

AGENDA ITEM 10

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

29 JANUARY 2021

COMMENTS FROM COMBINED AUTHORITY BOARDS

Meetings of the Combined Authority Boards have recently been held as follows:

- * Transport Board - 6 January 2021
- * Planning & Housing Board - 11 January 2021

A summary of comments from the Boards specifically about items included on the 29 January joint meeting committee agenda is set out below:

WEST OF ENGLAND HOUSING DELIVERY STRATEGY (agenda item 12)

Comments from the Planning & Housing Board:

* The Planning & Housing Board considered the proposed West of England Housing Delivery Strategy, 'A Strategy for Homes 2020-30'.

The Board noted that:

- * The strategy set out the ambition to increase and accelerate housing delivery, particularly affordable housing, by supporting priority locations where there is market failure.
- * The strategy explained how interventions at the strategic level will maximise the impact of collaborative working to make a greater impact and add value by taking a strategic approach, ensuring better value for the public purse and delivering better outcomes for communities.
- * The key aims of the Housing Delivery Strategy were to:
 - Intervene to deliver pace, quality and affordable homes across all tenures.
 - Achieve better outcomes than are usually delivered through the market.
 - Focus on the added value from taking a strategic approach.
 - Set out a compelling case to government that the West of England is a priority place for investment.
- * The strategy also includes emerging work on housing innovation in delivery.

The Board welcomed and generally supported the strategy. In discussing the strategy, the following specific comments were raised/noted:

* In relation to the reference to the potential availability of specialised funding pots referred to at page 8 of the strategy, a reference should be included to funding linked to

the armed forces covenant (this has been included in the strategy document presented for Joint Committee approval).

* The Board noted the section of the strategy relating to One Public Estate (OPE), a partnership between the Office of Government Property, the Local Government Association and MHCLG to support collaboration across the public sector to deliver local growth (jobs and homes), integrated customer-focused services and efficiencies (capital receipts and running costs). It was noted that although North Somerset Council is not a constituent council of the Combined Authority, it is a part of the OPE Partnership (though cannot access the WECA Investment Fund).

* With the delivery strategy in place, it will be important to now move forward in the context of the Spatial Development Strategy process.

BUS NETWORK RECOVERY (agenda item 19)

The Transport Board considered this report, noting that it:

- provided an update on network recovery from the coronavirus emergency.
- explained possible funding models under consideration by the government.
- sought delegated authority to enable urgent decisions to be made between committee meetings as necessary.

The Board supported the report, noting that at this point further information was awaited to confirm the government's intentions in this area. In discussing the report, the following specific comments were raised/noted:

* Careful consideration would need to be given to the detail of any government proposals, and to both the opportunities and risks of any proposal from the government on devolved emergency funding to support local bus services and associated powers. If a suitable offer from the government was accepted, it would be important to ensure clear and effective communications about changes.

* The Board noted that in the event that the government invited the Combined Authority to take over the direct funding of bus services with an appropriate offer of funding and powers, a rapid decision was likely to be required and that therefore the report sought delegated authority for the Combined Authority Chief Executive to take such a decision in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent councils.

TRANSPORT DECARBONISATION STUDY (agenda item 20)

Comments from the Transport Board:

The Board considered this report, noting that it proposed undertaking a study to develop the evidence base for producing a transport decarbonisation Issues and Options paper.

The Board supported the report. In discussing the report, the following specific comments were raised/noted:

* It was noted that the proposed study is intended to provide a strong steer for producing a transport decarbonisation Issues and Options paper and will assist in setting out a route map and in clarifying the required strategic interventions.

* It will be essential to continue close liaison with other key organisations such as Western Power Distribution and Network Rail in terms of their decarbonisation plans and actions.

* It was suggested that in producing the Issues and Options paper, it will be important to be clear about the limits on the actions that can be taken by local authorities to achieve transport decarbonisation (i.e. other organisations need to participate fully in delivering actions) and about the resources available. It was noted that the study will help to inform the development of Joint Local Transport Plan 5.