

**JOINT MEETING –
WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE &
WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT COMMITTEE – 20 MARCH 2020**

QUESTIONS & REPLIES

The following questions were submitted by the deadline (full details of questions and the replies are set out in the following pages):

Q1. Question from: James Mee

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Q2. Question from: Alan Morris

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Q3. Question from: Kim Hicks

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Q4. Question from: Mary Collett

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Q5. Question from: Diana Warner

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Q6. Question from: Tony Lloyd

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Q7. Question from: Tony Lloyd

Subject: MetroWest

Q8. Question from: Faye Dicker

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

QUESTION 1 - 20 March 2020

Question from: James Mee

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Question:

Question 1:

Have you heard of the concept of induced demand, whereby an increase in supply inevitably produces an increase in usage. Induced demand means that an increase in road capacity will encourage an increase in the amount of people who take up driving, and an actual decrease in public transport use, both in relative and absolute terms. All four authorities have declared climate emergencies; Some of the authorities are saying we must take urgent action to decarbonise and reach net zero by 2030. Yet you are building 10 new roads, and expanding 5 more.

How does building more roads allow you to reach your goal of increasing public transport use, and how can the declaration of climate emergencies and action on decarbonisation be squared with building more roads?

In terms of the JLTP4's inclusion of new road schemes and the goal of increasing public transport use attention is drawn to Section 7: Local Connectivity on p68 which states the following:

“The JLTP4 sets out objectives that seek to address poor air quality and take action against climate change yet the presence in the document of some major schemes that involve constructing new road infrastructure could be seen as contradictory to this. As such, it is important to clarify the principles for new road construction as part of a wider package of measures to improve efficient movement around the West of England and manage growth.

We know that the levels of car traffic and freight are high and that current travel habits need to change in order to accommodate the growth that will be seen across our region. We also know that this growth is needed to continue to support our economy and that even the most sustainable growth may create some car and freight trips.

We must start planning how we can move more people in more efficient ways in order to help tackle congestion and therefore meet our objective to address air quality and take action on the climate emergencies we have declared. Public transport and bikes carry more people with less demand on road space than cars carrying individual people. But in order to ensure cycling is safe and buses are not caught in congestion, we need to provide infrastructure for this, and existing road space is not enough.

Our approach for new infrastructure in the West of England is to balance the needs of the environment, our existing communities' health, inequalities and their need to travel, and the economy. This will require developers to mitigate the traffic impact from developments and will enable significant progress to be made in combatting poor air quality and addressing our climate emergencies.

This approach will also help us to manage congestion and work towards reallocating space on existing roads to more sustainable modes of transport. Road space is finite and we must

make the most efficient use of it as possible in order to improve accessibility around the West of England.

JLTP4 promotes a balanced transport network where each mode of transport plays a role in providing connectivity. That is why constructing new multimodal links forms part of our overall package of transport measures, enabling the reallocation of roadspace to more efficient travel choices wherever possible and ensuring that people are able to move around the network safely, efficiently and as sustainably as possible. If a new transport link is required, we will need to reduce exposure of people to environmental pollutants such as noise and air pollution, in order to reduce the harmful effects of additional road usage or upgrading local and strategic road networks.

Wherever possible, we will look to reallocate road space to modes of transport that carry people more efficiently. This can be achieved by converting a lane for general traffic into a bus lane or cycle lane. This approach makes buses more reliable and cycling safer, reduces capacity for general traffic and, as a result, can make driving on the most congested corridors the least attractive option in terms of journey time. This will encourage private car users to switch to alternative modes.”

Question 2

The Joint Spatial Plan, and the new housing developments contained therein, was rejected recently.

Furthermore, the proposed Bristol Airport Expansion was also rejected recently.

In the light of these changes, can you explain to me why you still feel more road capacity is needed in these areas?

REPLY:

In addition to the response for question 1, Section 11: Major Schemes on p130 includes the following commitment:

“All proposed transport schemes will be reviewed on an ongoing basis against the emerging evidence base for meeting our jointly stated ambition of carbon neutral emissions by 2030. This will be looked at in the context of the proposed physical infrastructure, the mode of transport using any new infrastructure, its effects on the wider transport network and environment in the West of England, future spatial planning and emerging technology. We will also continue to lobby government to give clarity on national targets for decarbonisation of transport and energy to be embedded in local transport policy and projects.”

QUESTION 2 - 20 March 2020

Question from: Alan Morris

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Question:

I SUPPORT *in principle* the adoption of a Joint Local Transport Plan 4 (JLTP4) by WECA Committee because ...

There are some welcome changes included in JLTP4:

- the words added to acknowledge the climate emergency.
- the words added in response to many consultation comments questioning the building of new roads when the priority is to enable modal shift away from cars, including the further changes made by North Somerset and BANES in their council papers adopting JLTP4. (South Glos has made no such changes. Bristol has made no changes, but has only one road-building scheme in its area.)

I accept that there is urgency to adopt a new JLTP because an up-to-date plan is needed to secure funding, and it would take too long to go through a significantly revised plan with associated consultation and sustainability assessment.

BUT I am concerned with JLTP4 because ...

Commitment to excessive road-building

The proposed JLTP is based on a flawed Joint Spatial Plan and pre-climate-emergency thinking. Surely the proposal to go ahead with road schemes to support the proposed Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) of the withdrawn JSP abnegates the Examiners' decision to declare the Joint Spatial Plan unsound ?

JLTP4 acknowledges this and says "the JLTP4 will undergo immediate review" and "regular reviews and progress reports will ensure the JLTP4 remains relevant and decisive, flexible and agile." But the reality is that any revision to JLTP4 will take 2 to 3 years to produce, allowing for the normal process of public consultation, sustainability assessment etc.

JLTP4 continues to have a disconnect between its policies and planned schemes. The document is a mismatch between on one the hand good policies on public transport and active travel, and an acknowledgement of the climate change emergency, and on the other hand a list of schemes that is biased to road-building, and still assumes the Strategic Development Locations of the failed Joint Spatial Plan (JSP).

This is a list of schemes in the JLTP4 for approval that are entirely or mostly road-building schemes:

Bristol South West Economic Link (BSWEL) – multiple road interventions

East of Bath access improvements

M5 Junction 19

Smart Motorways: M4 J18-19 and M5 J17-21A

M5 new junction J21A

A4174 Ring Road junction improvements including Wraxall Road (Longwell Green)

Freezing Hill junction upgrade and whole route improvements

M4 Junction 18A to A4174 Ring Road

Weston-super-Mare Package 2

Banwell Bypass

South East Bristol and Whitchurch

Keynsham

Yate and Coalpit Heath, incl Winterbourne and Frampton Cotterell Bypass, Coalpit Heath and Westerleigh Bypass

Nailsea and Backwell

Thornbury, Buckover and Charfield

Churchill

A46 to M4 route improvements, Cold Ashton

M5 Junction 20 Local Highway Improvements

Some of the road-building is linked to Strategic Development Locations in the Joint Spatial Plan that has been rejected by Planning Examiners. JLTP4 on page 125 says:

“Approximately half of total bidding, major scheme, and WECA Gainshare funding will be spent on mitigating the impact of future growth.”

The list of schemes is unprioritised and unsequenced, so that the JLTP could be used to justify a continuing bias to road schemes in the schemes taken forward. By agreeing to JLTP4 in its current form, Bristol and the other councils may be authorising a WECA commitment to excessive road-building that cannot be challenged at a later date.

This is an issue of public confidence and WECA credibility.

Question 1:

Given the disconnect and mixed messages in JLTP4, and the long time it will take to agree JLTP5, how will WECA and the four councils demonstrate credibly, transparently and quickly to the public that schemes will be progressed with an urgency, prioritisation, and sequencing that is appropriate for the declared climate emergency and zero carbon commitment?

Duty to co-operate

JLTP4 on page 134 lists a number of schemes under the heading of Joint Transport Study required schemes, describing this as: “Transport infrastructure identified through the JTS will be required to unlock and facilitate future development alongside maximising mode shift to active and sustainable forms of travel and public transport. *Schemes will be developed through each local authority’s Local Plan process.*” [my italics]” Surely taking forward schemes solely through each local authority’s Local Plan process abnegates the “duty to co-operate”, and is therefore unsound ?

The 2018/2019 updated National Planning Policy Framework strengthens the “duty to co-operate”, and makes it more transparent. Any plans started after the withdrawn Joint Spatial Plan and the adopted JLTP4 will have to comply with these requirements.

Question 2:

Should the JLTP be amended to make clear that the taking forward of schemes will be the subject of a sub-regional decision process, complying with the duty to co-operate, not just a Local Plan process?

REPLY:

Question 1

On p6 of the JLTP4 commitment is given to reviewing the Plan. A report on producing the next JLTP is proposed to be taken to the Joint Committee in July 2020. As outlined on p6 the review will need to include:

- Reinventing public transport through mass transit, smart ticketing and making it more user friendly, convenient, safe, direct and attractive linking key destinations to enable everyone to use it.
- Rethinking how we use our existing transport corridors including reallocating more road space to buses, pedestrians and cyclists.
- Demand management measures to influence travel choice and raise revenue to reinvest in alternatives.
- First and last mile type solutions to provide a linked-up transport network.
- Exploring new ways to run and fund our transport networks to provide unprecedented investment in cycling, walking and public transport.
- Promoting zero carbon development that does not need to be retrofitted.

In the meantime, regular reviews and progress reports will ensure the JLTP4 remains relevant and decisive.

In addition Section 11: Major Schemes on p130 includes the following commitment:

“All proposed transport schemes will be reviewed on an ongoing basis against the emerging evidence base for meeting our jointly stated ambition of carbon neutral emissions by 2030. This will be looked at in the context of the proposed physical infrastructure, the mode of transport using any new infrastructure, its effects on the wider transport network and environment in the West of England, future spatial planning and emerging technology. We will also continue to lobby government to give clarity on national targets for decarbonisation of transport and energy to be embedded in local transport policy and projects.”

Question 2

JLTP4 has been jointly developed by the West of England Authorities and once adopted will be the agreed transport strategy and policy statement for the West of England Authorities. It is therefore also a material consideration in relation to the development of any Local Plan proposals by the individual Authorities and in the assessment of associated planning applications that arise. In doing so, the West of England Combined Authority as the Transport Authority would be involved as a consultee in assessing the Transport Assessment associated with such development, where it is significant.

Notwithstanding this, there is also a requirement on each Authority to ensure that Local Plans are developed collaboratively in respect of cross boundary issues, which would include addressing most transport issues and progressing certain transport schemes. Further enhancing this requirement is the status that neighbouring authorities have as statutory consultees in respect of Local Plan development within one authority.

QUESTION 3 - 20 March 2020

Question from: Kim Hicks

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Question:

Background to Question 1:

The JLTP4 consultation was so very poorly advertised that I, a Bristol City Council resident, found out about it as a result of a meeting regarding the JSP held by a BANES Councillor. There is no co-incidence that following local people getting together and forming the SOUTH BRISTOL WRONG ROAD group, over **a third of all the responses** to the consultation came from people in the South Bristol area. *(NB JLTP4 area covers 1.3 million people!)*

We know that the JLTP4, consulted on, does not work!

Changing the road from blue to green on the map, calling it a corridor and not a road and justifying it because the residents of the area have a 'connectivity deficit', does not cut the mustard!

Question 1:

Will you acknowledge that building a new road

- **on valuable, irreplaceable Green Belt**
- **without having and current facts or figures to justify a connectivity deficit**
- **or realistic chance of running a metrobus on it**
- **or the money to fund it**
- **that local people have told you, in your consultation, that they do not want**
.....is a bad idea!

Background to Question 2:

Local people, in the Bristol South area, want solutions to the current traffic issue that exist already.

They can see that the JLTP4 has NOT planned on a robust, consistent and objective basis. I have witnessed councillors in all four councils appreciate that this plan is really poor in a number of areas. They also realise that, "we are where we are" and have to have a plan in place to secure funding for the good elements of the plan.

Question 2:

Will you commit to removing the propose route/road/corridor from the JLTP until you have:

- **Gathered the full fact and figures regarding the Connectivity deficit in the South Bristol area**
- **Explored all other options before even considering building a new road, let alone on Green belt**
- **Explored to see if there is a realistic chance of operating a metrobus on the route and whether it will be frequent enough and affordable to be viable**

- Can fund the building of it without it the cost falling to the residents of the area
- Consulted with the local people gaining their support

REPLY:

As the Case Study box on p75 of the JLTP4 points out the Joint Transport Study identified that there is poor infrastructure and public transport service facilitating orbital movements around South East Bristol and the surrounding area. The Case Study also stresses that further detailed engagement and consultation will continue with the residents of South East Bristol and Whitchurch Village to explore options that address the lack of orbital connectivity, developing plans that are suitable, deliverable and acceptable to the community. The JLTP4 remains committed to addressing the orbital connectivity issue. This response applies to both Question 1 and 2.

QUESTION 4 - 20 March 2020

Question from: Mary Collett

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Question:

It is vitally important that the Joint Local Transport Plans are as good as they can be as we are relying on them to take us forward into the next low-carbon decade.

Mayor Marvin Rees said in his responses to questions when the plans were discussed at Bristol council last month:

“I believe it is important to bring forward developments which are NOT car dependent and also to invest in mass transit for the region which will dramatically reduce car journeys and improve air quality “ Initial modelling suggests that Bristol will have to reduce traffic by around 40% to hit the target of being carbon neutral by 2030 whilst research shows that additional, wider roads lead to more car journeys.

How can these two aims of reducing car travel by 40% and building 10 new roads plus embarking on 5 big road-widening schemes. possibly be reconciled?

Why doesn't WECA prioritise public transport, cycling and walking schemes over road building?

REPLY:

In terms of the JLTP4's aim of reducing car travel and building new road schemes attention is drawn to Section 7: Local Connectivity on p68 which states the following:

“The JLTP4 sets out objectives that seek to address poor air quality and take action against climate change yet the presence in the document of some major schemes that involve constructing new road infrastructure could be seen as contradictory to this. As such, it is important to clarify the principles for new road construction as part of a wider package of measures to improve efficient movement around the West of England and manage growth.

We know that the levels of car traffic and freight are high and that current travel habits need to change in order to accommodate the growth that will be seen across our region. We also know that this growth is needed to continue to support our economy and that even the most sustainable growth may create some car and freight trips.

We must start planning how we can move more people in more efficient ways in order to help tackle congestion and therefore meet our objective to address air quality and take action on the climate emergencies we have declared. Public transport and bikes carry more people with less demand on road space than cars carrying individual people. But in order to ensure cycling is safe and buses are not caught in congestion, we need to provide infrastructure for this, and existing road space is not enough.

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JLTP4 promotes a balanced transport network where each mode of transport plays a role in providing connectivity. That is why constructing new multimodal links forms part of our overall package of transport measures, enabling the reallocation of roadspace to more efficient travel choices wherever possible and ensuring that people are able to move around the network safely, efficiently and as sustainably as possible. If a new transport link is required, we will need to reduce exposure of people to environmental pollutants such as noise and air pollution, in order to reduce the harmful effects of additional road usage or upgrading local and strategic road networks.

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In addition, Section 11: Major Schemes on p130 includes the following commitment:

“All proposed transport schemes will be reviewed on an ongoing basis against the emerging evidence base for meeting our jointly stated ambition of carbon neutral emissions by 2030. This will be looked at in the context of the proposed physical infrastructure, the mode of transport using any new infrastructure, its effects on the wider transport network and environment in the West of England, future spatial planning and emerging technology. We will also continue to lobby government to give clarity on national targets for decarbonisation of transport and energy to be embedded in local transport policy and projects.”

QUESTION 5 - 20 March 2020

Question from: Diana Warner

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Question:

Will you take due notice of the recent appeal court ruling that before the third Heathrow runway is built, it must be shown to be compatible with the Paris agreement that aims to limit global heating below 1.5 degrees centigrade, before considering giving the go ahead for the road building and widening projects included in the joint transport plan?

(Dear WECA decision makers - Please make sure that you answer yes to this question. The appeal court ruling is applicable to all infrastructure projects which may increase emissions that cause global heating.

The most recent scientific projections indicate that ALL global greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced year on year by 6.5% from 2019 emissions, starting this year. This includes methane emissions released by ice melts at the poles, and CO2 emissions from wildfires. It is an extremely difficult requirement to meet, and essential.

While the WECA transport plans include useful considerations for cycling, walking and public transport, I strongly argue that there can be no further road building provision within the plans that is at all compatible with the net zero carbon targets by 2030, targets which all involved authorities are necessarily moving toward.

While the individual authorities have approved the plans, S. Glos., N. Somerset and BANES approved them before the Heathrow ruling, and Bristol shortly after when they may not have adequately taken the ruling into account.

The onset of covid 19 has taken us by surprise, although adequate international government planning since the SARS outbreak several years ago, could have prevented last minute more chaotic planning. Safer principles should now apply to global heating gas emissions. With no adequate national or global leadership, effective leadership is taking place at local government level in many places worldwide. Please WECA take up this same leadership responsibility locally.

As a retired GP, I do understand that lung damage is often incremental. So chronic lung disease caused by air pollution will be placing people at greater risk from death or damage by infection with covid 19. From past studies, we know that road building eases congestion temporarily, but in the medium and long term has the effect of encouraging people into their cars, increasing car journeys and thus increasing pollution. Electric cars are only a partial solution especially as the majority of greenhouse gas emissions of a car's life cycle, including journeys taken, occurs when the cars are being manufactured. Electric cars are only a partial solution to local air pollution as we are now finding out the significance of particles from tyre wear and tear in causing lung problems.

It is time for us all to adopt health and wellbeing policies and long term climate health policy when making planning decisions).

REPLY:

In line with and taking account of the Paris Agreement the JLTP4 is fully committed to reducing carbon. The JLTP4 has a significantly positive role to play in meeting the

UK's international obligations through providing a well-connected and sustainable transport network which accelerates the shift towards low carbon trips, supporting sustainable development and the take up of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles to decarbonise transport. Decarbonisation, the Paris Agreement and / or its associated objectives are referenced throughout JLTP4 and its Strategic Environmental Assessment. In many respects with the commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030 the JLTP4 goes beyond the Paris Agreement. Looking ahead the next JLTP as outlined above will serve to strengthen this role.

In addition to the response for question 1, Section 11: Major Schemes on p130 includes the following commitment:

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QUESTION 6 - 20 March 2020

Question from: Tony Lloyd

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Question:

In the light of declarations of a climate emergency by WECA, Bristol, South Glos and B&NES, how is the continued planning and building of road schemes being justified?

REPLY:

The JLTP4 fully takes on board the declaration of climate emergencies by the five local authorities. In terms of these declarations and the inclusion of new road schemes attention is drawn to Section 7: Local Connectivity on p68 which states the following:

“The JLTP4 sets out objectives that seek to address poor air quality and take action against climate change yet the presence in the document of some major schemes that involve constructing new road infrastructure could be seen as contradictory to this. As such, it is important to clarify the principles for new road construction as part of a wider package of measures to improve efficient movement around the West of England and manage growth.

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QUESTION 7 - 20 March 2020

Question from: Tony Lloyd

Subject: MetroWest

Question:

MetroWest Phase 1: Given the Bristol Clean Air Plan and the climate crisis, and the fact that the £9m to deliver MetroWest Phase 1A has already been committed by WECA, what is now delaying the requested implementation of a half-hourly service from Temple Meads to Avonmouth, hourly to Severn Beach by the December 2020 timetable? and re: MetroWest Phase 2: Can Network Rail confirm that there is sufficient capacity at Filton Junction and Bristol Parkway to deliver MetroWest Phase 2, will the proposed Filton to Parkway service use the E-W chord, and have WECA reopened discussions with the Port of Bristol about the level crossing at St Andrew's Gate?

REPLY:

There are a number of dependencies that need to be fulfilled in order to increase, or introduce, new services. We are working with Network Rail and GWR to introduce enhanced MetroWest services, including Severn Beach to Bristol Temple Meads, as soon as we can. We can confirm there is sufficient capacity at Filton Junction and Bristol Parkway to deliver MetroWest Phase 2 (services to Yate and Gloucester, and for new stations at Ashley Down, North Filton and Henbury). MetroWest Phase 2 is dependent on the commissioning of the Bristol East Junction Remodelling. This project is currently in detail design and delivery phase with commissioning planned in summer 2021. There are no current plans to reopen discussions with the Port of Bristol about the level crossing at St Andrew's Gate. This is not part of our current enhancement programme. We are reviewing options for the next phase of service enhancements as part of the development of our 10 Year Plan and 25 Year Strategic Outline Business Case.

QUESTION 8 - 20 March 2020

Question from: Faye Dicker

Subject: Joint Local Transport Plan

Question:

I would like to submit these questions on behalf of the South Bristol Wrong Road Group.

Question 1:

How confident are you that the JLTP4 consultation process was robust enough – when will you start listening to those who engaged in your own consultation process?

Question 2

The South Bristol Wrong Road Group cannot support this proposed road, route or corridor. Nor do the local councillors and MPs effected by the plans. It is a proposal clearly lacking in support. Both Bristol City Council and BANES have both declared a climate emergency. Bristol have also declared an ecological emergency. Both BCC have said they do not support any new roads in their area and neither do BANES.

So why does the ring road/corridor still remain in the JLTP4, when the two main authorities – who form part of WECA don't support it?

REPLY:

Question 1

The JLTP4 consultation process attracted over 4,200 responses. To do any meaningful and robust analysis of the qualitative feedback in the report, we needed to categorise the responses into a series of themes. This is common practice in feedback received from letters, free text in questionnaires and emails. This does not mean that any data has been missed out. Every single response was categorised into nearly 400 different themes and then considered by officers.

Question 2

As the Case Study box on p75 of the JLTP4 points out the Joint Transport Study identified that there is poor infrastructure and public transport service facilitating orbital movements around South East Bristol and the surrounding area. The Case Study also stresses that further detailed engagement and consultation will continue with the residents of South East Bristol and Whitchurch Village to explore options that address the lack of orbital connectivity, developing plans that are suitable, deliverable and acceptable to the community. The JLTP4 remains committed to addressing the orbital connectivity issue.

In addition Section 11: Major Schemes on p130 includes the following commitment:

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This will be looked at in the context of the proposed physical infrastructure, the mode of transport using any new infrastructure, its effects on the wider transport network and environment in the West of England, future spatial planning and emerging technology. We will also continue to lobby government to give clarity on national targets for decarbonisation of transport and energy to be embedded in local transport policy and projects.”