

AGENDA ITEM 10

JOINT MEETING - WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE & WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT COMMITTEE

9 OCTOBER 2020

COMMENTS FROM COMBINED AUTHORITY BOARDS

Meetings of the Combined Authority Boards were held during September 2020 as follows:

- * Planning & Housing Board – 7 September 2020
- * Transport Board – 9 September 2020
- * Business Board and Skills Board (joint meeting) – 14 September 2020

A summary of comments from the Boards specifically about items included on the 9 October joint meeting committee agenda is set out below:

REGIONAL COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PLAN & CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (agenda item 11)

a. Comments on the Recovery Plan

Comments from the Business & Skills Boards:

The Boards were briefed on the Recovery Plan developed through the Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce and noted that the Taskforce had identified 5 key principles to support rebuilding of the region's economy:

- **Rebuild business** to help new and existing businesses to survive and thrive in order to safeguard existing and create new jobs.
- **Get residents back to work** in jobs which pay above the living wage and offer security of employment through targeted training and brokerage to available opportunities.
- **Strengthening inclusion** to prevent further widening of inequalities and build an inclusive economy where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential, reducing inequality gaps.
- **Green recovery** to use the changes in behaviour brought about by the pandemic to accelerate our transition to net zero carbon.
- **Renew places** to re-think our approach to 'place' creating greener, healthier, more vibrant places to live and work and so continuing to attract people from across the world.

The Boards generally welcomed the Plan, noting that they will be kept regularly updated as the plan moves into implementation/delivery.

Specific comments:

- * In terms of delivering the measures included in the Plan, it will be particularly important to continue to lobby government on the regional case for additional investment and to secure new resources to take schemes forward and maximise impact.
- * It will be important to capture green economic benefits and the benefits from new ways of working as businesses recover and adapt. Effective measures being taken now around working practices will need to inform longer term solutions.

- * In taking forward the various initiatives, as well as business needs, it will be important to take account of individual needs, e.g. mentoring employees into new roles.
- * The close linkages being made across the tourism and cultural sectors were welcomed.
- * Moving forwards, it will be essential to focus on the delivery of interventions and ensure clear communications with and targeting where possible of those eligible to benefit from involvement with the various schemes and programmes; it will be important to reach those individuals and businesses who are most in need of support.
- * Effective ongoing co-ordination between authorities will be critical so that authorities 'speak with one voice' and ensure consistent messaging about the support available to businesses and residents.
- * It is inevitable, and will have to be accepted, that some businesses will not be sustainable into the future and will close; it will be important to maximise support and retraining opportunities available to those individuals who face redundancy as they seek new roles.

b. Comments on the Climate Emergency Action Plan

Across the Boards, a number of members generally welcomed the work of the officer team and the progress made through partnership working across the authorities in developing the action plan.

Comments from the Planning & Housing Board:

- * It was suggested that as the plan develops, further detail should be included on mechanisms and funding in place to help meet targets.
- * Some concerns were raised over net zero carbon being achievable by 2030.

Comments from the Transport Board:

- * It was suggested by some members that the document could be more ambitious with more definitive targets set rather than aspirations in some areas.
- * A query was raised over research that had been done regarding fuel sources, specifically the use of hydrogen. It was noted that hydrogen for freight was an exploratory area.

Comments from the Business & Skills Boards:

- * Walking and cycling initiatives are to be welcomed but need to be mindful that many elderly people will continue to need the support of reliable public transport.
- * The importance of decarbonising the business sector is recognised, but businesses will need to be given options as to how to take this forward, including low cost options and tools that they can use to achieve this. The use of case studies would be a useful addition.
- * Noted that the twin-tracking of implementing the Regional Recovery Plan and the Climate Emergency Action Plan should ensure that the region was able to move forward positively in achieving both carbon reduction and a thriving economy.

INVESTMENT FUND (agenda item 15)

Comments from the Business & Skills Boards:

*** South Bristol Workspace**

The Boards were briefed on this proposal and noted that:

- a Full Business Case had been submitted by Bristol City Council for the South Bristol Workspace project; this will involve the demolition of existing buildings on an industrial site owned by Bristol City Council located adjacent to Hengrove Park and The Bottle Yard Film Studios and the development of up to 2610m² of light industrial workspace.
- the project seeks £2.7m from the Investment Fund, match funded by £1.2m of European Regional Development Fund.

Board members noted the update and indicated their support for this proposal.

*** Reboot West**

The Boards were briefed on this proposal and noted that:

- a Full Business Case has been submitted by Bristol City Council seeking £720k to extend the Reboot West programme to provide long term support of at least 2 years to enable young care leavers to secure sustained employment, education or training.
- the funding was accommodated within the Business and Skills allocation within the Investment Fund programme.
- the programme aims to support up to 170 care leavers across the West of England through coaches co-located in the local authorities' care team; match funding of £480k was sought from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

Board members noted the update and indicated their support for this proposal.

*** Regional Recovery Taskforce - £5m recovery fund**

The Boards were briefed on and were supportive of these proposals.