

**WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY**  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 17 JULY 2019**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME & AGENDA SETTING**

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**Purpose**

1. To discuss agenda setting for future meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

**Background**

2. Meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee are scheduled for the following dates:

\* 2 October 2019

\* 4 December 2019

\* 29 January 2020

\* 18 March 2020

3. In addition, it is suggested that informal meetings of the committee be held on the following dates:

\* 11 September 2019 (1.00 – 2.30 pm)

\* 6 November 2019 (1.00 – 2.30 pm)

\* 8 January 2020 (10.00 – 11.30 am)

\* 26 February 2020 (1.00 – 2.30 pm)

4. It is suggested, as per arrangements over the previous year, that these informal sessions are used to enable members to be updated/briefed on Combined Authority activity in-between formal, public meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and also to allow an opportunity for members to refine/confirm agendas suitably ahead of each of their formal, public meetings.

5. As per the previously agreed practice, meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been timed carefully ahead of the WECA Committee and Joint Committee meetings to enable Overview and Scrutiny members to review reports before decisions are taken and to formulate any comments they may wish to refer to the respective committee meetings (via the Chair's reporting slot at these meetings). The currently agreed practices reflect in part the level of resource available to support overview and scrutiny.

6. It is also anticipated that, from examining the WECA Committee and Joint Committee Forward Plan, members will wish to identify particular items or issues that they wish to be briefed or have input to at an early stage, i.e. well in advance of the formal decision taking meeting of the WECA Committee / Joint Committee.

7. The Forward Plan for the WECA Committee and Joint Committee is reviewed and published near the start of each meeting cycle.

8. The Forward Plan deliberately goes beyond the minimum legal requirement for notice of key decisions to be published at least 28 days in advance of a decision-taking meeting and aims to provide as much information as possible about the decisions that are anticipated to be brought forward for WECA Committee / Joint Committee decisions throughout the 2019/20 municipal year. It is hoped that this will assist Overview & Scrutiny members in setting their forward agendas.

9. The Forward Plan is the authority's best assessment, at the time of publication, of anticipated decision making. As the plan is reviewed and re-published near the start of each meeting cycle, Overview and Scrutiny members will be advised each time the Plan is re-published and sent a copy of each update at the point of each re-publication.

10. The 19 July WECA Committee and Joint Committee reports were considered under the previous agenda item. Appendix 1 sets out the items currently due to be considered for the remainder of 2019/20 as per the most recent published Forward Plan update.

### **Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities**

11. As further background to assist members, attached as Appendix 2 is a copy of the latest, updated Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities, as issued recently by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government in May 2019.

12. There are a number of themes identified/reinforced in the document that it is recommended members take into account in terms of setting future agendas and undertaking their work.

These include the following points:

- a. Effective overview and scrutiny should look to:
  - Provide constructive "critical friend" challenge.
  - Amplify the voices and concerns of the public.
  - Be led by independently minded people who take responsibility for their role.
  - Drive improvement in public services.
- b. It is important for authorities to recognise scrutiny's legal and democratic legitimacy.
- c. Effective scrutiny should 'add value' to an authority's decision-taking.

- d. Scrutiny members should be supported in having an independent mindset.
- e. A scrutiny committee needs access to relevant information held by the authority and should receive it in good time, if it is to do its job effectively.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the committee discuss agenda setting for future meetings, taking account of the WECA Committee and Joint Committee Forward Plan items as shown in Appendix 1.**

**On the basis of the discussion, a draft work programme will be drawn up, to include the substantive agenda items identified for the next and future meetings of the committee.**

**It is suggested that based on items currently listed in Appendix 1, the committee may wish to include the following items as part of their future agenda setting:**

- **An update/briefing on the proposals for the delivery of transport integration.**
- **An update on the Joint Spatial Plan (which could be scheduled once the Examination in Public process has been concluded).**
- **An update on the Joint Local Transport Plan 4.**
- **A regular update on progress in taking forward the Investment Fund programme.**
- **Regular updates (6 monthly) on taking forward the Local Industrial Strategy and the Employment and Skills Plan.**
- **Quarterly progress reports on the Combined Authority's Business Plan.**

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - WECA Committee & Joint Committee Forward Plan items

Appendix 2 - Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

**Background papers:** None.

#### **West of England Combined Authority Contact:**

Any person seeking background information relating to this item should seek the assistance of the contact officer for the meeting who is Ian Hird / Tim Milgate on 0117 332 1486; or by writing to West of England Combined Authority, 3 Rivergate, Temple Way, Bristol BS1 6ER; email: [democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk)

