

West of England Combined Authority WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 12 June 2019, 10:30am
The Pavilion, 1 Hannover Quay, Harbourside, Bristol, BS1 5EJ
3 Rivergate, Bristol BS1 6ER

Present:

Cllr Brian Allinson, South Gloucestershire Council	Cllr Carole Johnson, Bristol City Council
Cllr James Arrowsmith, South Gloucestershire Council	Cllr Hal MacFie, Bath and North East Somerset Council
Cllr Stephen Clarke, Bristol City Council	Cllr Jo Sergeant, Bristol City Council (as substitute for Cllr Brenda Massey)
Cllr Winston Duguid, Bath and North East Somerset	Cllr Mhairi Threlfall, Bristol City Council
Cllr Gary Hopkins, Bristol City Council	Cllr Mark Weston, Bristol City Council (as substitute for Cllr Geoff Gollop)

Officers In Attendance:

Patricia Greer, Chief Executive	Ian Hird, Scrutiny Manager
Shahzia Daya, Director of Legal Services	Tim Milgate, Democratic Services Officer
Malcolm Coe, Director of Finance	
Stephen Bashford, Head of Business and Skills	
David Carter, Director of Infrastructure	

Apologies:

Cllr Geoff Gollop, Bristol City Council (Cllr Mark Weston attended as substitute)	Cllr Brenda Massey, Bristol City Council (Cllr Jo Sergeant attended as substitute)
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Minutes

This was the first meeting of the WECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in Municipal Year 2019/20 and the Scrutiny Officer, Ian Hird, introduced the items up to Item 3 (Election of Chair)

1	EVACUATION PROCEDURE The evacuation procedure was set out.
2	MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE - TO NOTE Following the recent elections in Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire there had been several changes to the Committee's membership compared to 2018/19. In addition, there had also been recent elections in North Somerset and three new members had been appointed as observers. The new members were welcomed.
3	ELECTION OF CHAIR It was proposed by Cllr Weston, seconded by Cllr Allinson and resolved : <ul style="list-style-type: none">That Cllr Stephen Clarke be appointed as Chair of the WECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee for municipal year 2019/20. (Cllr Clarke was in the Chair for all subsequent items).
4	ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR It was proposed by Cllr MacFie, seconded by Cllr Threlfall and resolved :

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Cllr Winston Duguid be appointed as Vice-Chair of the WECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee for municipal year 2019/20.
5	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011</p> <p>There were no Declarations of Interest made under the Localism Act 2011.</p>
6	<p>COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE - TO NOTE</p> <p>The Committee's Terms of Reference had been attached for information and were noted.</p>
7	<p>DATES, TIMES AND VENUES OF MEETINGS</p> <p>It was agreed that the Committee would meet on the following dates and at the following venues during 2019/20:</p> <p>Wednesday 17 July 2019, Kingswood Civic Centre Wednesday 2 October 2019, Bath Guildhall Wednesday 4 December 2019, Bristol City Hall Wednesday 29 January 2020, Kingswood Civic Centre Wednesday 18 March 2020, Bath Guildhall</p> <p>It was requested at the meeting that any pre-meetings commence no earlier than 10am with the main Committee meetings starting at 10:30am or 11:00am as appropriate.</p>
8	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>
9	<p>ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (PETITIONS; STATEMENTS; QUESTIONS)</p> <p>Two statements had been received from Members of the Public as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. David Redgewell – bus and transport services 2. Christina Biggs – rail services <p>Mr Redgewell attended the meeting and addressed the Committee in person.</p>
10	<p>BUSINESS PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19 - OVERVIEW OF REPORT BEING SUBMITTED TO 14 JUNE WECA COMMITTEE</p> <p>The Committee received a report providing the annual assessment of the delivery of the Combined Authority's Business Plan for 2018/19. The Committee were asked to note the report.</p> <p>The report stated that the business plan for 2019/20 was agreed by WECA and Joint Committee at its meeting on 1 February 2019. The report attached at Appendix One provided an annual assessment on progress in delivering the business plan for 2018/19, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of delivery in 2018/19, with a description of key projects and activities • A detailed commentary on each item in the 2018/19 business plan • Specific information requested for the LEP delivery plan <p>The Corporate Risk Register was attached at Appendix 2.</p>

	<p>During the discussion the following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A question was raised as to how funds were allocated to different schemes, for example £60k was allocated specifically to women yet there was some underspend in the Adult Education Budget (AEB). In reply it was stated that the Combined Authority had to adopt a mixed approach between being reactive and proactive while allocating funds depending on the conditions attached to the funding being received; • A query was raised regarding the AEB budget. It was stated that this had been nationally funded previously and the Combined Authority had to prove its readiness. Funding had been based on a formula that had taken previous years' spending into account and as a result there had been less money allocated than anticipated. The current year would be about keeping the status quo although in future years the Authority can be more proactive in its budget allocation; • In response to a question about delivering a bus strategy, Patricia Greer reported that although there was a requirement to produce a bus strategy there was no extra allocation of funds to go with it and as the Authority could not have any ongoing revenue streams, any solutions would have to be sustainable. David Carter added that the process included Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) being agreed with all local bus operators. He stated that the Authority anticipated being able to bring forward a report to its Committee in autumn 2019; • Returning to the AEB budget a question was asked what mentoring was being provided for small and medium sized businesses to enable them to 'scale-up'. It was noted that there was already existing support freely available, but that the growth hub could take a lead in channelling this support more effectively; • A comment was made that the success of Metrobus had had a negative effect on some areas which were now used for commuter parking and a suggestion was made that a solution could be to provide more small and medium sized park and ride sites; • It was also noted that the Authority was aware of other issues regarding Metrobus such as cancelled routes, effect on existing services and the cost of providing new bus stops. However, it was reiterated that the operation of Metrobus was completely commercial. A move to a more simple fare structure was being looked at, such as the use of smart cards/oyster-style cards. It was also noted that Metrobus was not a Combined Authority function but the Authority was working with the three local authorities who were providing services; • There were a number of comments made about the 'Climate Emergency' declaration that had been made by a number of the local authorities and the Committee asked that WECA make a similar declaration. This formed part of the comments made by the Committee to the WECA Committee and Joint Committee meetings. Patricia Greer stated that green growth was embedded in the work of the Combined Authority which included reduction of carbon emissions, the switch of private cars to walking, cycling, use of shared transport etc and the use of information systems to cut down journeys made. It was also noted that green growth was embedded in the obligations on the funding given to the Combined Authority. However, the Committee still wished to raise the lack of an implicit commitment to tackling climate change and asked that a future briefing be provided. <p>Resolved: That the report be noted.</p>
11	<p>INVESTMENT FUND - OVERVIEW OF REPORT BEING SUBMITTED TO THE 14 JUNE WECA COMMITTEE</p> <p>The Committee received an update on the Investment Fund prior to its consideration by the WECA Committee on 14 June 2019.</p>

	<p>The report stated that the Combined Authority received different funding streams, including the Local Growth Fund, Economic Development Fund, Investment Fund, (IF), and Transforming Cities Fund (TCF). Each fund came with different conditions attached. The IF is allocated at £30m a year for 30 years subject to successfully passing 5 yearly government gateway reviews (demonstrating progress and outcomes achieved through the investment). The first £350m of IF and TCF funding, covering the period up to March 2023, was currently being programmed through various allocations and awards subject to business cases. Some over-programming has been built in to recognise an element of slippage in programme delivery.</p> <p>It was specifically noted that the business case for the research funding facility at Bristol University's Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus had been published. Concern was raised regarding the potentially high level of public sector funding that is being put towards this scheme. It was noted that the scheme would still be subject to due diligence, full business case approval and appropriate planning permissions.</p> <p>Agreed: That the report be noted.</p>
12	<p>GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION UPDATE - OVERVIEW OF REPORT BEING SUBMITTED TO 14 JUNE WECA COMMITTEE</p> <p>The Committee received an update on Combined Authority governance arrangements and proposed changes to the Combined Authority's constitution.</p> <p>The governance structure had set out 12 meetings a year for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with six formal and six informal meetings. The following comments were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was requested that any exempt reports be shared with the Scrutiny Committee in an open manner in order that the Committee could carry out proper pre-scrutiny of the item; • The new Board structure was welcomed; • There was some concern of the continuation of the public question arrangements with no oral or supplementary questions being allowed and this comment was to be passed on to the WECA Committee; • It was confirmed that the pay ratio within the WECA organisation was within usual parameters; <p>Agreed: That the report be noted.</p>
13	<p>14 JUNE WECA COMMITTEE AND JOINT COMMITTEE AGENDA PAPERS</p> <p>The Committee considered the reports being submitted to the WECA Committee and Joint Committee on 14 June 2019 and considered whether to make any comments thereon on behalf of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Chair, Cllr Stephen Clarke, indicated that he would not be able to attend the main Committee meetings on 14 June 2019. The Vice-Chair therefore indicated that he would attend on behalf of the Committee.</p> <p>The comments made were circulated to the WECA Committee and Joint Committee prior to their meetings and taken into consideration during their decision-making process.</p>
14	<p>WECA COMMITTEE AND JOINT COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN AND OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME</p>

	The latest update of the WECA Committee and Joint Committee Forward Plan was noted. The Forward Plan covered the 2019/20 year ahead and would assist members in setting their own agendas and work programme.
	Wednesday, 17 July 2019, 10.00 am, Council Chamber, Kingswood Civic Centre

The meeting closed at 11:50am.