

## Minutes - West of England Combined Authority WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 27 February 2019, 10:45am  
The Writing Room, Bristol City Hall, College Green, Bristol

### Present:

Cllr Stephen Clarke (Chair), Bristol City Council	Cllr Brenda Massey, Bristol City Council
Cllr Tim Ball, Bath & North East Somerset Council	Cllr Mhairi Threlfall, Bristol City Council
Cllr Liz Richardson, Bath & North East Somerset Council	Cllr Pat Hockey, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Geoff Gollop, Bristol City Council	Cllr Katherine Morris, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Carole Johnson, Bristol City Council	Cllr Robert Griffin, South Gloucestershire Council (as substitute for Cllr Brian Allinson)

### North Somerset Members present:

Cllr Chris Blades	Cllr Marcia Pepperall (on behalf of Cllr Charles Cave)
Cllr James Tonkin (on behalf of Cllr Donald Davies)	

### Officers in attendance:

Shahzia Daya, Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Patricia Greer, Chief Executive
Ian Hird, Democratic Services & Scrutiny Manager	Malcolm Coe, Section 151 Officer
Stephen Bashford, Head of Business and Skills	David Carter, Director of Infrastructure
	Lynda Bird, Head of Performance, Planning & Projects

### Apologies:

Cllr Brian Allinson, South Gloucestershire Council    Cllr Donald Davies, North Somerset Council

## Minutes

1	<b>EVACUATION PROCEDURE</b>  The evacuation procedure was set out.
2	<b>MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE</b>  It was reported that Cllr Mhairi Threlfall had replaced Cllr Steve Pearce as a member of the Committee. The Chair welcomed her to the meeting.
3	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  An apology for absence had been received from Cllr Brian Allinson. Cllr Robert Griffin attended as his substitute.  Cllr James Tonkin, North Somerset Council attended on behalf of Cllr Donald Davies. Cllr Marcia Pepperall, North Somerset Council, attended the meeting on behalf of Cllr Charles Cave.

4	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
5	<p><b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2019 were agreed as a correct record subject to the statement made to the Joint Committee by the Chair on the Energy Strategy being included as an appendix to the minutes. (An additional paragraph was suggested subsequent to the meeting and agreed upon. These revised minutes were published on the authority's website).</p>
6	<p><b>ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (PETITIONS, STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS)</b></p> <p>Three statements had been received from members of the public as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. David Redgewell – public funding for bus services</li> <li>2. Christina Biggs – transport issues</li> <li>3. David Redgewell – light rail</li> </ol> <p>David Redgewell attended the meeting and addressed the Committee for three minutes on each of his statements.</p> <p>In response to a point raised by Cllr Ball, the Chair agreed that an update on the bus strategy could be considered as an item for the committee's future work programme.</p> <p>One question had been received as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cllr Pat Rooney, South Gloucestershire Council – meeting venues</li> </ol> <p>The statements, question and the reply were made available on the authority's website.</p>
7	<p><b>CHAIR'S BUSINESS</b></p> <p>The Chair asked that Cllr Geoff Gollop raise an issue under Chair's business.</p> <p>Cllr Gollop stated that the A4018 consultation had been carried out using a form with a TravelWest Logo on the reverse. He asked who owned the TravelWest logo and therefore who was responsible for the quality control checking process on these types of consultation.</p> <p>It was requested that Cllr Gollop receive a formal update to this query in writing. Cllr Massey asked that any response be circulated to all members of the Committee.</p>
8	<p><b>ENERGY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT – UPDATE</b></p> <p>The Committee received an update, for information, on the position regarding the development of the West of England Energy Strategy.</p> <p>A report seeking approval for the basis of a LEP West of England Energy Strategy had been submitted to the West of England Joint Committee at its meeting on 15 February 2019. In line with the decision taken at that meeting, more detailed action planning and development work would now be taking place. Regular update reports would be brought to the WECA Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b> That the report be noted.</p>

9	<p><b>COMBINED AUTHORITY BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE</b></p> <p>Lynda Bird, Head of Performance, Planning and Projects, submitted a report updating the Committee on progress in delivering the 2018/19 business plan and presenting the West of England Combined Authority’s Business Plan for 2019/20.</p> <p>The report stated that the West of England Combined Authority 2018/19 business plan was agreed by the WECA Committee and the Joint Committee at their meetings on 1 June 2018. A progress report for the period June-August 2018 had been presented to the WECA Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee in October 2018. Appendix 1 to this report presented a progress report for the period October-December 2018. The Business Plan covering activity for 2018/19 had been refreshed in parallel with the 2019-20 budget planning and was attached at Appendix 2.</p> <p>A final report on the 2018/19 Business Plan would be prepared for the annual general meeting in May 2019. The 2019/20 Business Plan would need to be informed by the Local Industrial Strategy. The target date for completion of this, including sign-off by the Secretary of State, was summer 2019. The business plan would be reviewed and updated as appropriate on completion of the Local Industrial Strategy.</p> <p>During the discussion, the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was asked which were the 20 ‘hub schools’ mentioned in the report. Lynda Bird would circulate the list;</li> <li>• In response to a question it was reported that this was not a publicly consulted plan;</li> <li>• Work was underway to develop an Equalities Framework for WECA and a consultant would be appointed to carry out this work;</li> <li>• The Committee asked whether more detail could be provided in future updates on some of the projects, such as 5G;</li> <li>• West of England’s Scale Up Enabler initiative had been highlighted as “a role model to emulate” in the latest annual report on the UK’s scale-ups. It was queried whether the Committee could pick up anything specific on this matter and the Chair asked for a briefing on this particular matter. It was noted that a website would be set up which would include an interactive map;</li> <li>• It was also asked whether more detail could be provided on the land acquisition fund;</li> <li>• The Low Carbon Challenge Fund had just been awarded a grant;</li> <li>• It was felt that the 2019/20 Business Plan lacked “smart” objectives/goals and timelines and needed further details. Lynda Bird replied that the document was aspirational and covered ‘in-year’ goals;</li> <li>• The Committee requested that the West of England Mayor Tim Bowles and/or the leaders of the relevant authorities be asked to attend at least one meeting of the WECA Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee per year to set out the ambitions of the authority and be scrutinised thereon, or alternatively an away day or other such event, jointly held with the Audit Committee if need be;</li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed: That the position be noted.</b></p>
10	<p><b>METROWEST PROGRAMME UPDATE</b></p> <p>David Carter, Director of Infrastructure, introduced a report that provided an update on the progress of the MetroWest programme. The previous update had been provided for the Committee at its meeting on 23 January 2019.</p>

The report stated that, as work had been ongoing in relation to key deliverables, there was limited change to report at this stage. The report had therefore focussed on confirming key dates and providing a summary of responses to issues raised at the previous meeting. A more detailed update would be provided at the next scheduled meeting in May 2019.

The following points were raised:

- It was reported that discussions with government were ongoing regarding any potential gap in the funding for the Portishead Line and some further news should be available in the next couple of months;
- In respect of the Yate turnback it was reported that it had to remain an option until it was known how the franchisee would proceed. More details should be known by June/July 2019. It was noted that the proposed turnbacks had enough capacity but may not be needed. The business cases would be updated as necessary;
- Ashton Station would be included in a future programme;
- The overall capacity at Henbury would be determined in the planning application although it may be part of a wider development including the Arena at some point;
- It was confirmed that any extension would be stopping at the proposed station at Charfield;
- David Carter would brief Cllr Gollop on the A4018 issues outside of the meeting.

**Agreed: That the update on the MetroWest project be noted.**

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#### **METROBUS PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Pete Woodhouse, Metrobus Integration Manager, Bristol City Council, gave an update on the progress of the Metrobus programme. The main updates were as follows:

- Service M1 still had some infrastructure improvements including the installation of one bus stop (northbound at Harry Stoke) which was expected to be installed by the end of March 2019 and five additional iPoints, four of which would be installed by the end of February 2019;
- Service M3 had increased its frequency at peak times, with two of the four peak hour journeys providing a fast service from Emersons Green to the City Centre (not calling at UWE Frenchay campus). The change of frequency at UWE Frenchay would be offset by the M1;
- Service M2 (Long Ashton P&R to City Centre) used the Guided Busway which was now being shared with the A1 Airport Flyer Service;
- There were two Metrobus routes without a commercial offer at present: Hengrove to City Centre via South Bristol Link and Emersons Green to Bristol Parkway. Discussions with operators were continuing;
- Usage of the three routes was growing with 276,927 journeys made in January 2019 across the three services;
- Updates on ticketing and punctuality were also contained in the report.

The following points were made during the discussion of this item:

- In terms of usage statistics, Pete Woodhouse stated that some information being requested was being classed by the operators as 'commercially sensitive' but it was hoped that more information could be provided in the future;
- It was noted that initial indications were that the Metrobus had had limited impact on existing journeys. However, Metrobus should be having reliable journey times. The standard deviation of journey times was not currently available but should be made available shortly;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Metrobus was designed to look to any potential major housing developments. There was also a Rapid Transport Corridor which would form part of the wider bus strategy;</li><li>• A query was raised as to whether the Ashton stop would be moved closer to Ashton Gate Stadium. Pete Woodhouse would report back;</li><li>• It was an established principle that Metrobus services be delivered on a commercial basis with services run without subsidy from local authorities.</li></ul> <p><b>Agreed: That the update on the Metrobus programme be noted.</b></p>
12	<p><b>DEVOLVED ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET UPDATE</b></p> <p>Stephen Bashford, Head of Business and Skills, introduced a report which provided an update on the authority's progress in relation to the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB). The report noted the significant reduction in the authority's AEB allocation for the 2019/20 academic year.</p> <p>The progress report stated that for the 2019/20 academic year, the authority would determine which providers to fund (and how much) using a grant funding application process. This process was triggered on 21 January 2019 and the window for applications would remain open until 3 March 2019. It was reported at the meeting that one application had already been received with more expected before the deadline. Around 180 existing providers had been contacted as well as some independents. It was also reported that any underspend in the future would not have to be returned to Government but could be used for other purposes.</p> <p>The authority had been notified that its AEB allocation for 2019/20 academic year was £14.7m. This reflected an underspend by the existing provider base during the previous academic year. A meeting had been arranged with senior officials at the Department for Education (DfE) to raise concerns regarding this allocation. It was felt that around £17.5m would be needed for an effective service.</p> <p>The start of the devolved delivery would begin on 1 August 2019 with the first year having a transitional arrangement.</p> <p>The following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It was suggested that hard to reach groups should be targeted through, for example, mother and toddler groups where some may have fallen out of education too early without getting the requisite 5 GCSEs. It was acknowledged that local councillors were using their connections;</li><li>• It was requested that a more detailed report be brought to the Committee at a later date after the bidding process had ended;</li><li>• There would be an opportunity to develop a wider strategy following the interim/transitional period;</li></ul> <p><b>Agreed: That the progress in relation to devolved AEB be noted.</b></p>