

West of England Combined Authority
West of England Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 22 September 2022, Times Not Specified
Oak Hall, Bradley Stoke Town Council, The Jubilee Centre, Savages Wood Road, Bradley Stoke,
South Gloucestershire, BS32 8HL
70 Redcliff Street, Bristol, BS1 6AL

Present:

Cllr Winston Duguid, Bath and North East
Somerset
Cllr Hal MacFie, Bath and North East Somerset
Council
Cllr Ed Plowden, Bristol City Council

Cllr Brenda Massey, Bristol City Council
Cllr Steve Smith, Bristol City Council
Cllr John Ashe, South Gloucestershire Council

Officers In Attendance:

Richard Ennis, Interim Director of Investment and
Corporate Services
Stephen Gerrard, Interim Director of Legal and
Democratic Services
Alistair Kirk, Interim Director of Infrastructure

Roger Hoare, Head of Environment
Selonge Russell, Head of Finance and
Procurement
Pete Davis, Head of Grant Management and
Assurance

Apologies:

Cllr Geoff Gollop, Bristol City Council
Cllr Brian Allinson, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Tristan Clark, Bristol City Council

Cllr Steve Pearce, Bristol City Council
Cllr Huw James, North Somerset Council

Minutes

It was noted that the meeting was short of the eight members required to be present to be quorate.
The Interim Director of Legal and Democratic Services advised the Committee that the meeting
could continue as no formal decisions were being made.

The meeting had been moved from its original meeting date of Monday 19 September 2022 - the
day of the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

1	Welcome and Evacuation Procedure The Evacuation Procedure was noted.
2	Apologies for absence Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Brian Allinson (South Gloucestershire Council), Cllr Tristan Clark (Bristol City Council), Cllr Geoff Gollop (Bristol City Council) and Cllr Steve Pearce (Bristol City Council). Cllr Huw James (North Somerset Council) had also indicated that he was unable to attend. Cllr Mark Weston (Bristol City Council) attended the meeting as substitute for Cllr Geoff Gollop).
3	Declarations of Interest under the Localism Act There were no declarations of interest declared.
4	Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2022 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
5	Items from the public (questions; statements; petitions) Two questions had been received from one member of the public in advance of the meeting. These questions and replies have been published on the Authority's website and had been circulated.

In addition three statements had been received from members of the public in advance of the meeting. No members of the public attended the meeting to submit their statements in person. The statements had been published on the Authority's website and had been circulated.

The Metro Mayor Dan Norris attended the meeting and a summary of the discussion was as follows:

- The Committee had expressed their concern over the level of service on local buses. Metro Mayor Dan Norris stated that there are a number of factors, including commercial companies making decisions that could not be influenced. He warned that it may be a tough winter and spring before things settled down, and additional monies would come through in April 2023. There was also a shortage of drivers and high levels of inflation within the industry. However, a fares package had been launched which he hoped would encourage more people to use the bus services;
- The Committee asked why there had been no discussion about bus services at the recent Transport Board and cited this as an example where they did not think things had been working properly as this Board's remit was too wide. The Metro Mayor stated that he hoped that politicians would lead the agenda rather than officers and to interpret officers' advice as necessary. The Metro Mayor was urged to 'over manage' this particular issue;
- The Committee welcomed that a new provider may have been found for supported bus services. The Metro Mayor urged caution and stated that he would look at all possible options available including those at other Combined Authorities. He acknowledged that First Bus were working hard and putting in considerable effort to recruit additional drivers but he urged that women, students and other communities could be targeted more in the recruitment drive. Councillors were keen to distribute these recruitment leaflets at surgeries;
- The Committee asked whether drivers' wages had been benchmarked against other areas and cities. The Metro Mayor stated that he felt that the West of England had a lower per capita spend than some other areas such as Greater Manchester or Merseyside. Some other areas had precepts which raised additional funds;
- The Metro Mayor was awaiting further details on anticipated government announcements on creation of additional Enterprise Zones and Freeports;

The Committee thanked the Metro Mayor for his attendance at the meeting.

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Review of items for 23 September 2022 West of England Combined Authority Committee

The Committee discussed the reports due to be considered by the West of England Combined Authority Committee at its meeting on 23 September 2022. These comments were collated and circulated to the Committee in advance of its meeting on 23 September 2022. The comments are attached.

Monday, 23 January 2023, 10.00am, TBC