

Minutes of the Joint meeting - West of England Combined Authority Committee and West of England Joint Committee , Friday, 19 June 2020

West of England Combined Authority Committee - members present:

Mayor Tim Bowles, West of England Combined Authority
Cllr Toby Savage, Leader, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Kye Dudd, Bristol City Council (substituting for Mayor Marvin Rees)
Cllr Dine Romero, Leader, Bath & North East Somerset Council
Professor Steve West, Chair of West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (non-voting member)

West of England Joint Committee - members present:

Mayor Tim Bowles, West of England Combined Authority
Cllr Toby Savage, Leader, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Kye Dudd, Bristol City Council (substituting for Mayor Marvin Rees)
Cllr Dine Romero, Leader, Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Donald Davies, Leader, North Somerset Council
Professor Steve West, Chair of West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (non-voting member)

1	<p>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and introduced the committee members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cllr Toby Savage, Leader of South Gloucestershire Council - Cllr Kye Dudd, Bristol City Council (substituting for Mayor Marvin Rees) - Cllr Dine Romero, Leader of Bath & North East Somerset Council - Cllr Don Davies, Leader of North Somerset Council - Professor Steve West, Chair of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (non-voting member).
2	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Mayor Marvin Rees.</p>
3	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
4	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS JOINT MEETING</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the joint meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Committee and the West of England Joint Committee held on 20 March 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>
5	<p>CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Chair shared the following announcements / updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last few months had been very challenging but the region had really pulled together to support residents through the Covid-19 pandemic. • He expressed his thanks to everyone working so hard to protect residents including key workers across the councils, the NHS, care workers, business, volunteers and many others. It was very encouraging to see so much true collaboration including where businesses had really stepped up to the mark to provide PPE for health and care workers. • Throughout this period, the Combined Authority's Transport team had worked closely with transport operators to ensure key workers could get to work. The immediate focus now was on supporting the introduction of social distancing measures for those who need to travel. He was also calling on businesses to encourage cycling and walking, and change start and finish working times where possible to avoid staff having to travel at peak times. • The Combined Authority had stepped up business support since March, helping businesses to find the support they need. Some of the authority's current programmes had been changed in response to the pandemic - for example, by expanding the career coaching and support service, Future Bright, to help people whose jobs and income had been affected. New programmes had also been launched where an immediate need had been identified - for example Trading Better Online to help small businesses enhance their web presence by adopting new technology. • This though was just the start of the work to support economic recovery. Work would now be taken forward to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - help residents keep their jobs or find training or new job opportunities. - support business by keeping anchor employers in the region, helping

entrepreneurs and innovators develop new ideas, and attracting more jobs, businesses and talent.

- improve connections, both transport and digital.

Innovation and low carbon would be at the heart of the new future and it was also essential to make sure there were widespread opportunities for residents across the region.

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

26 questions had been submitted in advance of this meeting on the following subjects:

1. Alan Morris - Funding of walking and cycling measures
2. Suzanne Audrey - International Charter for Walking
3. Ben Anthony - Climate emergency action plan
4. Ian Pond - West of England Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan
5. Jacqueline Walkden - Climate emergency
6. Alison Allan - Climate emergency action plan
7. Robbie Bentley - Light rail / tram system
8. Robbie Bentley - Pedestrian / highways improvements
9. Nikki Barton - North Somerset being made part of WECA
10. Sam Morris - Climate emergency action plan
11. David Redgewell - Restoration of bus services
12. David Redgewell - WECA transport functions - engagement with user groups and stakeholders
13. Sarah Mason - West of England Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan
14. Adam Reynolds - Emergency active travel funding
15. Adam Reynolds - West of England Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan
16. Kim Hicks - Joint Local Transport Plan 4/5 - clarification about 'new road' (A4 to the A37 and onto Whitchurch Lane) and future consultation / engagement
17. Cllr Clive Stevens - West of England bus strategy
18. Cllr Martin Fodor - West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
19. Cllr Martin Fodor - Update on climate emergency planning update
20. Steve Melia - Clarification - Joint Local Transport Plan 4
21. Gordon Richardson - North Somerset being made part of WECA
22. Gordon Richardson - Social distancing on public transport – protecting disabled passengers
23. Christina Biggs - Scope of the Greater Bristol Area Rail Feasibility Study
24. Christina Biggs - Road bypass round Coalpit Heath and a road bypass round Frampton Cotterell
25. Cllr Jerome Thomas - Transport response to Covid-19
26. Dave Andrews - Expenditure on roads and public transport

The Chair advised that written replies had been sent to all questioners in advance of the meeting. The questions and replies had been circulated to committee members in advance of the meeting and were available on the Combined Authority web site.

The Chair then advised that 19 statements had been received in advance of the meeting. The statements had been circulated to committee members in advance of the meeting and were available on the Combined Authority web site. The statements received were on the following subjects (statements were presented by those in attendance):

1. David Redgewell - Transport issues
2. Alison Allan - Climate Emergency Action Plan
3. Gordon Richardson - Protecting disabled passengers - social distancing on buses and trains
4. Cllr Geoff Gollop - West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan specifically; other items generally on WECA committee agendas

5. Dave Andrews - Trams
6. Gavin Smith - West of England bus strategy / rapid transit
7. Dick Daniel - Sustainable transport improvements
8. Cllr Brenda Massey - West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
9. Sue Turner - Prioritising the recovery of the Voluntary Organisations and Social Enterprises sector in the West of England
10. Tony Jones - Climate emergency planning
11. Faye Dicker - Joint Local Transport Plan 4 - new road proposed to be built from the A4 to the A37 and onto Whitchurch Lane
12. Kim Hicks - Joint Local Transport Plan 4 - consultation / engagement
13. Julie Boston - Bus travel for young people
14. Sam Morris - WECA's climate emergency report and infrastructure plans
15. Susan Carter - Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy
16. Cllr Martin Fodor - Climate Emergency Action Plan
17. Cllr Clive Stevens - Strategic planning update
18. Margaret Boushel - West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan & West of England bus strategy
19. Christina Biggs - Covid / MetroWest / Joint Local Transport Plan

7 PETITIONS TO BE PRESENTED BY ANY MEMBER OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE OR WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT COMMITTEE

None for this meeting.

8 COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

Professor Steve West presented comments on behalf of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and highlighted the following points:

- In taking forward work on the economic recovery, collaboration and partnership working would be essential. Consideration would need to be given to the short term impacts, moving from the pandemic crisis situation to 'unlocking'; medium term impacts around how the region would adapt and become truly more resilient; and longer term considerations around how the region could begin to renew and reset the economy and ensure that growth took place in an inclusive, green and sustainable way.
- Different communities had felt varying impacts from Covid-19 and it was clear that disadvantaged communities had been more severely affected. The business community was very aware of this. The LEP had been meeting regularly every 2 weeks to ensure they kept on top of their agenda and were informed of the measures that the business community were taking as a result of the crisis. A series of task groups had been set up, working in the context of a set of principles for the recovery of the city region economy.
- There was a key focus on how to create new and sustainable jobs, supporting green economic recovery, and ensuring that those communities that had been hardest hit were supported. The LEP was also particularly focused on the skills agenda, bearing in mind the impact of the crisis on employment and on young people's opportunities. Important work would also need to be taken forward on infrastructure development, including the key area of digital infrastructure.
- The LEP was beginning to draw together the key themes associated with recovery, including behavioural change that may be needed, access to funding, new market opportunities and how reskilling of the workforce can be enabled, and how workspaces and transport infrastructure can be adapted around Covid-19. It would be essential to ensure that investment was made in the right areas for long-term benefit.

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

The Chair advised that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had submitted comments for consideration at this meeting, following on from their committee meeting held on 17 June. The comments had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were available to view on the Combined Authority web site.

Cllr Stephen Clarke, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee then presented the comments and highlighted the following points:

a. Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce (as referenced at agenda item 11):

Members had welcomed the update on the Taskforce - in order to assist their scrutiny role and keep them informed, members requested that the minutes of Taskforce meetings were shared. On the wider issue of the role of the Taskforce, members urged the Combined Authority Mayor and the political leaders of all the West of England authorities to work together on the regional recovery to deliver the outcomes residents and businesses need.

b. Update to the Constitution (agenda item 12)

Members had noted that under the Combined Authority governance model, the number of formal decision-taking committee meetings was being reduced to 4 per year. Members felt it was essential to enhance the role of scrutiny moving forwards to help ensure public accountability around the Combined Authority's decision taking. To that end, the committee was intending to strengthen their role, particularly in relation to the current sub-groups which mirrored the WECA Boards (Transport; Planning and Housing; Business; and Skills). In terms of the accessibility of regional Board meetings, it was felt that appropriate adjustments should be made so that all or part of these meetings (e.g. the Transport Board) were held in public.

c. Climate emergency planning update (agenda item 22)

Back in January, scrutiny members had expressed disappointment about the apparent lack of pace and urgency in taking forward the regional climate emergency work. The Climate Emergency was declared in July last year, but the Action Plan was now delayed until October. The committee acknowledged that the Covid-19 recovery planning and climate emergency planning must be linked but felt that insufficient progress had been made on this. Members also felt that their previous comments had been largely ignored - in January, the committee had recommended that a new Climate Emergency Board comprised of Cabinet leads should be established and had raised the issue that the £250k allocated to support regional climate emergency action was inadequate. The committee would welcome the opportunity for the Combined Authority Mayor to attend one of their meetings to discuss this and other issues.

In response to a question from Cllr Romero about where he saw the issue of climate emergency being scrutinised, Cllr Clarke commented that he understood that under the constitutional changes proposed at this meeting, scrutiny had been given a specific role in relation to monitoring how the region met its climate emergency commitments; however, he was concerned about whether the committee had the expertise and the resources to be able to do this effectively; a Climate Emergency Board, utilising expert views where required was the appropriate way to monitor progress at the regional level.

d. Quality assurance of reports and local consultation, with specific reference to agenda item 19 - West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

He drew attention to concerns included in the written scrutiny comments, as had also been highlighted in some of the public forum statements earlier at this meeting.

10	<p>COMMENTS FROM THE COMBINED AUTHORITY BOARDS</p> <p>The Chair advised that specific comments from the Boards about items on this agenda had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were available to view on the Combined Authority web site.</p>
11	<p>UPDATE ON RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC</p> <p>The Combined Authority Committee and the Joint Committee considered a report setting out an update on the Combined Authority’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic (agenda item 11).</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the following aspects of the report and commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report set out the actions taken by the Combined Authority and the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership since the lockdown began; this was in addition to actions taken by the region’s unitary authorities within their areas. • The report included details about essential, emergency decisions taken by the Combined Authority’s Chief Executive in consultation with him as Mayor during the very early stages of lockdown to ensure certainty on adult education budget provider funding and bus operator funding. • The report also included details of the financial impact of Covid-19 on the Combined Authority and the unitary authorities. • An update was also included on the work of the Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce, which he had established in response to a request from the Prime Minister in order to lead the response to the pandemic at the regional level. • The work on the recovery would inevitably dominate the region’s agenda for many months ahead – priorities were being reviewed, through liaison with the authority’s partners – this included refocusing the deliverability of, and priorities within the current £350m investment programme in response to Covid-19. <p>Cllr Savage expressed his thanks to officers across the authorities for their exceptionally hard work during the pandemic with businesses, voluntary and community groups and others to meet the challenge of the initial crisis, and also the work taking place to ensure that recovery could take place, across the region, in social, economic and environmental terms.</p> <p>Cllr Davies also thanked officers for their work and expressed his appreciation of the work of wider community groups, especially in terms of the efforts focused on helping vulnerable people.</p> <p>Cllr Dudd generally welcomed the report and drew attention to the effective collaboration that had taken place between authorities on the Covid-19 public transport response. Bristol would work with the Combined Authority to secure as much financial support as possible to support the recovery. It was also important to recognise the particularly acute challenges faced by the culture and tourism sectors of the economy.</p> <p>Cllr Romero thanked staff and communities for their efforts during the crisis, in providing support not just to businesses but also to vulnerable people. In terms of the work on economic recovery, it was important to stress the importance of learning lessons about what needed to be done differently in future, including actively addressing the climate emergency as part of this.</p> <p>The West of England Combined Authority Committee RESOLVED to note:</p>

1. The progress in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. The financial implications of the pandemic on the Combined Authority.
3. The emergency decisions made by the WECA CEO in consultation with the Mayor of the West of England on Adult Education Budget provider funding and Bus operator funding.
4. The next steps for the Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce and discussions with Government.

The **West of England Joint Committee** RESOLVED to note:

1. The progress in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. The financial implications of the pandemic on the Combined Authority.
3. The emergency decisions made by the WECA CEO in consultation with the Mayor of the West of England on Adult Education Budget provider funding and Bus operator funding.
4. The next steps for the Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce and discussions with Government.

12

UPDATE TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Combined Authority Committee considered a report setting out proposed updates to the Combined Authority’s constitution (agenda item 12).

The Chair advised that due to the Covid-19 situation, the usual annual business report was not being considered this year. Nevertheless, this report highlighted some proposed updates to the constitution which were important to progress, including:

- Updates to committee and Board terms of reference to reflect the climate emergency.
- Some adjustments to delegations to officers, including specific delegations required to reflect the transport functions that were now being carried out by the Combined Authority but which would also help ensure that swift decision-making could be expedited in the transport space as lockdown restrictions eased.
- Approval of the Combined Authority’s Pay Policy Statement; the authority was committed to ensuring the ratio between the highest and lowest paid employee was never greater than 10:1 and he welcomed the fact that, currently, the ratio of the highest paid employee to the lowest was 6.4:1.

The recommendations as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Savage.

Cllr Romero welcomed the inclusion of climate emergency responsibilities as reflected in the updated terms of reference of Combined Authority bodies, especially in relation to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. It would be useful to explore, in discussion with scrutiny, the role they have in ‘providing advice’ in this area, particularly in relation to the point raised by the Scrutiny Chair about securing expertise input in this area.

With reference to the Combined Authority Boards, Cllr Dudd commented on the need to ensure effective governance, for example in relation to the timely production of agenda papers ahead of Board meetings; he also raised the issue of ensuring a process was in place to enable Cabinet leads to input appropriately to forward agenda planning.

Cllr Savage commented that in his view, Climate Emergency planning and work should be a central thread, integral to all the Combined Authority's work and activity. He welcomed the modest reduction in the number of formal committee meetings, but it would be important to ensure that where opportunities arose between meetings, swift responses/actions could be delivered through the appropriate mechanisms where required without having to wait for ratification at a subsequent formal committee meeting.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.

The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED:

1. To agree the changes proposed to the Authority's constitution.
2. To approve the calendar of public meetings shown at Appendix 1.
3. To approve the Pay Policy Statement at Appendix 2.

13

WECA & MAYORAL BUDGET OUTTURN, APRIL 2019 - MARCH 2020

The Combined Authority Committee considered a report setting out the revenue budget financial outturn information for the Combined Authority and the Mayoral budget for the financial year 2019/20 based on data for the period April 2019 to March 2020 (agenda item 13).

The Chair highlighted the following aspects of the report and commented as follows:

- Appendix 1 set out the Mayoral Fund's forecast outturn revenue position for the 2019/20 financial year, which, overall, was £762k lower than the original budget. This was due to rephasing of spend on the Bristol Temple Meads Masterplan project during the year. As this project was funded by grants which were carried forward, the net position remained balanced.
- Appendix 2 detailed the Combined Authority's estimated outturn revenue position for the 2019/20 financial year, which, overall, was a net surplus of £551k due to higher than budgeted returns on investments.
- There was very little impact from the Covid-19 pandemic on the authority's management accounts for 2019/20. However, inevitably there would be an impact on 2020/21 revenue budgets as activity continued to be re-prioritised and re-focused in supporting economic recovery. The achievability of business rates growth targets was a particular concern which would directly impact on a significant proportion of the Combined Authority's core operating revenue. That activity, and corresponding budgets, would accordingly be kept under close review over the coming months.

The recommendations as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Romero.

Cllr Savage welcomed the underspend as highlighted in the report, noting that this would be transferred to the Combined Authority's reserves.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.

The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to:

1. Note the Mayoral Fund revenue outturn as detailed in Appendix 1.

2. Note the WECA revenue outturn as detailed in Appendix 2.
3. Approve the carry forward of £77k net overspend against the 2019/20 revenue transport levy into 2020/21 to be set against the Transport smoothing reserve.
4. Approve the transfer of £500k from the 2019/20 revenue surplus to a specific reserve to address the estimated shortfall of business rates retention in 2020/21.
5. Approve the transfer of £51k from the 2019/20 revenue surplus into the WECA General Reserve.

14

TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2019-20

The Combined Authority Committee considered a report setting out a review of performance against the Treasury Management Strategy to 31st March 2020 (agenda item 14).

The Chair advised that no specific decisions were required in respect of this report.

Cllr Savage particularly welcomed recommendation 3 and Appendix 8 of the report which set out the arrangements through which the Combined Authority would be implementing a short-term loan facility specifically to assist West of England unitary authorities with their cashflow challenges.

The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to:

1. Note the Treasury Management Report to 31st March 2020, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice.
2. Note the Treasury Management Indicators to 31st March 2020.
3. Note that in order to assist West of England Unitary Authorities with cashflow challenges as a result of Covid-19, WECA will be implementing a 'short term loan facility', within the parameters of the approved Treasury Management Strategy, as detailed in Appendix 8.

15

INVESTMENT FUND

The Combined Authority Committee considered a report setting out the latest proposed approvals in relation to the Investment Fund (agenda item 15).

The Chair advised that through discussions with the unitary authorities, very careful consideration had been given to the deliverability of, and priorities within the current £350m investment programme in response to Covid-19. This would be an ongoing process and further updates would be provided through each committee cycle.

In terms of the specific proposals in the report, he highlighted that a degree of financial headroom had been identified from a review of the current programme - as a result, the report proposed:

- an allocation of £5m to support the Covid-19 economic recovery, advised by the Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce.
- an award of £2m to develop the Spatial Development Strategy/Local Transport Plan evidence base.
- an allocation of £300k to enable specific Green Infrastructure proposals to be taken forward as part of the Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The Chair added that other significant decisions proposed through this report included:

- An award of £250k for North Keynsham strategic masterplanning.
- An award of £300k to support the development of the I-START project, a new facility on Bath College's city centre campus.
- An award of £174k to support continuing and extending the Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network in the 2020/21 academic year.
- A package of measures to support walking and cycling through:
 - allocating £3m from the Opportunities and Challenges fund to underwrite Emergency Active Travel Funding measures that were currently being carried out. This would enable unitary authority colleagues to mobilise short term measures to improve walking, cycling and the required social distancing in advance of receiving funding from government;
 - and, very significantly, an allocation of £10m from the Investment Fund for permanent walking and cycling infrastructure to continue to promote much needed modal shift into this area.

The recommendations as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Romero.

In response to a question from Cllr Romero in relation to Department for Transport (DfT) funding for emergency active travel measures, it was clarified that an announcement was expected at the end of June; it was expected that the DfT funding would be released in two tranches, at the end of June and July respectively. Whilst welcoming the proposed allocation for walking and cycling infrastructure, Cllr Romero indicated that the £10m should be seen as the minimal required investment, i.e. at least £10m was required.

Cllr Dudd welcomed in particular the proposed allocations of £10m for walking and cycling infrastructure and £5m to support West of England businesses during the early phase of economic recovery. He also commented that it was important to recognise the importance of the role of lower skilled sector workers in terms of assisting the recovery of a number of sectors, including retail and the local high street economy. In response, the Chair advised that through the work being taken forward by the Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce, specific sector groups had been set up both for retail and the visitor and tourism sectors; investment was also ongoing through the Love Our High Streets Fund.

Cllr Savage generally welcomed the report including the proposed allocation of £300k for the development of Green Infrastructure projects. In terms of skills, he drew attention to the current initiative being promoted through Reboot West to support young people leaving care to access work experience, jobs, apprenticeships and mentoring opportunities; it would be important for the Combined Authority and the unitary authorities to look to support this initiative outside of today's meeting. Cllr Savage also welcomed the funding for cycling and walking and for emergency active travel measures and referred to the importance of the current work taking place in this context to support social distancing in and around high streets/public spaces and for public transport, to help improve public confidence in travelling locally as lockdown is eased.

Professor West commented that it would be important to maintain a balanced approach to restarting the economy, recognising the needs of different communities and the needs / risk profiles of different age groups in the population. It would be particularly important to be mindful of the challenges faced by young people and encourage businesses to use apprenticeships as much as possible. As part of the recovery, it would also be critical to maintain/build community cohesion and to tackle key challenges that needed to be faced such as re-visioning and re-imagining the future role of the high street.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per

constitutional requirements.

The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to:

1. Allocate £5m to support West of England businesses during the 2020 early phase of economic recovery advised by the Covid-19 Economic Recovery Taskforce and, where there is urgency, to delegate the approval of the business case(s) to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils.
2. Approve the Feasibility and Development Funding Application for Spatial Development Strategy/Local Transport Plan Evidence Base and award of £2m and delegate the award of contracts to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils.
3. Delegate the approval of a Feasibility and Development Funding Application for £300k for the development of Green Infrastructure projects to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils.
4. Allocate £3m from the Opportunities and Challenges allocation to underwrite Department for Transport Emergency Active Travel Funding to be repaid on receipt of these funds.
5. Allocate £10m for walking and cycling infrastructure and to delegate approval of Feasibility and Development Funding Applications up to £1m to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent councils.
6. Approve the Feasibility and Development Funding Application for North Keynsham Masterplanning and the award of £250k.
7. Conditionally approve the I-START Outline Business Case and the award of £300k through the current Feasibility and Development Funding Application to continue to progress the design and development.
8. Approve the Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network Full Business Case and award of £174k subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 32 of the report.
9. Delegate grant award decisions for the Research and Innovation Challenge Fund to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the West of England UA Chief Executives.
10. Approve the change requests for schemes within the current programme as set out in Appendix 2.
11. Amend the approved capital programme for individual project approvals agreed at the 20 March 2020 Committee and within this report.

16

COVID-19 BUS NETWORK RECOVERY

The Combined Authority Committee considered a report setting out the current position on bus network recovery following a relaxation of the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions and the steps required to deliver this over the coming months (agenda item 16).

The Chair highlighted the following aspects of the report and commented as follows:

- The report provided a lot of detail of the work taking place around:
 - Funding sources for bus services.
 - Concessionary travel re-imburement.

- Support for community transport.
- The impact of social distancing on bus capacity.
- The latest position on bus network re-start and recovery.
- Members were asked today to approve the continuation of concessionary fare reimbursement payments to bus operators at pre-Covid levels for a further 3 months to the end of September 2020. This was an absolutely vital measure in terms of helping bus services to operate as the region moved through the next stages of lockdown release.
- At this point in time, it was not possible to have certainty around the exact pace and extent of further release from lockdown restrictions; for that reason, a plan to recover the bus network was inevitably a 'work in progress'. Nevertheless, the report set out the key issues and the steps being actively taken to support the recovery of the bus network. Further reports would be brought through to the committee via the Transport Board.

The recommendations as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Savage.

Cllr Savage welcomed the report. He also commented on the need to explore longer term modal shift as the region moves into recovery and to continue to work with bus operators to recover bus patronage to the previous high levels as speedily as is possible; this should include discussion on measures that may support this, such as future highway interventions.

Cllr Dudd drew attention to benefit of bus priority measures introduced in Bristol. In his view, looking at the longer term, changes in the bus transport model / ownership structure may need to be considered, e.g. consideration should be given to lobbying the government around the issue of a public stake being introduced in local bus companies given the level of public subsidy that was currently being required to keep bus services going. There were also important issues to address around how to deal with the increasing demand for bus services as lockdown eased given the limited capacity of the bus network due to social distancing.

Cllr Romero expressed her thanks to bus operators (and to officers for their ongoing work with the operators) for the efforts made in keeping services going throughout the crisis period. In terms of the future situation, she hoped that the Transport Board would give consideration to changes that would benefit the situation regarding bus travel across the region, including any areas where there may be a need to lobby government.

Professor West stated that it was important to recognise the scale of the challenge for public transport services, given the many demands on services, including the demand from businesses and from young people and university students across the region. Ongoing work should be considered, working with bus operators to try to mitigate the risks for certain population age-groups across the region which may assist in helping to manage demand for bus services.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.

The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED:

1. To note the current position on bus network recovery.
2. To approve the continuation of concessionary fare reimbursement payments to bus operators at pre-Covid levels for a further 3 months to the end of September 2020.

WEST OF ENGLAND BUS STRATEGY

The Joint Committee and the Combined Authority Committee considered a report setting out the West of England Bus Strategy for adoption (agenda item 17).

The Chair highlighted the following aspects of the report and commented as follows:

- The Bus Strategy was a key document that built on public transport delivery options to meet the aims of the Joint Local Transport Plan 4. The Bus Strategy work-stream had been in progress over the last 18 months and had been the subject of public consultation between February and March 2020.
- Covid-19 had created a fundamental change in the landscape associated with bus and public transport operations nationally, and this was recognised in the report.
- Bus patronage recovery back to pre-lockdown levels would not happen realistically in the short term. This was in part due to the ongoing need for social distancing and staff and passenger protection. As demand rose, more vehicles and drivers would be required against the backdrop of social distancing constraining network capacity, requiring a carefully managed approach to ensure that network capacity was aligned with passenger demand.
- Given the changing landscape within which bus services operated at present and in the foreseeable future, in considering the Bus Strategy for approval at today's meeting, it was proposed to review the adopted strategy within 18 months in order to ensure its continued alignment with the future operating landscape.

The recommendations as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Dudd.

Cllr Dudd welcomed the strategy, noting that it had been discussed by the Bristol One City Transport Board and supported the proposal that the strategy should be reviewed within 18 months given the Covid-19 circumstances. He also highlighted though the need to resolve the M32 Park & Ride situation in Bristol as quickly as possible.

Cllr Romero also broadly welcomed the strategy and the proposal to review it within 18 months. It was essential to do everything possible to encourage the use of means of transport other than the private car.

Cllr Savage welcomed the strategy, drawing attention also to the high level of engagement / consultation responses, which also showed strong support for the key themes within the strategy around an interchange-based network and reallocation of road space, opportunities for a more flexible approach to the provision of rural services, and the need for high quality vehicles and availability of integrated ticketing. The long term aims of the strategy were the right aims.

Cllr Davies welcomed the strategy and commented that he hoped the funding regime around bus services would change in the post-Covid period. All possible action needed to be taken to encourage public transport use, especially use of buses rather than reverting to private car use; in his view, political leaders should use and be seen to use public transport, including buses, wherever possible.

Professor West welcomed the strategy as a starting point in setting a direction for the region to move in. Moving forwards, the use of buses was one component of the mass transit infrastructure that the region needed. He emphasised the need to discourage private car use and promote the use of public transport.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.

The **West of England Joint Committee** RESOLVED:

1. To agree the West of England Bus Strategy for adoption.
2. To note the summary of feedback from public consultation.
3. To note linkages with the programme of bus infrastructure (as per the separate report on the agenda).
4. To note linkages with, and impacts of, the COVID-19 lockdown on bus operations and strategy delivery and alignment to the bus recovery report (as per the separate report on the agenda).
5. To delegate the agreement of any subsequent minor changes to the adopted Bus Strategy to the WECA Director of Infrastructure.

The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED:

- To note the report.

18

BUS INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

The Combined Authority Committee and the Joint Committee considered a report setting out proposals for further investment in bus infrastructure (agenda item 18).

The Chair highlighted the following aspects of the report and commented as follows:

- The report summarised the funding opportunities available through the Department for Transport and progress on bus infrastructure development, including Park and Ride, the M32 corridor study, bus priority measures, and updates on Mass Transit and the Bath Transport Study.
- The report also highlighted proposed priorities for bus corridors – these were split into 2 phases, based on deliverability. Phase 1 included assessing and taking forward interventions, including:
 - A4 Bath Road (Bristol to Bath Strategic Corridor)
 - A4018/A37 (First Route 2, and Bristol City Centre)
 - A38 North (Bristol City Centre to Thornbury)
 - Bristol city centre
 - A4174 Ring Road / A432 to Yate
 - A37 (S) - Bristol to Midsomer Norton

The recommendations as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Dudd.

Cllr Dudd welcomed in particular the commitment to continue work on mass transit and the bus corridor priority proposals. He also drew attention to the benefits arising from Bristol's Covid-19 response/decision to close Bristol Bridge and Baldwin Street to general traffic and introduce a bus priority route over the bridge.

Cllr Savage generally welcomed the report.

Cllr Romero particularly welcomed the A4 Bath Road (Bristol to Bath Strategic Corridor) proposal and also raised the following points:

- She stressed her broad support for Park and Ride sites at appropriate locations which took account of commuters' needs and were clearly identified for that purpose.
- It was important to find a way to be able to submit bids for financial support through the Rural Mobility Fund to support rural bus services.
- Where there were issues/conflicts around the use of road space (e.g. in relation to the use of narrow roads in cities/towns), these should be resolved locally.

Cllr Davies stated that it was essential to improve information flows, particularly to bus passengers. He was concerned that the use of electric cars should not be incentivised - this may increase the use of electric cars (by those who could afford them) instead of fuel-powered cars but would not contribute positively to modal shift.

Professor West commented that social distancing requirements presented an immediate challenge to Park & Ride services in the short term and that it would be important to ensure effective communications with communities and the public to manage the immediate expectations around this.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.

The West of England Combined Authority Committee RESOLVED:

1. To agree the strategic criteria for initial prioritisation.
2. To agree the prioritised corridors.
3. To agree to the principles set out in Section 7 for progressing Operator Agreements.
4. To note progress on the Mass Transit project and Bath Transport Study.
5. To agree to the creation and funding of the Bristol to Bath Strategic Corridor programme and agree the suggested delivery approach.

The West of England Joint Committee RESOLVED:

- To note the report.

19

WEST OF ENGLAND LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Joint Committee and the Combined Authority Committee considered a report setting out the West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for adoption (agenda item 19).

The Chair highlighted the following aspects of the report and commented as follows:

- The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan was a sub-regional plan which identified priority walking and cycling routes for investment and proposed improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure along these routes. It had been created following a specific, defined methodology set by the Department for Transport. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan was a technical document and was not a walking and cycling strategy in itself and was not intended to constitute the totality of the region's approach to cycling and walking. It was important to be aware of this context and also to bear in mind the decision taken earlier at this meeting, through the Investment Fund

report, to create a £10m capital funding pot for cycling and walking infrastructure.

- In terms of the consultation that had taken place on the plan, the report highlighted good levels of support for a number of the key principles, such as promoting and supporting cycling and walking within the region, support for the reallocation of road space in favour of cycling and walking, and an aspiration to see more investment in cycling and walking across the region.
- All the schemes and improvements detailed in the route plans would be subject to further design and technical work, consultation and funding approvals, and would be designed in line with the Department for Transport's current and future design guidance. An updated version of the latest Plan had been circulated and published. In response to points raised in the public forum, he emphasised that the very clear expectation was that as individual schemes were brought forward, it was essential that full and transparent local consultation took place in each case with local residents and councillors.

Cllr Romero moved the following amendment:

'At the end of recommendation 1, add the wording:

"as the first step to develop a more detailed local cycling and walking strategy."

The full wording of the revised recommendation 1 to therefore read as:

"The Joint Committee is asked:

1. To agree the West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for adoption as the first step to develop a more detailed local cycling and walking strategy."

It was noted that all members were supportive of the amendment.

The Chair accordingly moved that the recommendations as set out in the published report be approved, subject to the above amendment. This was seconded by Cllr Dudd.

Cllr Romero then thanked members for supporting the amendment and commented as follows:

- She would not be giving this report an unqualified endorsement. There were a number of omissions such as no references about rural cycling, although she understood that some types of scheme were excluded from the criteria set by the Department for Transport (DfT).
- Bearing in mind the limitations of this Plan as a technical document, Bath & North East Somerset would support the work that had been undertaken to formulate the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan, which would help to prioritise work and target the ask for investment from DfT to support the proposals. Her understanding was that the DfT regarded this current draft as a strong Plan which should help the region secure more funding and achieve the outcome all wanted of encouraging more cycling and walking, including in Bath & North East Somerset.
- The analysis had helped the understanding of the demand for cycling and walking and the ability for certain communities to adjust their travel habits to travel more sustainably in the future.
- The Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan by its nature should be a live document and the delegation to directors to review and make changes to the plans would ensure that the early concepts for route designs could be tailored to fit the needs of local areas and the local communities that the routes serve.
- She also recognised that the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan guidance from the government was very specific and required looking at population density, propensity to

cycle and other criteria, which meant that some schemes were unfortunately not included in this document. However, she also welcomed the fact that the Plan did not represent the entirety of the region's ambitions for cycling and walking. It was important (whilst pushing for DfT funding) to support proposals within the Plan, but also to make sure that the region continued to use other sources of funding to support these wider aspirations that were important to communities.

- She therefore welcomed the additional Investment Fund investment in cycling and walking measures and was pleased that a range of schemes would be assessed for priority against this funding, not just those schemes that appeared in the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan. She hoped the investment was not limited to the £10 million allocated.

Cllr Dudd welcomed the report's proposals, pointing out also that they had helped to inform Bristol's Covid-19 response.

Cllr Savage welcomed the proposals as forming one part of the region's approach to developing improved cycling and walking infrastructure. He echoed the Chair's comments about ensuring that full and active local consultation took place with local residents and councillors as the detail of individual schemes were brought forward.

Whilst generally welcoming the report, Cllr Davies referred to the public statements received from Cllrs Gollop and Massey and stressed the need to ensure full quality assurance around report detail.

Professor West welcomed the report, drawing attention to the importance of pursuing all available funding opportunities from government to support the development of cycling and walking infrastructure.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations as amended. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.

The **West of England Joint Committee** RESOLVED:

1. To agree the West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for adoption as the first step to develop a more detailed local cycling and walking strategy.
2. To note the summary of feedback from public consultation.
3. To note linkages with, and impacts of, the Covid-19 lockdown on cycling and walking strategy and delivery.
4. To delegate the agreement of any subsequent minor changes to the adopted Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to the WECA Director of Infrastructure.
5. To agree the delegation of decisions on the final content of route plans for the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan document to the WECA Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the relevant Directors of the West of England Councils.

The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED:

- To note the report.

20

STRATEGIC RAIL INVESTMENT

The Combined Authority Committee and the Joint Committee considered a report setting out the necessary delegations required to support the budget and contractual requirements to

deliver strategic rail programmes (agenda item 20).

The Chair highlighted that the report included updates and sought appropriate delegations to enable officers to progress further work to deliver the following:

- MetroWest programme - Phase 1a – Severn Beach & Westbury Line, Phase 1b – Portishead line and Phase 2 – Henbury and Yate lines.
- MetroWest GWR rail services and access to Department for Transport funding.
- The Bristol Temple Meads Eastern Entrance project.
- Work that the Combined Authority and Network Rail were undertaking to produce a joint 10 year Delivery Plan and 25 year Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for rail investment in the West of England.

He also emphasised and very much welcomed the important work that the Combined Authority had taken forward to extend the scope of MetroWest 2 to Gloucester.

The recommendations as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Savage.

Cllr Dudd welcomed the investment taking place, particularly in relation to the Bristol Temple Meads Eastern Entrance project. He expressed wider concerns around the national issue of slippage in the timescales for rail delivery, especially when viewed in the context of how important rail was in terms of the Climate Emergency.

Cllr Romero generally welcomed the report and the investment in rail. She also advised that she remained hopeful that as part of this approach, feasibility work could be carried out on the re-introduction of a railway station at Saltford.

Cllr Savage welcomed the report and the important opportunities for rail investment that would be coming forward, and particularly drew attention to the importance of the extension of the scope of MetroWest 2 to Gloucester, which together with the proposals for a new station at Charfield would significantly enhance the rail commuter offer between Yate and Gloucester.

Cllr Davies stressed the importance of rail as part of the response to the Climate Emergency; in the context of strategic planning and future housing development, it would be important to take every opportunity to improve the connections between where people live and where they work.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.

1. The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to endorse the change to scope (extension to Westbury to be progressed) for MetroWest 1a on the condition that the business case is produced and approved; and to delegate responsibility for approving the business case for this to the WECA CEO in conjunction with UA CEOs.

2. The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to delegate the responsibility for signing the Implementation Agreement for MetroWest 1a with Network Rail to the WECA CEO, in conjunction with UA CEOs, subject to funding.

3. The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to delegate the responsibility for signing the MetroWest Phase 1a Inter-Authority Agreement to the WECA CEO, in conjunction with the UA CEOs, subject to funding.

4. The **West of England Joint Committee** RESOLVED to delegate the responsibility for agreeing procurement strategies for MetroWest 1b for detailed design and construction to the WECA and NSC CEOs, subject to funding.
5. The **West of England Joint Committee** RESOLVED to delegate responsibility for signing Implementation Agreements and Asset Protection Agreements for MetroWest 1b with Network Rail to the WECA CEO and NSC CEOs, subject to funding.
6. The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to endorse the change to scope for MetroWest 2 (extension to Gloucester) on the condition that the business case is updated, approved and represents good value for money.
7. The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to delegate responsibility for signing a revised Inter-Authority Agreement for MetroWest 2 to the WECA CEO, in conjunction with UA CEOs, subject to funding.
8. The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to delegate responsibility for signing the novation of the MetroWest Phase 2 Network Rail Development Services Agreement to the WECA CEO, subject to funding.
9. The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to delegate responsibility for signing Implementation Agreements for MetroWest 2 with Network Rail to the WECA CEO, in conjunction with UA CEOs, subject to funding.
10. The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to delegate responsibility for agreeing procurement strategies for delivery of the Access for All (AfA) station enhancements to the WECA CEO.
11. The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to delegate the approval of the Bristol Temple Meads Eastern Entrance Full Business Case to the WECA CEO, in conjunction with UA CEOs, to a maximum value of £26.645m (which includes the £2.5m already awarded).
12. The **West of England Joint Committee** RESOLVED to delegate responsibility for agreeing the programme of schemes for the 10 Year Delivery Plan for rail investment in the West of England to the WECA CEO, in conjunction with UA CEOs and Strategic Rail Board, should new Department for Transport funding for rail become available during 2020.

21

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

The Combined Authority Committee and the Joint Committee considered a report setting out an update on strategic planning and the formal agreement of the constituent authorities of WECA and North Somerset on the Memorandum of Understanding which would guide the start of the strategic planning process (agenda item 21).

The Chair highlighted that in addition to the Memorandum of Understanding, the report also gave an update on the following:

- The proposed broad timetable for strategic planning activities.
- The steps for the formal duty to co-operate arrangements and the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground as a pre-cursor to starting the respective plan making processes.
- The proposed programme governance for the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) and

an update on the North Somerset Local Plan process.

The Chair also stressed that it was important to note that officers in all the authorities were continuing to work proactively with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in exploring planning freedoms to support the plan making process and the development of a robust and effective strategy that could be delivered.

Cllr Dudd moved the following amendment:

'That the following wording be added to the report narrative (section 1 of the report):

"The ambition to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all in the area will take account of UN Sustainable Development Goals. Using the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals will help to recognise the interdependence of social issues for example, (hunger (SDG1); health (SDG 3); education (SDG 4); gender equality (SGD5); decent work and economic growth (SDG8); strong infrastructure (SDG9); sustainable Cities and Communities (incl housing) (SDG11), sustainable environment (climate change, life in the sea, life on land, and responsible production and consumption (SDGs 11, 13,14,15)). This will support the commitment to promote and ensure clean and inclusive growth so that everyone shares in the future opportunities for growth and renewal.

The UN SDGs will inform work on the cross boundary strategic issues as worked through in the Statement of Common Ground (see section 6 below)."

Add an additional recommendation for approval by the Combined Authority Committee, as follows:

"That as officers work through the detail of the Statement of Common Ground with the Planning & Housing Board, they will report back progress to future WECA/Joint Committee which will include an update of how the SDGs have been incorporated as part of the development process."

It was noted that all members were supportive of the amendment.

The Chair accordingly moved that the recommendations as set out in the published report be approved, subject to the above amendment. This was seconded by Cllr Romero.

Cllr Romero commented that it was important to move on to the development of the SDS; the agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding between the authorities was a key point in the process and would set a broad framework to work within.

Cllr Savage welcomed the report and commented that it would be important to have a strategic spatial plan in place that could direct new development in the region, recognising that how people live and access work and other opportunities was not based on where individual council boundaries fell. From South Gloucestershire's perspective, it was critical to make sure that the government, particularly the planning inspectorate recognised the importance of spatial planning in the region - it was essential not to have 5 year land supplies being used against individual unitary authorities, effectively picking off sites outside of a planned approach because this could inhibit an adoptable plan being put in place. He also noted that future approval stages for this work would be dependent on the authorities' ability to negotiate the required flexibilities with government so that they can have as much confidence as possible that the time, effort and resource put into this process would deliver a successful outcome for all communities across the region.

Cllr Dudd stressed the importance of incorporating the UN SDGs to strengthen the approach, noting also that further work on the detail of the Statement of Common Ground would be

taken forward through the Planning & Housing Board.

Cllr Davies supported Cllr Savage's comments about the importance of securing a strategic spatial plan for the region. It would be essential to listen to communities' views as the process was taken forward.

Professor West welcomed the report and was supportive of taking forward the strategic spatial planning through a joined-up approach across the city region.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations as amended. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.

The **West of England Joint Committee** RESOLVED to:

- Agree the Memorandum of Understanding at Appendix A.

The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED:

1. To agree the Memorandum of Understanding at Appendix A.
2. To agree the proposed draft Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) programme subject to ongoing review, draft at Appendix B.
3. To note the funding request to support the strategic evidence base work required including the transport modelling work (as referenced in the Investment Fund report elsewhere on the agenda).
4. To agree the process for progressing the WECA Statement of Common Ground and the cross-boundary issues to be considered. Officers are asked to work through the detail of the Statement of Common Ground with the Planning & Housing Board and to report back progress to a future WECA/Joint Committee (an example structure/contents page for a Statement of Common Ground was set out at Appendix C).
5. That officers work with the Planning & Housing Board and Transport Board to develop and agree the ongoing non-statutory engagement programme for the SDS and report back progress to a future WECA/Joint Committee.
6. To agree the proposed officer support for the SDS process.
7. To agree the governance and decision-making process for the SDS.
8. To note and support the North Somerset update on progress with their local plan.
9. That the following wording be added to the report narrative (section 1 of the report):

'The ambition to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all in the area will take account of UN Sustainable Development Goals. Using the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals will help to recognise the interdependence of social issues, for example hunger (SDG 1); health (SDG 3); education (SDG 4); gender equality (SGD 5); decent work and economic growth (SDG8); strong infrastructure (SDG 9); sustainable cities and communities (including housing) (SDG 11), sustainable environment (climate change, life in the sea, life on land, and responsible production and consumption) (SDGs 11, 13,14,15). This will support the commitment to promote and ensure clean and inclusive growth so that everyone shares in the future opportunities for growth and renewal.'

The UN SDGs will inform work on the cross boundary strategic issues as worked through in the Statement of Common Ground (see section 6 below).'

10. That as officers work through the detail of the Statement of Common Ground with the Planning & Housing Board, they will report back progress to a future WECA/Joint Committee which will include an update of how the SDGs have been incorporated as part of the development process.

22 UPDATE ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Combined Authority Committee and the Joint Committee considered a report setting out an update on climate emergency planning, including progress towards developing a Climate Emergency Action Plan (agenda item 22).

The Chair referred to the detailed work and actions that were in progress in response to the Climate Emergency across the Combined Authority and the unitary authorities.

Cllr Romero commented that whilst accepting that this was a progress update, there was much more to achieve; climate emergency still felt like it was an “add-on”- climate emergency considerations needed to be embedded as an integral principle underpinning the Combined Authority’s planning and work.

Cllr Savage commented that it was important to maintain a challenge about the ambitiousness of the approach to tackling the climate emergency; he also reiterated his earlier point that climate emergency planning and work should be a central thread, integral to all the Combined Authority’s work and activity. The action plan to be presented in October would bring together all the current activity into one visible place, which would be useful in providing clarity about the many actions that were being taken forward.

Cllr Davies commented that it would be useful to ensure that the action plan included clear timelines for delivery.

The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED:

- To note this update report on climate emergency planning and development of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The **West of England Combined Joint Committee** RESOLVED:

- To note this update report on climate emergency planning.

23 WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

The Combined Authority Committee and the Joint Committee considered a report seeking endorsement of the Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy and a proposal for joint working through the proposed Environment Officer Working Group to support this work (agenda item 23).

The Chair highlighted the following aspects of the report and commented as follows:

- The Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy provided a framework for delivering a strategically planned and managed Green Infrastructure network.
- The strategy had been endorsed by the Environment Agency and Natural England.
- The strategy would provide Green Infrastructure evidence, guidance and tools to support the delivery of other regional and local plans and strategies including the Local Industrial

Strategy, Joint Local Transport Plan, Local Plans and any future joint strategic planning.

- The Strategy also helped provide an opportunity to position the West of England for post-Covid recovery and renewal by setting out a longer-term strategic vision for delivering Green Infrastructure. It included an Action Plan that was set to support the West of England authorities in further evidence gathering, addressing future legislative requirements within the Environment Bill and identifying future projects.

Finally, he reminded members that through the Investment Fund report considered earlier at this meeting, an allocation of £300k had been agreed to develop and move forward quickly on specific Green Infrastructure proposals.

The recommendations as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Savage.

Cllr Savage welcomed the report and the approval through the Investment Fund report earlier at this meeting that would enable a start to be made in delivering specific projects. The recent crisis situation had highlighted the importance of people being able to readily access green / open spaces. He looked forward to ambitious proposals being brought forward now that the strategy was in place.

Cllr Romero supported the above comments and drew attention to the importance of access to open space to many people during the lockdown in terms of their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Cllr Dudd welcomed the strategy and commented that in relation to the skills agenda, it would be important to harness people's existing skills to the new technologies coming forward.

Cllr Davies commented that the lockdown had seen more people access green and open space than before; this activity should be captured in taking forward work in delivering green infrastructure.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.

The **West of England Combined Authority Committee** RESOLVED to:

1. Endorse the Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy (at Appendix A).
2. Endorse the proposed arrangements for the Environment Officer steering group (as set out at para 4.6).

The **West of England Joint Committee** RESOLVED to:

1. Endorse the Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy (at Appendix A).
2. Endorse the proposed arrangements for the Environment Officer steering group (as set out at para 4.6).

24

LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP & INVEST BRISTOL AND BATH BUDGET OUTTURN, APRIL 2019 - MARCH 2020

The Joint Committee considered a report setting out the forecast revenue outturn budget for the West of England Joint Committee for the financial year 2019/20 based on data for the period from April 2019 to March 2020 (agenda item 24). The report covered the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Invest Bristol and Bath revenue budgets.

The recommendations as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Romero.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.

The **West of England Joint Committee** RESOLVED to:

1. Note the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) revenue outturn as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Note the Invest Bristol & Bath revenue outturn as set out in Appendix 2.
3. Approve the net underspend on core LEP activities of £163k to be transferred to the LEP general reserve.

25

LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP ONE FRONT DOOR FUNDING PROGRAMME

The Joint Committee considered a report setting out the latest Local Enterprise Partnership One Front Door funding programme report (agenda item 25).

The Chair highlighted that the report:

- Provided an update on the current Local Growth Fund (LGF) programme and the profile of spend.
- Set out changes to schemes within the current funding programme for which approval was sought.
- Sought a delegation to grant awards through the Research and Innovation Challenge Fund funded through the European Regional Development Fund and Investment Fund.
- Provided an update on the additional £515,000 of Government funding provided for the South West Energy Hub.
- Updated on applications for innovative renewable energy projects for the Low Carbon Challenge Fund.

The recommendations as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Savage.

Cllr Davies and Cllr Romero raised the issue of the risk to LGF spend being fully delivered, as referred to in the report; in response, it was noted that during this final year of the LGF programme, the deadline for final spend was the end of March 2021; £12m of over-programming had been permitted to manage the risk to try to ensure that full spend was achieved. This was being kept under close review each month in conjunction with the unitary authority S151 officers. Cllr Dudd suggested that it would be appropriate to lobby the government about an appropriate degree of flexibility around the 31 March 2021 'hard' deadline. Mayor Bowles commented that this issue was being raised with the government through the M9 group of Metro Mayors.

The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.

The **West of England Joint Committee** RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the change requests for schemes within the Local Growth Fund programme as set

	<p>out in Appendix 1.</p> <p>2. Approve the change requests for schemes within the Economic Development Fund and Revolving Infrastructure Fund programmes set out in Appendix 2.</p> <p>3. To delegate grant award decisions for the Research and Innovation Challenge Fund to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the West of England UA Chief Executives.</p> <p>4. To conditionally approve the £500k application to the Low Carbon Challenge Fund from Ambition Community Energy Ltd.</p>
<p>26</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. The meeting finished at 1.51 p.m.</p>
	<p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p>