

# **Minutes of the Joint meeting - West of England Combined Authority Committee and West of England Joint Committee**

## **Friday, 9 October 2020**

### **West of England Combined Authority Committee - members present:**

Mayor Tim Bowles, West of England Combined Authority  
Cllr Toby Savage, Leader, South Gloucestershire Council  
Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council  
Cllr Dine Romero, Leader, Bath & North East Somerset Council

### **West of England Joint Committee - members present:**

Mayor Tim Bowles, West of England Combined Authority  
Cllr Toby Savage, Leader, South Gloucestershire Council  
Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council  
Cllr Dine Romero, Leader, Bath & North East Somerset Council  
Cllr Donald Davies, Leader, North Somerset Council

1	<p><b>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and introduced the committee members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cllr Toby Savage, Leader of South Gloucestershire Council</li> <li>- Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council</li> <li>- Cllr Dine Romero, Leader of Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council</li> <li>- Cllr Don Davies, Leader of North Somerset Council</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Professor Steve West, Chair of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (non-voting committee member).</p>
3	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
4	<p><b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS JOINT MEETING</b></p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the minutes of the joint meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Committee and the West of England Joint Committee held on 19 June 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>
5	<p><b>CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b></p> <p>The Chair shared the following information, focusing in particular on the regional Recovery Plan (to be considered later at the meeting) developed by the Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The publication of the Recovery Plan marked an important step along the road to the region's economic recovery from Coronavirus. The ambitious plan, devised by the Taskforce set out how the Combined Authority and the region's partners would rebuild business, protect and secure well-paid jobs and renew the region, while making sure that all communities had the opportunity to share in future success.</li> <li>* The Recovery Plan built on the package of measures already announced during the last six months to help residents and business deal with the unprecedented situation.</li> <li>* The Plan also built on the strengths of the regional economy and aimed to protect jobs and incomes; the Plan aimed to achieve a recovery that renewed the economy through making it greener and more resilient, so that the region emerged stronger, building on the progress made in recent years.</li> <li>* The Recovery Plan was published alongside the regional Climate Emergency Action Plan. It was essential that these two pieces of work were joined up, to avoid silos and seize the opportunity to make sure that the region really did build back better and cut emissions.</li> <li>* Both plans supported the significant investment already committed to innovation, public transport, walking and cycling, and to supporting businesses and residents' transition to low carbon ways of doing things, including the e-scooter trial which would be launched later this month.</li> <li>* He looked forward to discussing these points with members of the committee later at the meeting.</li> </ul>

<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (QUESTIONS; PETITIONS; STATEMENTS)</b></p> <p>3 questions had been submitted in advance of this meeting on the following subjects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anne Lemon - Climate Emergency Action Plan</li> <li>2. Cllr Jerome Thomas - Climate Emergency Action Plan</li> <li>3. Kim Hicks - Investment Fund report and Southern Orbital study</li> </ol> <p>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 to view on the Combined Authority web site.</p> <p>The Chair then advised that 8 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 to view on the Combined Authority web site. The statements received were on the following subjects (statements were presented by those in attendance):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alison Allan - Climate Emergency Action Plan</li> <li>2. Kim Hicks - Southern orbital study</li> <li>3. David Redgewell - Transport and related issues</li> <li>4. Christina Biggs - Transport/rail issues</li> <li>5. Cllr Martin Fodor - Climate Emergency Action Plan</li> <li>6. Dick Daniel - Investing in trams</li> <li>7. Andy O'Brien / Martin Garrett - Integrating low-carbon transport in the West of England</li> <li>8. Cllr Sarah Warren - Climate Emergency Action Plan</li> </ol>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>PETITIONS TO BE PRESENTED BY ANY MEMBER OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE OR WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>None for this meeting.</p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP</b></p> <p>Specific written comments from the Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership about items included on the agenda for this meeting were noted. These comments can be viewed on the Combined Authority website.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COMBINED AUTHORITY'S OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>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 7 October. The comments had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were available to view on the Combined Authority web site.</p> <p>Cllr Stephen Clarke, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee then presented the written comments, which had highlighted the following points:</p> <p><b>Covid Recovery Plan and Climate Emergency Action Plan (agenda item 11):</b> Scrutiny members had been pleased to welcome Mayor Bowles to their meeting to discuss these items and hoped he would attend future meetings on a reasonably regular basis as they had found the engagement helpful.</p> <p>In broad terms, the committee had welcomed both the Recovery Plan and the Climate Emergency Action Plan. Specific comments were as follows:</p> <p><b>Recovery Plan:</b> Members welcomed the breadth and ambition of the plan, and the specific detail of the</p>

actions to be taken forward, as developed through the Taskforce, with the full involvement of the region's local authorities and the business and other communities.

**Climate Emergency Action Plan:**

Members broadly welcomed the Climate Emergency Action Plan, recognising the clear structure of the plan. They particularly welcomed the headline ambition to achieve net zero carbon in the region by 2030, which was significantly ahead of the 2050 national target and acknowledged the work of officers and the engagement and partnership working that had taken place across the authorities in developing the action plan.

Members, however, also wished to draw attention to the following issues that should be fully taken on board in taking actions forward:

\* It would be important to ensure the development of a suite of SMART (Specific; Measurable; Attainable; Relevant; Timed) targets as an integral part of the action plan. It was critical to define goals and establish clear milestones against which progress and success could be measured and demonstrated.

\* There would need to be clarity about how taking forward these actions would be factored into / linked in with the evidence base that would inform the review of key strategies, plans and projects, e.g. the Local Industrial Strategy, the next Joint Local Transport Plan and future investment in sustainable transport.

\* Given the twin 'drivers' of facilitating economic recovery and tackling the climate emergency, it would be essential to build on the region's acknowledged strengths around innovation and technology by maximising investment opportunities (e.g. around the hydrogen economy and clean technologies) that will bring both economic and environmental benefit.

**Investment Fund (agenda item 15):**

Scrutiny members noted the latest report and the fact that £32.2m of headroom had been identified in the programme to 2022/23 as a result of the detailed review of scheme deliverability. They noted also that detailed proposals for the reallocation of funding from this headroom were to be presented in December and were supportive of the proposal that a significant part of this funding, approx. £20-£25m be used to create a Development Infrastructure Fund.

**West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset:**

It was scrutiny members' strong view that it would be beneficial to the region for North Somerset Council to join the Combined Authority, so that the Combined Authority's geography aligned with the West of England's functional economic area. They encouraged all Mayors and Leaders to do everything possible to bring this about in discussion with government so that these arrangements were in place in advance of the 2021 Combined Authority Mayoral election.

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**COMMENTS FROM THE COMBINED AUTHORITY'S BOARDS**

Specific comments from the 4 Combined Authority Boards about items included on this meeting agenda were noted. These comments can be viewed on the Combined Authority website.

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**REGIONAL COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PLAN & CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

The Combined Authority Committee and the Joint Committee considered a report seeking endorsement of the regional Recovery Plan and approval of the regional Climate Emergency Action Plan (agenda item 11).

The Chair highlighted that this report very much set the context for this meeting and

commented as follows:

\* Firstly, as Chair of the Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce, he expressed his deepest thanks to all those who had participated in the work of the Taskforce, culminating in the evidence-based Recovery Plan which was before the committees today.

\* The work had been developed by local experts in industry, education and communities. Over 180 organisations across all sectors had been involved.

\* This was an ambitious plan to rebuild business, get residents back to work, strengthen inclusion, support a green recovery and renew the region's places.

\* The Climate Emergency Action Plan was an intrinsic part of the recovery, which was why these papers were being presented for approval together.

\* The Climate Emergency Action Plan had been developed with full input from representatives from unitary authority partners and with close input from business on the innovation opportunities and skills needed to foster clean growth. This co-production would continue in implementing the actions set out in the plan and he extended his thanks to everyone involved for their ongoing hard efforts.

\* The Action Plan set out actions in 5 challenge areas and detailed the scale of the challenge faced and the actions taken so far. Each year, a report on progress against these actions as set out in the 5 challenge areas would be produced in line with the Combined Authority's monitoring and evaluation framework.

\* Now was the time to continue to work together as a team across the West of England and make these plans a reality. The region's local authorities had of course also been developing their own local responses and plans and great care had been taken to make sure these activities were aligned.

The recommendations for both the Combined Authority Committee and the Joint Committee as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Savage.

Cllr Savage welcomed the work of officers and partners in developing both plans, noting that the work complemented and aligned with workstreams being taken forward in these areas by the individual unitary authorities. In South Gloucestershire, these initiatives included:

\* a new campaign to encourage people to stay safe, shop local and support high streets to rebuild.

\* a clear aim moving forwards to ensure availability of space on every high street to support learning and flexible working.

There were also clear linkages between the regional plans and the themes and priorities included in the recently approved South Gloucestershire Council Plan 2020-2024.

Cllr Romero advised that she would be supporting the plans. With regard to the Recovery Plan, she stressed the ongoing importance of engaging with communities and supporting greater inclusion. In relation to the Climate Emergency Action Plan, she commented that the Plan was not in her view as ambitious as it could be. She would continue to push the authority to be ambitious and more proactive in tackling the emergency. As a more general point, she stressed the importance of reports being written in as public-friendly a way as possible - this should be taken into account in future progress reports on these plans.

Cllr Davies supported the Climate Emergency Action Plan but suggested that the plan needed to be stronger moving forwards; if the aim was to have a green recovery, then climate emergency action planning needed to be prominently involved within that. In terms of the Recovery Plan, he commented that the changing needs of the rural economy must be recognised and taken on board - for example, broadband connectivity in rural parts of the

region was a significant issue and would impact on the ability of start-up businesses to get underway in these areas.

Mayor Rees thanked officers and partners for their work. In terms of taking the Recovery Plan delivery forward, an agile approach must be maintained, recognising the uncertainty of the Covid situation and the fact that adjustments to the approach may be needed to meet the challenges ahead. He welcomed the commitment to inclusion within the Plan and the recognition of the role of freelance workers, particularly in the creative industry sector. In relation to the Climate Emergency Action Plan, he welcomed the cross-referencing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and added that as a complementary work strand, Bristol had now launched its ecological strategy.

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 endorse the regional Covid-19 Recovery Plan and support the next stages of the Taskforce's work.
2. To approve the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

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

1. To endorse the regional Covid-19 Recovery Plan and support the next stages of the Taskforce's work.
2. To approve the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

**12 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP & INVEST BRISTOL AND BATH BUDGET OUTTURN, APRIL - JUNE 2020**

The Joint Committee considered a report setting out the latest forecast revenue outturn budget for the West of England Joint Committee for the financial year 2020/21 based on data for the period from April to June 2020 (agenda item 12). The report covered the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Invest Bristol and Bath revenue budgets.

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

\* Appendix 1 set out the Local Enterprise Partnership forecast revenue outturn to the end of June 2020. This showed spend of £6.9m against an original budget of £5.6m. The difference of £1.3m was mainly due to the receipt and phasing of spend for government grants. There was a forecast underspend of £80k and this was mainly due to treasury management surplus and the timing of a grant between financial years.

\* Appendix 2 set out Invest Bristol and Bath's revenue outturn position for 2020/21, which showed a surplus of £88k at year end. This surplus related to Business and Skills directorate recharge costs being split over more projects than originally budgeted due to new funding from government. This would result in a lower recharge to Invest Bristol and Bath.

In discussion, members agreed that an update / briefing should be provided on a regular basis to the region's Mayors and Leaders on the progress being made on inward investment and trade following on from the 2019 review and the new business case that had subsequently been agreed for Invest Bristol and Bath. This should include information about the geographical spread of new inward investment across the region.

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

1. To note the Local Enterprise Partnership revenue outturn as set out in Appendix 1.
2. To note the Invest Bristol & Bath revenue outturn as set out in Appendix 2.

**13**

**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 13).

The Chair highlighted that:

\* The report set out proposals for the use of the £13.7m Getting Building Fund secured from the Government. This supported the following capital projects that would benefit the region's recovery:

- Keynsham town centre improvements
- Enabling infrastructure at Bath Quays South
- The Umbrella testbed in South Gloucestershire
- Emersons Green local transport enhancements
- Improvements on the A4018 Corridor
- Weston General Stores
- Opening of the Portway Park and Ride station.

\* The report also sought approval for the Full Business Case for Temple Quarter Enabling Works (Bristol project) with an allocation of up to £32m to deliver infrastructure to enable the development of significant office space, residential units, a hotel and conference centre and new public realm. This was a flagship regional project that he was pleased to see progressing.

\* The report sought approval of a delegation to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive (in consultation with South West LEP Chief Executives) to take forward the Green Homes Grant, as announced in the Chancellor's Summer economic update in July. This was part of a national green recovery programme from which the South West Energy Hub was likely to receive a grant allocation of between £40-55m. This would help low income households improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

\* A number of scheme change requests were included in the appendices to projects funded through the Local Growth Fund, Economic Development Fund and the Revolving Infrastructure Fund.

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

Mayor Rees welcomed the proposed allocation of up to £32m to deliver enabling works at Temple Quarter. As part of this development, significant levels of new housing and new jobs would be realised, and the full development of the site would bring a very positive GVA impact. Taking forward the work on this major project was a good example of demonstrating to government the region's ability to deliver major projects. He welcomed the work being taken forward to establish a joint delivery team to support this work, and (in terms of the change requests) the investment proposed to assist the Bristol Beacon transformation project.

Cllr Savage welcomed the report, drawing attention to improvements in the Yate area, where progress on the A432 Yate Park & Ride together with the increased frequency of MetroWest rail services to/from Yate represented a significantly improved public transport offer for the area.

Cllr Romero welcomed the investment in Temple Quarter (this being a project which would bring benefits for the whole region) and the investment in Keynsham town centre improvements and at Bath Quays. She was also supportive of the proposals to take forward Green Homes grant funding arrangements; it would be important to ensure an equitable distribution of the grant to ensure that assistance was targeted at those in the greatest need.

Cllr Davies welcomed the report, drawing attention in particular to the investment in Weston General Stores.

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 approve the proposals for the use of the Getting Building Fund as set out in paragraphs 5.1 - 5.3.
2. To approve the Full Business Case for Temple Quarter Enabling Works up to £32m, with a requirement on Bristol City Council to provide detailed information on the works specification and anticipated cost profile.
3. To approve the change requests for schemes within the LGF programme as set out in Appendix 1.
4. To approve the change requests for schemes within the EDF and RIF programmes set out in Appendix 2.
5. To delegate the detailed funding allocations and grant funding arrangements for the South West Energy Hub Green Homes Grant to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the South West LEP Chief Executives.

At this point in the meeting, it was noted that the business relevant to the West of England Joint Committee had been concluded. Cllr Davies left the meeting at this point.

**14**

**WECA & MAYORAL BUDGET OUTTURN, APRIL-JUNE 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 2020/21 based on data for the period April to June 2020 (agenda item 14).

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

- \* A small underspend of £11k was forecast in relation to the Mayoral Fund, as set out in Appendix 1; also in relation this fund, a contribution of £396k would be made to an earmarked reserve, in line with budget, to meet the estimated costs of the Combined Authority Mayoral election in 2021.
- \* In terms of the Combined Authority's revenue budget, a net surplus of £565k was forecast, as set out in Appendix 2, which was due to higher income received from cash balances.
- \* The report set out various transport grants received from the government to support local bus operators through the Covid period, and also proposed that the committee should approve the continuation of paying concessionary fares, in line with budgeted profile, to local transport operators up to 31 December 2020, and also to community transport providers and to meet current service contracts.



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

Given the ongoing Covid situation, Mayor Rees welcomed the continued financial support to local transport operators and community transport providers. He also welcomed the fact that payments to Adult Education providers had been made in line with the budgeted profile to maintain the stability of the provider base.

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 continuation of paying concessionary fares, in line with budgeted profile, to local transport operators up to 31 December 2020, and to Community Transport Providers and in respect of current Service Contracts with delegation for enabling these payments provided to the Head of Strategic Transport Integration.
4. Approve an internal virement of £150k from Treasury Management surplus and consultancy savings to establish capacity in the financial services team.
5. Approve a drawdown of £403k from the WECA Business Rates Reserve to fund the projected income shortfall in business rates for 2020/21.

## **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 highlighted the following aspects of the report and commented as follows:

- \* Through discussions with the unitary authorities, very careful ongoing consideration was being given to the deliverability of, and priorities within the current £350m investment programme in response to Covid-19.
- \* Today's report clarified that £32.2m of headroom had been identified in the programme to 2022/23; detailed proposals for the reallocation of this funding would be presented to December's committee meeting.
- \* Some of that funding would be used to create a Development Infrastructure Fund, following the model of the Land Acquisition Fund that was already in place, and could support both housing and economic development infrastructure. It was also planned to increase the allocation for the Land Acquisition Fund itself given this was proving to be a valuable funding model.
- \* Work was taking place to identify suitable proposals for the fund – the Hengrove Park, Bottleyard Studios, Milsom Street renewal and Yate Town Centre regeneration schemes all showed a potentially good fit.
- \* It was also proposed to increase the Regional Recovery Fund to £9.4m. This would bring further support to Recovery Plan actions to create/facilitate:

- A £2m Digital Skills investment programme
- A High Streets renewal catalyst fund
- Phase 2 of the Low Carbon Challenge Fund
- A Small Business Resilience Grant Programme, a third of which would be 'ringfenced' for cultural and creative businesses, and
- A Covid-19 Community Recovery Fund to support disadvantaged communities in finding innovative solutions to improve access to employment.

\* The report also sought approval of the Full Business Case for the South Bristol Workspace with an award of £2.7m.

\* The committee was also asked to approve the Reboot West Full Business Case and award of £720k subject to match funding being secured.

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

Mayor Rees welcomed the report, referring to the importance of progressing funding approvals for schemes as quickly as possible through the Development Infrastructure Fund for 'shovel-ready' projects such as Hengrove Park (where significant new housing is being provided) and Bottleyard studios. He also strongly supported the investment in the South Bristol Workspace project and Reboot West.

In addition to his earlier comments welcoming progress on the Yate A432 Park & Ride proposals, Cllr Savage particularly drew attention to the significance of the proposed investment in taking forward phase 2 of the Low Carbon Challenge Fund programme and to support Reboot West, noting that the latter project would provide long term support of at least 2 years to enable young care leavers to secure sustained employment, education or training. He also welcomed the progress in taking forward green infrastructure initiatives, particularly the Common Connections project which would see green infrastructure improvements that would benefit people and wildlife across the east fringe of South Gloucestershire.

Cllr Romero welcomed the potential for funding improvements to Milsom Street in central Bath through the Development Infrastructure Fund. On a separate point, she suggested that at an appropriate point, consideration be given to adjusting the name 'Park and Ride' to reflect that people may wish to access a range of transport options from these sites.

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 identification of £32.2m of headroom in the programme to 2022/23 as set out in paragraph 5-7.
2. To approve the Feasibility and Development Funding Application for the Access for All - Step Free Stations Feasibility Study and award of £100k.
3. To approve the Outline Business Case for the Yate A432 Park & Ride and delegate approval of the Full Business Case to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils.
4. To allocate a further £4.395m to the regional recovery fund from the Business and Skills allocation, with individual project business case approvals falling within the existing delegation to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils.

	<p>5. To approve the Full Business Case for the South Bristol Workspace and the award of £2.7m subject to securing the ERDF funding, obtaining planning consent, resolution of land issues and finalising the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.</p> <p>6. To approve the Reboot West Full Business Case and award of £720k subject to securing the match funding, finalising the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and provision of a detailed programme.</p> <p>7. Approve the change requests for schemes within the current programme as set out in Appendix 2.</p> <p>8. To amend the approved capital programme for individual project approvals agreed at the June Committee and within this report.</p>
<p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>INFORMATION ITEM - DECISIONS TAKEN AT THIS MEETING</b></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 12.21 p.m.</p>
	<p><b>Signed:</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b></p>