

DRAFT

Minutes of the West of England Combined Authority Committee Reconvened meeting of the adjourned meeting - 12 December 2023, Thursday, 14 December 2023

Members Present:

Cllr Kevin Guy, Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Claire Young, South Gloucestershire Council

Officers Present:

Richard Ennis, Interim Chief Executive
Daniel Dickinson, Interim Director of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Rachel Musson, Strategic Director of Resources (Section 73 Officer)

1	<p>EVACUATION PROCEDURE</p> <p>The evacuation procedure was noted.</p>
2	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>No formal apologies had been received prior to the meeting.</p>
3	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011</p> <p>No declarations of interest were declared under the Localism Act 2011.</p>
4	<p>UNLAWFUL EXPENDITURE REPORT</p> <p>The meeting was reconvened following adjournments on 1 & 12 December 2023. Cllr Guy was in the Chair. The following additional persons were present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Claire Young. <p>Also present was the Chair of the Authority’s Audit Committee, Cllr Geoff Gollop, who was invited to address the meeting on this item. The comments received from the Audit Committee had been published and circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Interim Monitoring Officer introduced the report which sought the Committee’s view on the report relating to the unlawful expenditure.</p> <p>The Committee noted the concerns expressed by the public at the Extraordinary Committee held on the 1 December 2023 and requested that the Interim Chief Executive provide the costs of the investigation and additional meetings, to the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee expressed the view that the expenditure was clearly unlawful for the reasons set out in the report. However, it was not content to pass a formal resolution to that effect because it felt very strongly that a representative from Bristol City Council should have attended the meeting to contribute to the debate and vote.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>That no formal finding on unlawfulness be made and the Head of Paid Service be directed to:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Invite the Authority’s external auditors to carefully consider the way in which this matter has proceeded, with particular reference to the existing statutory recommendations. ii) Implement a code of practice or protocol to be followed in all mayoral marketing and communications activity. iii) Carry on with the implementation of the corrective measures set out in the report and report progress on the same back to the Audit Committee. iv) Take a line by line report to the Audit Committee on spend against the mayoral budget in the 22/23 and 23/24 financial years in order to assist and inform the code of practice/protocol referred to in paragraph (ii) above and to inform organisational learning for the future. <p>Signed:</p>

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