

WECA AUDIT COMMITTEE – 16 OCTOBER 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: Dick Daniel

Subject: **Investment in Road Building and Road Improvements**

QUESTION 1 - 16 October 2020

Question from: Dick Daniel

Subject: Investment in Road Building and Road Improvements

Question:

WECA's transport planning seems think that investing in road building and road improvements will help deal with the climate emergency.

Often justified by reducing congestion, where as, as the Department for Transport has acknowledged building more roads increases vehicle use.

How then can WECA's proposal to spend around £3-5 Billion on road building be justified, for the stated aim to be carbon neutral by 2030?

REPLY [text provided by officers and approved by the Chair of the Committee]

The Chair informs the questioner that the WECA Audit Committee is not the decision-making body in this regard. However, the Chair draws the questioner's attention to the following response provided by WECA officers:

WECA's approach for all new transport infrastructure is to balance the needs of the environment, our existing communities' health, inequalities and their need to travel, and the economy. 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.

In taking a balanced approach the Joint Local Transport Plan 4 (JLTP4), adopted in March 2020, sets out an £8.9 billion programme of transport schemes covering rail, cycling, mass transit, buses, walking and a limited number of new road schemes. The road schemes support development proposals and will enable the reallocation of road space to more efficient travel choices and ensure that people are able to move around the network safely, efficiently and as sustainably as possible and connect new development to the existing transport network

The JLTP4 includes a commitment that 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. The JLTP4 also commits to continuing to work with government to gain clarity on national targets for decarbonisation of transport and energy to be embedded in local transport policy and projects.