

COMMENTS FROM CHAIR OF WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COMMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE - 4 OCTOBER 2019

Arising from our meeting held on 2 October 2019, I wish to raise the following matters on behalf of the Combined Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

1. Investment Fund report (agenda item 12) – recommendation 9 – Future Bright Plus Full Business Case and award of £3.6m

We received and generally welcomed a full update on the progress of the Future Bright project. We recognise the benefits brought by the project in supporting people on low incomes to help overcome a wide range of life challenges (including a significant number of people facing mental health issues) so that individuals are empowered to make progress in their careers.

We strongly support the recommendation to approve the Full Business Case for Future Bright Plus and the award of £3.6m from the Investment Fund to take the project to the next stage. In terms of assisting the longer-term sustainability of the project, we suggest that other possible funding routes are also explored to support costs, e.g. from charities.

2. Professional Services Framework procurement (agenda item 13):

We generally welcomed this report. With regard to the details on SME spend / work packages referred to in paras. 26 and 27 of the report, we would like to stress the importance of maximising local SME spend.

3. Business Plan 2019/20 - quarter 2 progress report (agenda item 14): (this also refers to agenda item 14 on the 4 October Joint Committee agenda)

With regard to the Corporate Risk Register summary (appendix 2), we ask please that the reference to the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) is checked and updated as necessary to take into account the latest situation in light of the letters received from the Planning Inspectorate following the Examination in Public of the JSP.

4. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (agenda item 15):

Whilst noting that the Panel will be reconvening to review and consider WECA member allowances in further detail, a number of members of the committee wished to place on record that they felt:

- a. That the current and recommended level of allowance for the post of WECA Mayor is too low; they were concerned that the current and proposed new level may be a limiting factor in terms of attracting high quality candidates to stand for election as Combined

Authority Mayor at future elections. The remuneration of the Mayor should also be benchmarked, e.g. with other Combined Authority Mayors.

b. That the Chair of the WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Chair of the WECA Audit Committee should each receive an allowance.

5. Public participation at committee meetings:

We have made this comment before in relation to the constitutional changes agreed by the WECA Committee in July. In relation to questions from the public, whilst we continue to welcome the fact that every effort will be made to provide replies to questioners in advance of committee meetings, we strongly feel that questioners should also be permitted to ask an oral supplementary question(s) at the meeting itself. We ask that this particular aspect of the constitutional changes is reconsidered.

Cllr. Stephen Clarke
Chair, West of England Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee