers will be issued in good time in advance of meetings taking place. 	March 2023, and Ongoing

Recommendation	Accepted	Issues to be addressed	Response	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale
<p>SR2 - A formal protocol should be agreed between member organisations within the Combined Authority to commit to consultation on key proposals, that they should define, at an earlier stage. Combined Authority members should engage effectively in this process, to help mitigate points of contention before they are published and debated in public. This should include a commitment to deliver proposals on a reasonable timetable</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working practices Culture & solution development Communication Internal decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior officers in the Combined Authority and Unitary Authorities play a key role in finding solutions to contentious problems all year round. We value this important work, and we will ensure this is standard practice as a move forward. We recognise that constructive relationships are as important as processes. All West of England partners will commit to meaningful consultation when developing solutions and proposals to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Officers will meet collectively and individually with their counterparts as policies and projects progress, from conception to delivery and evaluation. The Combined Authority will ensure that Cabinet Members from the Unitary Authorities can request briefings with senior CA officers as required. Any existing regular meetings will continue in line with agreed arrangements. An officer delivery board has been established and meets twice a month to review progress on agreed projects and to provide challenge and support to ensure more timely delivery on all projects where relevant. These boards will continue and will report directly to regular joint CEO meetings. This process will be reviewed to further strengthen the board if necessary. To help support driving delivery of key projects, proposals will include a commitment to deliver on a reasonable timetable (agreed by the Committee), which will be included in relevant papers going forward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a programme of activities to discuss regional priorities with leaders, senior officers and board members Regional priorities paper to be considered by Combined Authority Committee in March 2023. Timely Committee meetings to be held To allow for maximum participation Mayors, Leaders & Senior Officers will be given advance notice of all meetings. Agendas and Papers will be issued in good time in advance of all meetings taking place (public and private) to enable proper consideration and informed debate to take place in the meeting.) Papers detailing proposals will contain agreed timetables for delivery. A forward plan of decision making for public meetings will be maintained and published. 	March 2023 and ongoing

Recommendation	Accepted	Issues to be addressed	Response	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale
			<p>help leaders to mitigate points of contention where possible ahead of Combined Authority Committee meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further work to find solutions to operational matters will continue with a view to embedding new working practices which will be developed with all partners. • Meaningful engagement with Combined Authority Scrutiny and Audit Committees will continue ahead of CA committee meetings to ensure 			

Recommendation	Accepted	Issues to be addressed	Response	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale
			constructive feedback on key proposals.			
SR3 - <i>In future, in all circumstances, including where there is a potential conflict of interest affecting individual statutory officers adequate steps must be taken to ensure the statutory duties of these officers is effectively discharged.</i>	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VfM Communication Transparency Working practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A protocol has been prepared and shared earlier this year with the Auditor and Chair of Audit, which has been designed to manage the rare cases of conflict of interest by statutory officers. This is designed to reflect the unusual circumstances that in a small authority there may not always be another employee able to discharge the role of deputy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The protocol will be shared with UA Leaders, Chairs of Audit and Scrutiny for comment before being adopted and published. The protocol will be published on the Combined Authority's website and shared with Combined Authority officers. The Combined Authority Monitoring Officer will brief senior officers regarding the implications of the protocol. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the unlikely situation that a similar circumstance arises, the Mayor and Unitary Authority Leaders will be briefed by the Chief Executive on a confidential basis. 	January 2023
KR1 - <i>The future management structure of the Combined Authority should</i>	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership Organisation Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising that several senior leadership posts are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new Senior Leadership Structure of the Combined Authority will be developed in 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new senior leadership structure will be developed by Combined Authority Officers in consultation with expert support (a third party) 	New senior structure to be implemented by October 2023.

Recommendation	Accepted	Issues to be addressed	Response	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale
<p><i>be reviewed in order to ensure it is fit for purpose in the context of new funding awards and strategic priorities and this must include appropriate consultation and agreement by the CA Committee.</i></p>			<p>currently vacant and interims are in post, there is an opportunity to develop a new Senior Leadership Structure of the Combined Authority which will be developed in 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This structure will reflect the changing funding landscape which has emerged in recent years and will meet the requirements of our strategic priorities. We recognise the need for senior leadership stability and will aim to complete this process by Autumn 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Combined Authority will use expert support to determine necessary skills and appropriate structures are in place so as to recruit suitably skilled permanent staff at pace. It will be agreed in line with the Constitution by the West of England Combined Authority Committee Process regarding Senior Officer appointments to be guided by external expert support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new senior leadership structure will be implemented by October 2023 following engagement and consultation with the Constituent member organisations. All Senior Officer roles will have permanent appointments as soon as practicable. 	

Recommendation	Accepted	Issues to be addressed	Response	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale
<p>KR2 - <i>The Constitution of the Combined Authority should be revised to define the conditions under which it is acceptable for other officers and members to seek independent legal advice, without reference to the Monitoring Officer and/or Head of Legal Services.</i></p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working practices Internal decision making VfM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Constitution of the Combined Authority will be revised to define the conditions under which it is acceptable for other officers and members to seek independent legal advice, without reference to the Monitoring Officer and/or Head of Legal Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The West of England CA Monitoring Officer will provide wording for the constitution at the next suitable meeting of the Combined Authority Committee (no later than March) in consultation with the Monitoring Officers of the Unitary Authorities. Such a change would require unanimous support of the Mayor and Leaders at a West of England Combined Authority Committee meeting. 	Constitution updated to reflect new protocol.	March 2023 or as soon as is practically possible
<p>IR1 <i>That consideration of relationships with the Chief Executive Group should be incorporated into any relationship development and mediation work undertaken.</i></p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture & behaviour Mediation & Relationships Communication Internal Decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is underway to establish longer term working practices among all senior officers which embed a culture of mutual understanding and constructive working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Officers will continue to meet collectively and on a 1:1 basis going forward. All Senior officers will work collaboratively and engage in meaningful consultation when developing solutions and proposals to help leaders to mitigate points of contention where possible ahead of Combined Authority Committee meetings. Where possible, matters of contention will be flagged with all senior officers in good time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Officers and CEOs will continue to meet regularly at a regional level. Areas of contention will be shared with partners in good time to enable solutions to be developed where possible. Agendas and Papers will be issued in good time in advance of meetings taking place. 	March 2023

Recommendation	Accepted	Issues to be addressed	Response	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that constructive relationships are as important as processes. Staff survey results to be reported back to committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to allow for solutions to be developed ahead of Combined Authority meetings. All Senior Leaders will commit to promote a culture of respect and understanding at all times. Where relationships require support, Senior Leaders will seek mediation at an early stage to ensure good working practice continue and solutions can be developed. A forward plan of decisions and activities to help with planning / resourcing / engagement for CEOs meeting will be developed. 		
<p>IR2 <i>That the constitution be reviewed, as previously considered by Combined Authority Members. This should incorporate the new Monitoring Officer protocol but also focuses on the specific ambiguities raised in the recent legal advice including the definition of statutory roles, delegated</i></p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitution Working practices Internal decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Constitution will be revised to include the new Monitoring Officer protocol MO will discuss this and any further changes to the document in consultation with the Unitary Authority MOs, which would require unanimous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Constitution will be revised to include the new Monitoring Officer protocol. Regional MOs to meet regularly to discuss any matters regarding the constitution that need addressing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Constitution will be revised to include the new Monitoring Officer protocol and wider issues identified in IR2. 	March 2023

Recommendation	Accepted	Issues to be addressed	Response	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale
<p><i>powers, managing conflicts of interest, decisions on all senior staffing matters including restructure and severance. The results should be reported to committee and used alongside the points we have raise basis for revision. There may be value in reviewing other Combined Authority constitutions to optimise the opportunity to improve the document in these areas.</i></p>			<p>support of the Mayor and Leaders at a West of England Combined Authority Committee meeting.</p>			
<p>IR3 <i>That the performance reviews of the senior officers be formally recorded, including reasonable steps taken to manage issues and provide access to resources to</i></p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance • Working practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The annual performance reviews of all senior officers will be formally recorded, including reasonable steps to manage issue and provide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal actions put in place to ensure Performance reviews are formally recorded. • Consideration of the GT Auditing Culture report made by the Head of HR in consultation with UA HR leads (and others as relevant), and recommendations for improvement made for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reviews to be formally recorded. Head of HR to provide confirmation process has been implemented by January. Process for managing senior management performance shared with UA partners. • Positive staff survey results and feedback at all levels of the organisation. Results shared with CA lead members and CEOs on a regular basis. 	January and March 2023 respectively

Recommendation	Accepted	Issues to be addressed	Response	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale
<p><i>enable skills development as appropriate.</i></p>			<p>access to support and resources to enable skills to develop as appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing GT 'Auditing Culture' Report: Auditing Culture and to consider how best practice can be implemented in the Combined Authority. • Organisational Performance Reports to be developed and shared with all CA partners, which would include staff survey results, turnover, KPIs. • Process for managing senior officer performance to be shared with UA partners. 	<p>consideration by the constituent member CEO group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process agreed by March 2023 for the recording and sharing of key organisation performance indicators and information with member organisations relating to organisational culture and health 		

Recommendation	Accepted	Issues to be addressed	Response	Action	Measure of outcomes	Timescale
<p>IR4 – <i>That the Monitoring Officer role retains its current seniority at Director level in any future restructure or that sufficient safeguards are implemented to protect the authority and influence of the role.</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Organisation structure • Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Monitoring Officer will remain as a Director role in any future senior leadership structure which will be considered by the Combined Authority Committee. Any change would require a vote of the West of England Combined Authority Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Officer to be confirmed at Director Level in any future leadership structure. Any change would require a vote of the West of England Combined Authority Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Officer role retains its current seniority at Director level in any future restructure. Any change would require a vote of the West of England Combined Authority Committee. 	<p>Ongoing</p>

Report from Audit Committee

WECA Audit Committee wish to draw the following matters to the attention of the WECA Committee.

1 VFM report

These comments are a summary of discussions at Audit Committee, representing views supported by all members from all political parties. We preface these remarks by emphasising that all members want WECA to succeed and recognise how important its role is, which is why we want it to work effectively.

Members want to see WECA benchmarked against other combined authorities. We understand that political differences will occur but we expect them to be managed

In December Audit Committee were briefed on the action plan in response to the VFM audit report.

It was indicated that the action plan would be evolving and developing. However, on 2nd March we were presented with the same plan with no updates or improvements. In December we were told that the Leaders were planning a meeting in January, to deal with the co-working issues and establish how they could improve their working. We understand that meeting eventually took place in late February.

We welcome the ToR for the Solace Peer Challenge but note that these issues were those identified by audit and Scrutiny meetings over a year ago.

If we are to be updated on the action plan (which we expect on a regular basis), we would like to know what has actually happened

rather than have received a document that has not changed since it was tabled at the beginning of December

- For SR1(improve working relationship), we have seen no evidence that this is happening if it is to happen by march, why is there no detail of the programme of activities and the Regional Priorities
- For SR2,(commit to protocol to consult) we note that in spite of the VFM report the last WECA Committee involved a 100-minute adjournment for leaders to agree on the budget. We reiterate that these breaks indicate a failure of commitment to work together and are damaging to the public and governmental perception of the Authority.
- for SR3,(statutory officer conflict of interests) what is the status of the protocol. Has it been circulated and published by January 2023
- for KR1 (future management structure)is this on course for October 23 if the Employment Committee cannot function between March and May
- KR2.(re independent legal advice) “As soon as is practically possible” is not specific enough and does not acknowledge the seriousness of the weaknesses. There is no reason why this has not been actioned
- IR1. (chief execs working relationship). Who is checking independently with UA senior officers that this is working
- IR2(constitution) as more and more flaws in the constitution become apparent what action has been taken. Has anything happened on the Constitution? This is not specific enough and does not acknowledge the seriousness of the many issues. This is important enough for a detailed and specific timeline to be established for addressing each area of weakness.

- IR3.(senior officer performance reviews This was presented to audit Committee with no assurance from the Head of HR. Has it been formally recorded

Audit Committee wants to see detail to confirm that the actions referred to in the Action Plan and happening and are effective in achieving the required outcome.

We would hope each member of the Committee can commit to working together to resolve differences in advance of public meetings, so that any amendments to papers can be agreed and published in such a way that members of the public and Councillors can understand what has changed from the originally produced papers.

Without categoric confirmation that the actions are happening and are effective and without all individual Committee members commitment, the action plan is only an attempt to placate auditors and audit committee.

One of our members summed this up succinctly “Message from Audit Committee should be: sort out matters of disagreement ahead of the meetings and present a united front on the day”



REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

DATE: 17 MARCH 2023

REPORT TITLE: COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE CONSTITUTIONAL UPDATE

DIRECTOR: INTERIM DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

AUTHOR: STEPHEN GERRARD, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Purpose of Report

- 1 To make changes to the Monitoring Officer's delegations to address the Auditors concerns identified in the VFM report of November 2022.

Recommendation

- It is recommended that an additional paragraph 3.8 (e) is added to the functions of the Monitoring Officer in the Authorities constitution:

(e) Combined Authority Officers and Members are prohibited from obtaining legal advice without the written agreement of the Combined Authority Monitoring Officer. All legal services will be commissioned in accordance with arrangements settled by the Monitoring Officer from time to time. These arrangements will be set out in a legal services protocol which will be published on the authority's internet.

Reasons for recommendation

- To improve governance and to comply with the Key Recommendation 2 in the Grant Thornton VFM report on governance published in November 2022.

Background / Issues for Consideration

- 2 The recent Grant Thornton VFM report on governance published in November 2022 made recommendations including Key Recommendation 2.

“KR2 The Constitution of the Combined Authority should be revised to define the conditions under which it is acceptable for other officers and members to seek independent legal advice, without reference to the Monitoring Officer and/or Head of Legal Services.”

2.1 The current constitution provides:

3.8 Representing the West of England Combined Authority in the courts, tribunals or at public inquiries

(a) To authorise the institution, defence, withdrawal or compromise of any civil claims or legal proceedings, and or criminal proceedings, in consultation with the relevant chief officer, except where power to institute proceedings is delegated to specific officers.

(b) To appear personally or authorise officers (or agents) of the Combined Authority to appear on the Combined Authority’s behalf in court proceedings or at any tribunal or public or local inquiry.

(c) To engage counsel (or, where appropriate, others with suitable rights of audience) to represent the Combined Authority at any proceedings.

(d) To defend and settle (subject to consultation with the relevant chief officer and the Head of HR) any Employment Tribunal proceedings, except where any cases involve policy or are of particular sensitivity, when decisions are subject to consultation with the appropriate Committee Chair

2.2 While this goes some way to confirming the role of the Monitoring Officer in obtaining legal advice it is recommended that an additional paragraph (e) is added

(e) Combined Authority Officers and Members are prohibited from obtaining legal advice without the written agreement of the Combined Authority Monitoring Officer. All legal services will be commissioned in accordance with arrangements settled by the Monitoring Officer from time to time. These arrangements will be set out in a legal services protocol which will be published on the authority’s internet.

2.3 While legal advice is currently commissioned in accordance arrangements agreed by the Monitoring Officer this will codify the practice. The Committee is asked to agree this amendment to the Monitoring Officer’s delegations in the constitution.

Risk Management / Assessment

3 This recommendation will help avoid the risk that legal advice is commissioned contrary to the wider interest of the authority.

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where

appropriate

4 None.

Legal Implications

5 As set out above.

Climate Change Implications

6 None.

Human Resources Implications

7 None.

Background papers

None.

West of England Combined Authority Contact:

Report Author	Contact Details
Stephen Gerrard	DirectorLegal@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

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