

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

Friday, 4 December 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
Professor Steve West, Chair, 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
Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council
Cllr Dine Romero, Leader, Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Donald Davies, Leader, North Somerset Council
Professor Steve West, Chair, 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 members of the committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cllr Toby Savage, Leader of South Gloucestershire Council - Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council - Cllr Dine Romero, Leader of Bath & North East Somerset Council - Cllr Don Davies, Leader of North Somerset Council - Professor Steve West, Chair, West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (non-voting member) <p>At this point, the committee observed a minute's silence in memory and respect of the four people who had sadly died in an incident the previous day at the Wessex Water site in Avonmouth.</p>
2	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>None.</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:</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 9 October 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 information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The region had experienced a month of national lockdown, and a move this week to ongoing restrictions that would present significant challenges to the region's residents and businesses. Now though, there was encouraging news around the planning for the roll-out of the Covid vaccination programme. * The Combined Authority, working with the region's councils, continued to support individuals and businesses. This included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working together to make sure the Additional Restrictions Grant of £23m was delivered consistently within the region; over 2,000 businesses had applied by the end of the previous week. - putting into place some of the ambitious plans to build back as set out in the Regional Recovery Plan, using the £9.4m Regional Recovery Fund to support some of the hardest hit sectors. - securing additional Adult Education Budget funding to help those who were unemployed back into jobs. - supporting the Climate Emergency Action Plan through extending the Low Carbon Challenge Fund with an additional £1.8m investment. * Funding was also being used to support regional initiatives including MetroWest rail, business support and innovation, and the Workforce for the Future and Future Bright programmes. * Last week, the Chancellor had reconfirmed the government's commitment to a multi-year transport funding settlement for Combined Authority regions from 2022-23, giving the

Combined Authority the resources to deliver ambitious sustainable transport plans for the region. This was an approach he had been pushing for along with the M9 group of metro-mayors.

* Specific investment in the region's transport was highlighted in the National Infrastructure Strategy with feasibility funding to support the reopening of St. Anne's Park station in Bristol. There was other good news in that £2.96 million had been secured from the Department for Transport to encourage more cycling and walking.

* The e-scooter trial had been launched in Bath and Bristol last month. This was proving very popular and he looked forward to making further announcements on extending the trial areas very soon.

* He had expressed elsewhere his disappointment that North Somerset would not be joining the Combined Authority in advance of next year's Mayoral election; but close work continued through the Joint Committee, including through the One Front Door programme which supported projects across the whole of the West of England.

* He had already announced his intention to retire as West of England Mayor but would continue to work right through until the end of his term. He was committed to the work to recover and grow the regional economy in a sustainable way.

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

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

1. David Redgewell - WECA / North Somerset situation
2. Tony Jones - Bristol airport expansion
3. Alison Allan - Bristol airport expansion
4. Jacqueline Walkden - Bristol airport expansion
5. Kate Gadsden - Bristol airport expansion
6. Kim Hicks - Spatial Development Strategy engagement
7. Mark Usher - Bristol airport expansion
8. James Collett - Bristol airport expansion
9. Steven Smith - Bristol airport expansion
10. George Oakenfold - Bristol airport expansion
11. Phil Heath - Bristol airport expansion
12. Caroline New - Bristol airport expansion
13. Mary Collett - Bristol airport expansion
14. Richard Baxter - Bristol airport expansion
15. Question from: Tony Lloyd - Rail projects

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.

The Chair then advised that 75 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):

1. David Redgewell - Regional governance; transport issues
2. Lucy Travis - Regional governance; transport issues
3. Kim Hicks - Spatial Development Strategy engagement
4. Clive Weston - Bristol airport expansion
5. Jill Coleman - Bristol airport expansion
6. Gavin Smith / Martin Garrett - Integrated Transport Authority
7. Dr Sarah Keown - Bristol airport expansion
8. Janet Grimes - Bristol airport expansion
9. Glenys Smith - Bristol airport expansion
10. Dr Tessa Cook - Bristol airport expansion

11. Richard Matthews - Bristol airport expansion
12. Mary Collett - Bristol airport expansion
13. Tarisha Finnegan-Clarke - Bristol airport expansion
14. Dr John Leach - Bristol airport expansion
15. Greg Dring – Bristol airport expansion
16. Breda Kingston – Bristol airport expansion
17. Jackie Head – Bristol airport expansion
18. Oliver Lax – Bristol airport expansion
19. Simon Omiotec – Bristol airport expansion
20. Joanne Pemberton – Bristol airport expansion
21. Jill Tarlton - Bristol airport expansion
22. Rachel Lunnon - Bristol airport expansion
23. Polly Bramley - Bristol airport expansion
24. Nikki Jones - Bristol airport expansion
25. Kingsley Belton - Bristol airport expansion
26. Phil Sturgeon - Bristol airport expansion
27. Nicky Sweetland - Bristol airport expansion
28. Piers Sadler - Bristol airport expansion
29. Rory Peliza - Bristol airport expansion
30. Rachel Wilson - Bristol airport expansion
31. Annie Beardsley - Bristol airport expansion
32. Robert Helson - Bristol airport expansion
33. Helen Phillips - Bristol airport expansion
34. Robin Simpson - Bristol airport expansion
35. Alexandra Limberg - Bristol airport expansion
36. Brian Piper - Bristol airport expansion
37. Arne Ringner - Bristol airport expansion
38. Deasy Bamford - Bristol airport expansion
39. Amy Fletcher - Bristol airport expansion
40. Bridget Page - Bristol airport expansion
41. Cllr Huw James - WECA & North Somerset
42. Cllr Brian Allinson - Strategic rail investment report - Parkway railway bridge
43. Peter Andreson - Bristol airport expansion
44. Laura Norton - Bristol airport expansion
45. Grant Mercer - Bristol airport expansion
46. Helen Struthers - Bristol airport expansion
47. Bob Langton - Bristol airport expansion
48. Constance Piper - Bristol airport expansion
49. Sue Poole - Bristol airport expansion
50. James Collett - Bristol airport expansion
51. Rob Bryher - Bristol airport expansion
52. Margaret Boushel - Bristol airport expansion
53. John Waters - Bristol airport expansion
54. Olga Taylor - Pilning railway station
55. Duncan Porter - Bristol airport expansion
56. Andy Parsons - Bristol airport expansion
57. John Tarlton - Bristol airport expansion
58. Katherine Piper - Bristol airport expansion
59. David Clegg - Bristol airport expansion
60. Diana Warner - Bristol airport expansion
61. Bill Roberts - Bristol airport expansion
62. Dawn McGhee - Bristol airport expansion
63. Fenella Butler - Bristol airport expansion
64. Renee Slater - Bristol airport expansion
65. Dr Christine Hine - Bristol airport expansion

- 66. Garvan Donnelly - Bristol airport expansion
- 67. Jon Turney - Bristol airport expansion
- 68. Caroline New - Bristol airport expansion
- 69. Sally Lawson - Bristol airport expansion
- 70. Maggie Singham - Bristol airport expansion
- 71. Tony Lloyd - WECA; rail issues
- 72. Gaie Delap - Bristol airport expansion
- 73. Andy O'Brien - Bristol airport expansion
- 74. Richard Baxter - Bristol airport expansion
- 75. Charlie Low - Bristol airport expansion

The meeting was then adjourned at 2.38 pm and reconvened at 3.00 pm

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, Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) commented as follows:

* Since the Regional Recovery Plan was signed off in October, the subsequent national lockdown and current Covid tiers had impacted significantly on businesses. In light of this, the LEP, through the Regional Recovery Taskforce had been focusing on getting an understanding of the different consequences of Covid-19 on different parts of the business community and industries. Clearly, they were not all impacted in the same way.

* The LEP Board had been taking soundings and working hard to understand these impacts and to bring intelligence into the discussions with unitary authorities and the Combined Authority to make sure that support could be mobilised quickly. He paid tribute to unitary authority colleagues and the Combined Authority for being able to react and adjust quickly, within short timescales, to support businesses and also to the authorities' role in seeking to influence government over the ways that support could be delivered. The Covid tiering system meant there would be at least another few months of review, resetting and rebasing; the LEP would continue working to raise the business perspective. A key lesson from the pandemic was that a regional recovery approach was really essential.

* The LEP particularly welcomed the report on strategic rail investment, including the partnership approach with Network Rail and the clear alignment to the wider Western Gateway rail plan, and looked forward to seeing how that investment would really start to impact on the region.

* The LEP was also very pleased to see the supplementary report submitted by WECA as part of the government's 5 year gateway review of the investment programme. This was about showing the value from the impact of the Combined Authority, working in partnership with the unitary authorities and also with businesses to bring the investment that was very clearly needed across the city region. It was about how the region invests in skills, protects and creates new jobs, and as per the Local Industrial Strategy, drives clean, inclusive growth. Partnership working and collaboration was key to all this.

* The business representatives of the LEP Board had been very supportive of North Somerset joining WECA and were very disappointed that achieving the consensus to do this within the timeframes that were set for the elections in May 2021 had not been successful; collaborative work would of course continue through the LEP with the 4 unitary authorities and he hoped that in time it would be possible to resolve the issue.

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 meeting held on 2 December. 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 written comments, which had highlighted the following points:

1. WECA and North Somerset

He highlighted that he had written on 20 November to the Mayors and Leaders of the West of England authorities on behalf of the scrutiny members (the full text of the letter was set out at Appendix 1 of the written scrutiny comments). Scrutiny members were aware of the motion passed at the Bristol City Council meeting on 25 November and had asked for clarity from WECA officers about the options that may still be available and the processes and timeline that would need to be followed to enable North Somerset Council to join WECA.

He stressed that in scrutiny members' view, Mayors and Leaders needed to urgently discuss the issue and try and ensure that the region, including North Somerset, had the ability to speak with one voice when decisions were being made by central government that impacted on all the region's residents.

2. Strategic Rail Investment (agenda item 11)

The committee was very supportive of the 10 year rail plan and strongly supported all measures that could be delivered as part of this plan in terms of electrification of rail and ensuring fully accessible stations. Scrutiny members noted that the Strategic Outline Business Case for mass transit would be completed in 2021, and that, depending on the outcome, this might ultimately result in some future adjustments being required to the rail plan.

3. Investment Fund (agenda item 15)

The committee was supportive of the proposals being brought forward through this report, including the creation of the Development Infrastructure Fund and the Housing and Regeneration Enabling Fund.

4. Adult Education Budget – approach for the 2021/22 academic year (agenda item 16)

The scrutiny committee was supportive of these proposals and had received an update from the Scrutiny Skills member sub-group which had looked at this issue in depth and had particularly welcomed:

- * The commissioning of adult education providers that will work towards the region's Local Industrial Strategy, Employment and Skills Plan and economic recovery from Covid-19.

- * WECA's joined up approach to the Adult Education Budget, encouraging the sharing of provider delivery plans to avoid duplication within FE Colleges.

Members also wished to encourage:

- * More working with overview and scrutiny in this area, in particular to review performance data for the Adult Education budget.

- * That Further Education and Higher Education providers work closer together to work towards Climate Emergency targets, seeing the green industrial strategy as a possible future impetus for greater joint working to achieve the region's low carbon aims.

Committee members had also noted and welcomed WECA's investment in the We Work for Everyone project to improve employment outcomes for people with learning disabilities across the region.

<p>10</p>	<p>COMMENTS FROM THE COMBINED AUTHORITY'S BOARDS</p> <p>Specific comments from the 4 Combined Authority Boards about items included on this meeting agenda were noted as per the report included in the committee agenda pack.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>STRATEGIC RAIL INVESTMENT</p> <p>The Combined Authority Committee and the Joint Committee considered a report seeking approval to adopt the 10 Year Rail Delivery Programme and endorsement of the schemes included as the basis for future rail investment in the region (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 10 year Rail Delivery plan encompassed all existing rail projects, including MetroWest and the key strategic enhancements to be delivered over the next 10 years and aligned with Network Rail's current and long-term plans. * MetroWest was a project of real national significance, and that significance was recognised in the National Infrastructure Strategy published last week by the Government. <p>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 Romero.</p> <p>Cllr Romero commented that she welcomed this investment, which was essential if the region was to move to more sustainable modes of transport; having a 10 year rail delivery plan in place was key to the region's ambitions in relation to climate change and sustainability. Whilst welcoming the plan, she expressed slight disappointment that Salford station remained a scheme in the category that 'could' come forward in the next 10 years.</p> <p>Cllr Savage welcomed the regional and pan-regional approach being taken to the future of rail. Delivering these complementary strategies would also serve to dramatically enhance the already powerful connectivity offer of the Western Gateway extending to South Wales and demonstrated why the West of England was such a central focus for that geography and was really on the radar of government and others for this sort of investment.</p> <p>From a South Gloucestershire perspective, he added that these rail enhancements were vital to supporting the sustainable development of Yate and Charfield. The programme also included an important enhancement and redevelopment at Bristol Parkway which was a focal arrival and transition point for South Gloucestershire and in a part of the region that was economically successful. He echoed the points raised by one of the public speakers earlier at the meeting, Cllr Brian Allinson, who, along with his ward colleagues, had campaigned relentlessly to see improvements being made to the very noticeable 'pinch point' underneath the Parkway railway bridge. He also welcomed the positive impacts the plan would bring for Yate as South Gloucestershire's largest town and through the masterplanning work that committee members had already agreed to resource - that work was re-imagining Yate town centre, alongside increased frequency of rail services, the exciting prospect of a transformed Yate train station, and the development of the park and ride just a couple of hundred metres away, demonstrating an integrated transport offer and investment in sustainable travel that was being delivered through the Combined Authority. Overall, he was very happy to support the report's recommendations.</p> <p>Cllr Davies also welcomed the regional approach to transport delivery and the update on the funding. He expressed a slight concern in that a less bureaucratic approach from government could enable quicker progress to be made in bringing forward and delivering 'shovel ready' rail projects for the benefit of residents and to help meet some of the climate emergency goals. In terms of climate emergency considerations, he was disappointed that in appendix 1,</p>

there was no reference to electrification to Bristol Port as his understanding was that it was government policy that there should be electric rail to all ports, and certainly to a major port like Bristol. He welcomed the extra funding for station enhancements, including those at Nailsea and Backwell station, but clearly there was a lot more to do in terms of making that station truly accessible for people with disabilities. Overall though, he was very supportive of the report.

Mayor Rees welcomed the report, which represented good news for further investment in the region's public transport offer, emphasising the importance of the West of England as a central hub within the Western Gateway, bringing added connectivity to the region. Very specifically, the Metrowest phase 1a Severn Beach to Westbury line increased frequency was very welcome. He also raised the issue of accessibility; it was essential to press on with work to make sure stations were accessible; a number of stations in Bristol were not, and this involved unacceptable inconvenience for disabled people. For a truly accessible, equal and fair public transport system, it was essential to drive forward progress on this.

Professor West welcomed the report but stressed that there needed to be ongoing investment to connect up infrastructure in the region and get public transport working effectively and efficiently and in a way that met the accessibility needs of communities. This programme was a really good start. It would be essential to deliver these projects efficiently and effectively with pace but also with control. Nationally, lots of these big projects had seen costs overrun and it was essential not to get caught in that trap. It would be important to keep the pressure on government to help ensure that projects are delivered at pace, so that the investment started to 'pay back' but also gave a platform to then build on in terms of future bids for public transport improvements.

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

1. The West of England Joint Committee RESOLVED:

To adopt the 10 Year Rail Delivery Programme and to endorse its programme of schemes as the basis for future rail investment in the West of England area.

2. The West of England Joint Committee RESOLVED:

To delegate authority to the WECA Chief Executive Officer in conjunction with the West of England Unitary Authority Chief Executive Officers to approve the project scope and value for money assessment and release of funding for the next phase of MetroWest Phase 1a (Severn Beach & Westbury Lines) works up to a value of £1m from within the Investment Fund from within the agreed £116.4m of MetroWest Phase 1 budget to facilitate the start of enhanced services.

3. The West of England Combined Authority Committee RESOLVED:

To delegate responsibility for approval of the Full Business Case for up to £552k from the Investment Fund for the Access for All (AfA) station enhancements to the WECA Chief Executive Officer in conjunction with the West of England Unitary Authority Chief Executive Officers.

4. The West of England Joint Committee RESOLVED:

To delegate authority to the WECA Chief Executive Officer in conjunction with the West of England Unitary Authority Chief Executive Officers to approve the signing of an Enhanced Service and Funding Support Agreement with First Great Western Limited to support initial start-up costs to enable operation of MetroWest Services.

<p>12</p>	<p>LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP & INVEST BRISTOL AND BATH BUDGET OUTTURN, APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2020</p> <p>The Joint Committee considered a report setting out the latest forecast revenue outturn budget for the West of England Joint Committee (agenda item 12). The report covered the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Invest Bristol and Bath (IBB) revenue budgets.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted that the report was based on data for the period from April to September 2020.</p> <p>The West of England Joint Committee RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the LEP revenue outturn as set out in Appendix 1. 2. To note the IBB revenue outturn as set out in Appendix 2.
<p>13</p>	<p>LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP ONE FRONT DOOR FUNDING PROGRAMME</p> <p>The Joint Committee considered a report setting out the latest Local Enterprise Partnership One Front Door funding programme report (agenda item 13).</p> <p>The Chair highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * As reported in October, a further £13.7m had been secured for the region through the Getting Building Fund aimed at funding capital projects to help accelerate national recovery. £12m of this was being utilised to meet the Local Growth Fund over-programming, enabling full funding and completion. One new project, Weston General Stores was being added to the programme, for which a business case was being developed. * The report also presented the latest proposed scheme changes in relation to projects funded through the Local Growth Fund, Economic Development Fund and the Revolving Infrastructure Fund. <p>The recommendations as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Savage.</p> <p>Cllr Davies welcomed the particular work around Weston General Stores and the regional approach to the overall programme in getting the economy moving. He also commented that every effort should be made to use local suppliers in as many of these projects as possible.</p> <p>Cllr Romero noted the change requests which related, from a Bath & North East Somerset perspective to schemes predominantly around Bath Quays – she drew attention to the new bridge across the River Avon, which was the first new bridge across the river in Bath in 100 years.</p> <p>Professor West commented that the £13.7m Getting Building Fund allocation was welcome but there was a big challenge around the end of the Local Growth Fund and the lack of a clear view on what comes next. The region needed to continue lobbying government for replacement funding as this investment was about kickstarting the economy, which was even more important given the impact of Covid-19.</p> <p>The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.</p> <p>The West of England Joint Committee RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the change requests for schemes within the Local Growth Fund programme as

	<p>set out in Appendix 1.</p> <p>2. To approve the change requests for schemes within the Economic Development Fund and Revolving Infrastructure Fund programme set out in Appendix 2.</p>
14	<p>WECA & MAYORAL BUDGET OUTTURN, APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2020</p> <p>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 (agenda item 14).</p> <p>The Chair highlighted that the report was based on data for the period April to September 2020.</p> <p>Mayor Rees welcomed the continuation of concessionary fare payments to bus operators and the arrangements made to maintain continuity of service, along with contract payments for supported bus services and payments to community transport providers.</p> <p>The West of England Combined Authority Committee RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the Mayoral Fund revenue outturn as detailed in Appendix 1. 2. To note the WECA revenue outturn as detailed in Appendix 2.
15	<p>INVESTMENT FUND</p> <p>The Combined Authority Committee considered a report setting out the latest proposed approvals in relation to the Investment Fund (agenda item 15).</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the following aspects of the report and commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A number of significant projects were being funded through this report. It was important to note that a clear value for money framework was in place which brought together the management and reporting of all major regional funding streams within a 'single pot' approach. * The Investment Fund was subject to 5 yearly government gateway reviews to assess the impact and outcomes from investments made, strength in regional partnerships and effectiveness of resource planning and prioritisation. SQW were the firm appointed by the government to undertake gateway reviews for all Combined Authorities across the country. They had recently completed their first assessment of WECA and had reported back to government accordingly. This report was extremely positive regarding the progress that WECA had made in its first four years of operation. He thanked all involved for their support, engagement and commitment. * The specific proposals in the report included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approval of the Outline Business Case for Hengrove Park which was the first project to access the Development Infrastructure Fund (DIF). Ultimately this development would enable 1,450 new homes with WECA's initial funding, unlocking the enabling works through an allocation of £12m in the current programme and earmarking of a further £7.8m post 2022/23 to be confirmed at Full Business Case stage. - An allocation of £2m to the Housing and Regeneration Enabling Fund and a further £2m to strategic masterplanning. This would provide the unitary authorities with much needed capacity to bring forward, at pace, several more strategic sites for housing and business development across the region, unlocking further significant public and private sector

investment.

- Approval of the Strategic Outline Business Case for Charfield Station, which was hugely important for that part of the region.

- Approval of the Full Business Case for the Chew Valley Lake recreational trail.

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

Cllr Savage welcomed the investment in masterplanning, notably for the east fringe, Severnside and the important growth area around Parkway station which were key locations in terms of the sustainability of the West of England economy. He reminded the committee that through WECA funding, it had already been possible to develop comprehensive masterplan approaches in both Kingswood and Yate over the last year; that work supported the identification of sites for commercial investment, through which the authorities could instigate the delivery of regeneration rather than merely making policy. Similarly, with the resources for DIF funding, unitary authorities were able to access the resource to promote development in key strategic sites where the market was facing new pressures that threatened delivery. The masterplanning funding for Parkway would enable the commissioning of the first phase of the works to explore the boring of a new subway under the main line at Parkway station, which would represent significant improvements in both connectivity and safety. He very much welcomed the fact that Charfield station had reached the Strategic Outline Business Case stage and hoped that work with Network Rail would rapidly move this project on to the next stage. Charfield was an important development location in delivering new homes in South Gloucestershire and would provide an attractive and sustainable travel option to Gloucester, Yate and Bristol.

Cllr Savage also welcomed the new funding for Hengrove Park. This was a really important regional project; it was clearly in the regional interest to help to maximise the delivery of housing within Bristol, thus helping the city to meet its own housing need and thereby reducing the unmet need that the surrounding unitary authorities had to address through their own local plans.

Mayor Rees commented that Hengrove Park had long been identified as an area for housing and had never been brought through as a project. With the current commitment and working together, the project was now coming through for development, which was hugely significant. This would see over 1,400 homes, but additionally 12,000 sqm of new employment, commercial, retail and education use, plus community space and a public park as well. This would help build communities within the city, help build the local economy and support local supply chains and get the multiplier effect of that going within the economic region. The new Chair of Homes England had made the point that housing was one of the most significant interventions that could be made to improve life chances, but he would add to that that the kind of homes built and where they were built would also be among the biggest determinants of impact in terms of climate and ecology as well. The Hengrove development would be a flagship development in line with Sustainable Development Goals, and the city's climate and ecological strategies.

Cllr Romero commented that a key aspect of WECA was about securing development and investment in the region; when looking at schemes, it was always important to assess their impact on the region. With that in mind, she welcomed the Hengrove project and was happy to support it. She added that this development should alleviate some of the pressure around what had been perceived as unsustainable development proposals that up to now had been experienced in surrounding areas such as Whitchurch village. She also referred to high streets investment; high streets including those in the region's cities, were changing - they had been changing before the pandemic but as a result of Covid-19, they were changing

much more rapidly. Investment in high streets in places such as Milsom Quarter in Bath city centre would be very welcome and necessary. She also strongly welcomed the funding for the Chew Valley recreational trail.

Professor West commented that the investment brought through this report was really good news. In terms of the Hengrove development, he felt it was important to look at the development through the lens of the real opportunity to do something different, taking on board the learning from previous big developments, and getting the sense of 'place' right to create a place that was great to live, work and bring up families in. Covid-19 had taught communities how important external space was; in developing places, it was important to be ambitious, innovative and creative in terms of how we build, what we build, where we build and how we connect it. It was also important to take the opportunity to think about bringing in new opportunities for sustainable developments and building schemes that deliver buildings in a different way - modern approaches to new design could open up all sorts of thinking around new jobs and new ways of sustaining the environment.

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 approve use of the Investment Fund headroom as set out in paragraph 7 and 8, and the Development Infrastructure Fund criteria set out in Appendix 2.
2. To allocate £2m to the Housing and Regeneration Enabling Fund and to delegate the approval of the criteria and Feasibility and Development Funding Applications for specific proposals to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent councils.
3. To allocate a further £2m to strategic masterplanning and to delegate the approval of Feasibility and Development Funding Applications for specific proposals to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils.
4. To approve the Outline Business Case for Hengrove Park Enabling Works and allocate funding of £12m in the current programme, and earmark a further £7.8m post 2022/23 to be confirmed at Full Business Case.
5. To approve the Strategic Outline Business Case for Charfield Station and to delegate the approval of the Outline Business Case to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent councils subject to this remaining within the agreed budget.
6. To approve the revision to the Local Growth Assurance Framework set out in paragraph 15 and the approval of the £3.655m Future Transport Zones match funding.
7. To allocate £500k to match fund the Housing Enabling Fund bid through One Public Estate 8 and, should the bid be successful, to delegate the approval of the Feasibility and Development Funding application to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent councils.
8. To approve the award of an additional £2.5m for the development of the Spatial Development Strategy/Local Transport Plan Evidence Base.
9. To approve the Full Business Case for the Chew Valley Lake Recreational Trail subject to resolution of land issues and planning conditions, the supply of a detailed programme and the

confirmation of the final costs.

10. To approve the award of £179k to the 5G Logistics project subject to securing Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport funding.

11. To delegate the detailed use of the Adult Education Budget Covid-19 Skills Recovery Package to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent councils.

12. Approve the change requests for schemes within the current programme as set out in Appendix 3.

13. To amend the approved capital programme for individual project approvals agreed at the October Committee and within this report.

16

ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET - APPROACH FOR THE 2021/22 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Combined Authority Committee considered a report seeking approval of the proposed approach for the management and administration of the devolved Adult Education Budget for the 2021/22 academic year (agenda item 16).

The Chair highlighted that the overall aim of this report was to orientate the local Adult Education system so that it was focused on and responsive to the specific needs of the region's residents, communities, employers and the local economy as a whole.

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

Cllr Romero welcomed the report and commented that a real advantage of the Combined Authority was the opportunity to increase investment in skills, together with the ability to react quickly in such changing and challenging times, to the region's advantage.

Cllr Savage also welcomed the report, stressing that all members were aware of how challenging the current situation was for the regional economy and the impact for those people who had been losing their jobs. This was a really important area of work for the Combined Authority in helping people back into work, helping them to reskill, particularly in those industries of the future, and those linked to the region's transition to net zero carbon.

Mayor Rees commented that it had been an incredibly difficult time economically, therefore making opportunities for reskilling available to people was going to be significant, not just for the functioning of the economy but also for the health and mental health of those people who will continue to need something constructive in their lives and some structure to sustain their lives. He also particularly welcomed the support for the Bristol Learning Centre service. In the challenging time ahead, it was important to maximise the effectiveness of the provider base in helping to consolidate and provide stability in the region's skills offer.

Professor West commented the report was very welcome; in his view, the only way that we stood a chance of being able to help people is if we have a really strong 'eco-system' around skills with schools, colleges, universities working together to create the opportunities with business. He felt there was a piece of key work that had to be done, which was a needs analysis, to help give clarity about where there are job opportunities, what jobs we are trying to attract into the region and what is the best way of reskilling people as they potentially lose jobs. Partnership and collaboration in the provider base were also absolutely key.

Cllr Davies commented that he was extremely supportive of Weston College, who did a

	<p>wonderful job but of course were denied any access to this funding because North Somerset was not part of WECA.</p> <p>The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.</p> <p>The West of England Combined Authority Committee RESOLVED to approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed approach for the management and administration of devolved AEB for the 2021/22 academic year. 2. The following delegations to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent councils: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To make decisions on the final approach for the 2021/22 academic year once the consultation results have been considered. b. To make decisions on final provider allocations once agreed provider curriculum delivery plans are in place. c. To make in-year exceptions funding decisions. d. To make in-year growth funding decisions. e. To make decisions on provider re-allocations at all operational points including: in-year, mid-year and end-of-year. f. To make decisions relating to distribution of funding for continuing learners. g. To make decisions on the purpose and allocation of funds not distributed through the CDP process or funds used for the management and administration of devolved AEB. h. To make decisions on recommended amendments to the devolved approach for AEB in subsequent academic years.
<p>17</p>	<p>APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICER FOR THE 2021 COMBINED AUTHORITY ELECTION</p> <p>The Combined Authority Committee considered a report seeking formal approval in relation to the appointment of the Returning Officer for the 2021 Combined Authority mayoral election.</p> <p>The recommendations as set out in the published report were then moved by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Savage.</p> <p>The Chair then moved to the voting on the recommendations. Voting took place as per constitutional requirements.</p> <p>The West of England Combined Authority Committee RESOLVED:</p> <p>To appoint Shahzia Daya as the Returning Officer for the 2021 Combined Authority election and that North Somerset Council’s election team assist the Combined Authority election Returning Officer in the delivery of this election as necessary.</p>
<p>18</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 3.55 p.m.</p>
	<p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p>