

Minutes of the West of England Combined Authority Committee

Friday, 4 October 2019

Members present:

Mayor Tim Bowles, West of England Combined Authority

Cllr Toby Savage, Leader, South Gloucestershire Council & Deputy Mayor of
the Combined Authority

Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council

Cllr Dine Romero, Leader, Bath and North East Somerset Council

Professor Steve West, Chair, West of England Local Enterprise Partnership Board

<p>1</p>	<p>EVACUATION PROCEDURE</p> <p>The Chair thanked South Gloucestershire Council for hosting the meeting, welcomed attendees to the meeting and introduced his colleagues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Toby Savage, Leader, South Gloucestershire Council and Deputy Mayor of the Combined Authority • Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council • Cllr Dine Romero, Leader, Bath & North East Somerset Council; and • Professor Steve West, Chair of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership Board. <p>The evacuation procedure for the venue was then announced by the Chair.</p> <p>The Chair then informed everyone present that the meeting was being recorded and that the recording would be available to view after the meeting on the Combined Authority website. Any individuals present who did not wish to be filmed were asked to indicate this.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011</p> <p>The Chair declared an interest in agenda item 15 (Report from the Independent Remuneration Panel) relating to recommendation 1 as set out in the Panel’s report which referred to the Mayor’s allowance. It was noted that at the appropriate point in the meeting, the Chair would not vote on this recommendation.</p> <p>Cllr Savage also declared an interest in agenda item 15 (Report from the Independent Remuneration Panel) relating to recommendation 2 as set out in the Panel’s report which referred to the Deputy Mayor’s allowance. It was noted that at the appropriate point in the meeting, Cllr Savage would not vote on this recommendation.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>The committee RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 19 July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Chair shared the following news about the Combined Authority’s recent activities:</p> <p>1. Local Industrial Strategy: The region’s first ever Local Industrial Strategy, developed by the Combined Authority and the Local Enterprise Partnership had been launched, working with regional businesses and organisations, as well as central government. The strategy set out how the Combined Authority and its partners need to work together to build on local strengths around creativity, collaboration and ingenuity to secure clean growth to benefit all the region’s residents.</p> <p>2. Adult Education Budget: The Combined Authority had now formally taken over responsibility for the Adult Education Budget. This meant the authority could start targeting</p>

funding in the most effective way for the region, helping residents reach their potential and helping to ensure businesses could find employees with the right skills.

3. 5G event at Bristol Harbour Festival: 5G technical innovation had been brought to the Bristol Harbour Festival in the summer, giving visitors a unique view of all three performance stages at the event from their smartphones. The 5G Smart Tourism project had also simulated the use of the network as a robust communications channel for the emergency services during a public safety emergency. This had proved to be an exciting opportunity to lead the way on the potential for 5G at major public events.

4. Ashley Community Housing event: He had recently attended a community event at Barton Hill Settlement in Bristol organised by the Growth Hub and Ashley Community Housing. Around 30 business people from the region's migrant and refugee communities had shared inspirational stories and business advice. The event had helped to show the value of everyone working together to ensure that, as the region's economy grew, everyone could benefit and look to achieve their potential.

5. Women Into Digital Jobs, Education and Training (WIDJET) project: He was pleased to report that this project was going well. The project was tackling the under-representation of women in digital roles by working with a wide group of women to encourage more representative and inclusive employment in digital roles. A recent showcase at Knowle West Media Centre had demonstrated how the project was supporting women to develop their skills and improve their career prospects.

6. Love Our High Streets event in Bath: He welcomed the event held last month where Bath's historic Milsom Street had been transformed as it became car-free for a weekend as part of the Love Our High Streets project. More than 35 businesses had taken part and this had been a great example of how the Love our High Streets project was helping to revitalise local communities by giving high streets a real boost.

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COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

Professor Steve West, Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership Board shared the following news about the LEP's recent activities:

1. LEP Board membership: A refresh of the membership of the LEP Board was being implemented. This had brought fresh, added expertise to the Board and at the same time had strengthened the Board in terms of its gender balance, diversity and ethnicity. By January 2020, the LEP Board would achieve a full gender balance.

2. Local Industrial Strategy: As mentioned earlier by the Chair, the Local Industrial Strategy had been launched. The key themes articulated in the strategy included a clear emphasis on ensuring that growth was sustainable, clean and inclusive, with a focus on opportunities for employment and progression for all across the region. In terms of promoting clean growth, the right and appropriate balance had to be found between developing a vibrant local economy alongside active consideration of environmental impacts. The LEP was also ambitious, recognising the importance of reaching out and working in partnership with a range of south west and south Wales organisations to deliver particular projects that could bring significant benefits for residents within and beyond the immediate geographic regional area. It was important to use the Local Industrial Strategy to promote the region locally, nationally and internationally.

3. One Front Door funding programme: In terms of the One Front Door funding programme overseen by the West of England Joint Committee, the LEP Board recognised the need to ensure high-level scrutiny and review of the investments made through the programme, and

effective management of risks and any project slippage.

The committee noted the update. On behalf of the committee, the Chair thanked Professor West and the LEP Board for their ongoing work and contribution in taking forward regional priorities.

7 COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COMBINED AUTHORITY'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Stephen Clarke presented comments on behalf of the committee, highlighting the following issues:

1. Investment Fund report (agenda item 12) - Future Bright project: Overview and Scrutiny members had received a detailed update on the project's progress and recognised the benefits brought in supporting people on low incomes to overcome a wide range of life challenges (including a significant number of people facing mental health issues) so that individuals were empowered to make progress in their careers. Members strongly supported the recommendation to approve the Full Business Case and award £3.6m to Future Bright Plus. Members also suggested that to assist the long-term sustainability of the project, additional funding sources should be explored, e.g. funding from charities.
2. Professional Services Framework procurement (agenda item 13): Members generally welcomed the report; in relation to the details on Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SMEs) spend and work packages, the committee wished to stress the importance of maximising local SME spend and involvement.
3. Business Plan 2019/20 – quarter 2 progress report (agenda item 14): With regard to appendix 2 (Corporate Risk Register summary), members asked that the reference to the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) was checked and updated as necessary to reflect 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): Some members of the committee had expressed the view that the current and recommended level of allowance for the post of Combined Authority Mayor was too low and may be a limiting factor in attracting high quality candidates to stand for election for the post. It was suggested that the level of remuneration should be benchmarked, e.g. in comparison with other Combined Authority Mayors and MPs. It was also suggested that the Chair of the Combined Authority's Overview & Scrutiny and Audit committees should receive an allowance. The committee noted that the Panel would be conducting a further in-depth review.
5. Public participation at committee meetings: Members again wished to re-iterate their view that, whilst noting that every effort was made to provide written replies to those submitting written questions to committee meetings, a further constitutional change should be considered to enable questioners to ask an oral supplementary question(s) at committee meetings as a "follow-up" to any written replies received.

It was noted that the full comments of Overview & Scrutiny members had been circulated in advance of the meeting and would be available to view on the Combined Authority web site.

8 COMMENTS FROM THE COMBINED AUTHORITY'S BOARDS

The Chair advised that following on from the constitutional changes agreed at the 19 July committee meeting, the 4 newly established Combined Authority Boards (dealing respectively with Planning & Housing, Transport, Business and Skills) had all held their first meetings in

September.

The specific comments from the Boards about items on this agenda had been taken into account in terms of report preparation. The comments had also been circulated in advance of the meeting and would be available to view on the Combined Authority web site.

9 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (QUESTIONS; PETITIONS; STATEMENTS)

4 questions had been submitted in advance of this meeting, as follows:

1. Christina Biggs - subject: Use of Combined Authority funds
2. Cllr Clive Stevens (Bristol City Council) - subject: Agenda item 14 - Business Plan 2019/20 - quarter 2 progress update - Appendix 2 - Corporate Risk Register summary
3. Richard Baxter - subject: Bristol airport expansion
4. Sandy Hore-Ruthven - subject: Creative Youth Network - The Courts project

The Chair advised that written replies had been sent to all questioners in advance of the meeting.

13 statements had been received in advance of the meeting, as follows:

1. Cllr Mark Weston (Bristol City Council) - subject: Support tariff-free ports plan
2. Sandy Hore-Ruthven & Mark Coates - subject: Creative Youth Network - The Courts project
3. Susan Davies - subject: Action on climate emergency
4. Mathew Thomas - subject: Bristol airport expansion
5. Bill Roberts - subject: Bristol airport expansion
6. Hilary Burn - subject: Bristol airport expansion
7. Dave Redgewell - subject: Transport issues & bus strategy
8. Nigel Bray - subject: Transport issues & Bath-Warmley light rail consultation
9. Tony Jones - subject: Action on climate emergency
10. Christina Biggs - subject: Local transport issues
11. Professor John Adams - subject: Bristol airport expansion
12. Leeza Awojobi - subject: Creative Youth Network – The Courts project
13. Richard Baxter - subject: Bristol airport expansion

At the invitation of the Chair, and in accordance with the constitution, those in attendance were given the opportunity to present their statements. It was noted that the full text of the statements and questions/replies had been circulated to committee members in advance of the meeting and would be available to view on the Combined Authority website.

In connection with the statements relating to climate emergency and proposed Bristol airport expansion, the following points were raised:

1. Cllr Romero drew attention to the objection to the proposed Bristol airport expansion expressed by Bath and North East Somerset Council and queried how this stood in relation to the other authorities' position on this issue, including the Combined Authority. On this subject, Mayor Rees stressed the importance of carefully assessing all the available evidence about anticipated future airport passenger numbers and the benefits/risks to the region from the proposed expansion in determining a view on this issue. Cllr Savage stated that it would also be important to fully understand the action being taken now and planned by local, major air-related industry employers (who employed many thousands of people in the region) to move towards a lower carbon future through the latest engineering technologies, e.g. through work towards electric engines.

2. Arising from a point raised by Cllr Romero, it was noted that following on from the Combined Authority's declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019, it was intended that climate emergency considerations would be fully embedded into the Combined Authority's decision making.
3. Mayor Rees stressed the importance of taking evidence bases into account in developing specific action planning to tackle the climate emergency. For example, 36% of Bristol's carbon emissions were housing related; in his view, in planning action to tackle climate emergency, there was a need for a citywide debate and wide engagement with stakeholders about how to tackle the particular challenge of reducing Bristol's housing related carbon emissions, including the issues about where and how many new homes should be built in the city, and the related issues of acceptable levels of building height and housing density given climate emergency considerations.
4. It was suggested that Mayors and Leaders should look to review and discuss the actions being taken forward by each authority to tackle the climate emergency and related issues and perhaps consider pooling resources and secure common understanding and agreement around the "drivers" that should influence future, prioritised actions.
5. With reference to his earlier comments, Professor West stressed the need for a holistic approach to tackling the climate emergency, based on evidence and which sought the right balance between economic and environmental considerations.

10 PETITIONS FROM ANY MEMBER OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

No petitions had been notified for this meeting.

11 COMBINED AUTHORITY & MAYORAL BUDGET OUTTURN REPORT - APRIL - AUGUST 2019

The committee considered the latest Combined Authority and Mayoral budget outturn report (agenda item 11).

The Chair highlighted the following points:

1. Appendix 1 set out the Mayoral Fund's forecast revenue outturn position for the 2019/20 financial year. Overall spending was £1,231k higher than the revised budget, largely due to slippage on grant funded feasibility projects; as this slippage was funded by grants also brought forward, the net position remained balanced.

2. Appendix 2 set out the Combined Authority's estimated revenue outturn position for the 2019/20 financial year, which, overall was £5,006k higher than the original budget due to slippage on grant funded feasibility projects, new funding approvals through the Investment Fund and an increase in specific grant funding. With spend being fully funded from income and reserves, the net position was a forecasted underspend of £250k through achieving a surplus on investment returns.

3. Appendix 3 outlined the current capital budget forecast for the 2019/20 financial year.

The committee **RESOLVED**:

- To note the Mayoral Fund and WECA revenue and capital budget outturn forecasts as set out in Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

INVESTMENT FUND

The committee considered the latest Investment Fund report (agenda item 12).

The Chair highlighted the following points:

1. He reminded members that in June, the committee agreed an overall funding envelope of £350m for the period up to March 2023, reflecting their strong ambitions to drive forward projects which will bring very significant, positive improvements and impacts for residents right across the region.

Within that context, the report set out details of the latest required project-specific approvals including:

- A Full Business Case for Great Stoke Roundabout capacity improvements, with funding of £2.91m for the implementation of the scheme.
- An allocation of £3.9m to support the Future Mobility Zone bid.
- A further £1.2m of funding to continue to progress the development work for the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) - Bristol Temple Meads to Keynsham Strategic Growth Corridor A4/A37 project.
- Details of the Bath Riverside Land Acquisition Fund submission as approved through delegation.
- Funding of £50k to address the challenge of the lack of evidence/research around Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance and to determine what interventions could potentially come forward to improve this.
- A Full Business Case seeking £1.3m for WE Work for Everyone which would target people with a learning difficulty to support them to achieve and maintain paid employment.
- A Full Business Case seeking £3.6m to extend and develop the current Future Bright Innovation Pilot for a further 3 years.
- £50k to progress the Working Well Institute.

2. With specific regard to the Quantum Technologies Innovation Centre project+ referred to in paragraph 29 of the report, the Chair advised that a supplementary note had been circulated to members (and published on the Combined Authority website) providing an update on the due diligence work undertaken by Ernst and Young. This essentially satisfied the requirements set by the committee when they approved an Investment Fund allocation for this project in June.

The Chair advised that as per the proposal set out in the supplementary note, and following discussion with all the authorities, there was an amendment to add an additional recommendation 11 to the report, as follows:

That an additional recommendation 11 be added as follows:

“11. To note the points to be addressed in contractual and monitoring arrangements with the University of Bristol for the delivery of QTIC+ as set out in paragraph 5 and 6 of the supplementary note; and to delegate the approval of achievement of the conditions precedent to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils, with a further report to be presented to the Committee should there be issues requiring a further decision.”

The report recommendations, as amended above were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Mayor Rees.

Cllr Savage generally welcomed the report, also drawing attention to the benefits for pedestrians and users of all modes of transport that would be brought through the Great

Stoke roundabout capacity improvements. He also particularly welcomed the investment proposed to take forward the Future Mobility Zone(s) and, in relation to business and skills investment, to further develop the Future Bright project.

Whilst welcoming the particular investment relating to Bath Riverside, Cllr Romero commented that it was encouraging to see the full span of investment in a wide range of projects that would bring benefits to residents right across the region.

Mayor Rees particularly welcomed the investment in the WE Work for Everyone project which was focused on supporting people with a learning difficulty to achieve and maintain paid employment. He also thanked officers for their work in assisting the progression of the Quantum Technologies Innovation Centre+ project; this project formed a key element in redeveloping the Cattle Market Road site near Temple Meads railway station and was a catalytic, key regional project/development..

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations.

The committee **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the delegations for changes to schemes within the approved programme set out in Appendix 1.
2. To approve the Full Business Case for Great Stoke Roundabout capacity improvements and a total award of £2.91m.
3. To approve the allocation of £3.9m for the Future Mobility Zone subject to securing the DfT funding and business case.
4. To approve the change request and the award of an additional £1.2m for the HIF Outline Development Work.
5. To note the Land Acquisition Fund Assessment Criteria shown in Appendix 7 and the approval of the Full Business Case for Bath Riverside and award of up to £9m through the granted delegation.
6. To approve the Feasibility and Development funding application for the Careers Advice Analysis and the award of £50,000 to produce a report outlining prioritised co-designed interventions.
7. To approve the Feasibility and Development funding application for the Working Well Institute and the award of £50,000 to produce an Outline Business Case.
8. To approve the Full Business Case for WE Work for Everyone and award of £1.3m subject to securing ESF funding, development of the Procurement Plan, supply of a detailed programme and finalising the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.
9. To approve the Full Business Case for Future Bright Plus and award of £3.6m subject to the supply of a detailed risk register, cost breakdown and project plan, and finalising the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.
10. To approve the change requests for schemes within the current programme set out in Appendix 8.
11. To note the points to be addressed in contractual and monitoring arrangements with the University of Bristol for the delivery of QTIC+ as set out in paragraph 5 and 6 of the

	<p>supplementary note; and to delegate the approval of achievement of the conditions precedent to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils, with a further report to be presented to the Committee should there be issues requiring a further decision.</p>
13	<p>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FRAMEWORK PROCUREMENT</p> <p>The committee considered a report providing an update on the progress of the Professional Services Framework procurement process and next steps (agenda item 13).</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The report set out the work taken forward to develop the framework and sought committee approval to delegate authority to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive, in consultation with the West of England authorities' Chief Executives, to award places on the framework. 2. The Professional Services Framework contract was a very positive example of collaboration across the authorities. Given the very significant capital spend pipeline in the region, the framework would enable swift and efficient access to professional services contractors by reducing the complexity of individual project procurement processes. <p>The report recommendations were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Savage.</p> <p>In generally welcoming the report, Mayor Rees stressed the importance of ensuring that social value considerations were fully factored into the approach.</p> <p>The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations.</p> <p>The committee RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To approve that the award of places on the Professional Services Framework is delegated to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the West of England Chief Executive Officers.
14	<p>BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20 - QUARTER 2 PROGRESS REPORT</p> <p>The committee considered the quarter 2 progress report on the 2019/20 Business Plan (agenda item 14).</p> <p>The Chair highlighted that regular reporting on progress in delivering the Business Plan was a key element of the Combined Authority's overall performance management and reporting framework, which was reviewed annually with Government. The detail of the second quarterly report was set out at Appendix 1 and the key risks to delivery were recorded in the Corporate Risk Register summary set out at Appendix 2.</p> <p>The committee RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To note the quarter 2 update on delivery of the 2019/20 Business Plan.
15	<p>REPORT FROM THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL</p> <p>The committee considered the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (agenda item 15).</p>

As per item 3 above, it was noted that the Chair had declared an interest relating to recommendation 1 as set out in the Panel's report which referred to the Mayor's allowance; the Chair would not vote on this recommendation. It was also noted that Cllr Savage had declared an interest relating to recommendation 2 as set out in the Panel's report which referred to the Deputy Mayor's allowance; Cllr Savage would not vote on this recommendation. In terms of the Panel's other recommendations, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would vote in line with the provisions of the West of England Combined Authority Order.

The following points were highlighted in discussion:

1. Cllr Romero suggested that it was unfortunate that the level of Combined Authority member remuneration had to be determined locally. In her view, it would be much more appropriate for national guidance to be issued. She was mindful that the level of remuneration should be set at a level that could act in an inclusive way to attract candidates across communities.
2. Mayor Rees also stressed the importance of ensuring that the level of member remuneration was set at a level that would help enable (and not inhibit) people from a wide range of backgrounds to consider seeking election to public office. In his view, it was important for local politicians to engage robustly in a public conversation around this point.
3. Professor West stated that it was important to recognise the crucial importance of these key member leadership roles. The region's communities deserved the best possible leaders. The level of remuneration for these key member posts should reflect the significance of these roles and should be set openly and transparently at a level that would attract the highest quality candidates and widen the pool of potential quality candidates.
4. It was noted that the Panel would be conducting a further review and that it was anticipated that this would be concluded by December 2019.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

The committee **RESOLVED**:

To approve the recommendations of the Independent Review Panel, as follows:

Recommendation 1: Mayor's Allowance be increased to £65,000.
(Note: having declared an interest, Mayor Bowles did not vote on this recommendation).

Recommendation 2: Deputy Mayor's Allowance set at 20% of the Mayoral allowance, £13,000 to be introduced.
(Note: having declared an interest, Cllr Savage did not vote on this recommendation).

Recommendation 3: No other WECA members should, at this stage, receive allowances on the basis that, at the moment, these roles are part of the expectations placed on them by their constituent authorities.

Recommendation 4: The Panel recommends the Mayor's travel and subsistence continues in line with the current policy of using the South Gloucestershire members travel and subsistence scheme. All other members should continue to be paid by their constituent authorities.

Recommendation 5: The Panel recommends that Carers allowance continues to be paid by constituent authorities but that the issue of a Carers allowance for the Mayor should be

	<p>considered at the next review.</p> <p>Recommendation 6: The Panel recommend that the increase in the Mayor’s allowance should be backdated to the 1st April 2019 and the new Deputy Mayor’s allowance to take effect from the date of appointment to the role in 2019.</p> <p>Recommendation 7: The Panel recommends that in future allowances should be increased in line with the annual local government pay percentage increase as agreed by the National Joint Committee for Local Government Services.</p> <p>Recommendation 8: The Panel have conducted this first review at speed. They recommend there should be a more detailed review commencing soon when they would wish to revisit the recommendations set out above in the light of more evidence including evidence from interviews with the Mayor, Deputy and other members of WECA.</p>
<p>16</p>	<p>INFORMATION ITEM - DECISIONS TAKEN AT THIS MEETING</p> <p>In closing the meeting, the Chair advised that details of the decisions taken at this meeting and the draft minutes of the meeting would be published as soon as possible on the Combined Authority website.</p>
	<p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p>