

**REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE AND JOINT COMMITTEE**

DATE: 29 JANUARY 2021

REPORT TITLE: WECA ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN

**AUTHOR: LYNDA BIRD, HEAD OF PERFORMANCE,
PLANNING & PROJECTS**

Purpose of Report

- 1 To present the West of England Combined Authority Business Plan for 2021-22.

Recommendation (for both committees)

- To approve the West of England Combined Authority Business Plan for 2021-22.

Background / Issues for Consideration

- 2 The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) business plan covers activity during the financial year to deliver the objectives of WECA and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
 - 2.1 The business plan covering activity during 2020/21 was agreed by WECA and the Joint Committee on 31st January 2020. Activity in the plan was reviewed in April 2020 to help ensure a focus on critical activities to support businesses and residents during the pandemic. As a result a number of programmes were expanded and refocused, and additional support provided. Full details of this support is available on our website [here](#).
 - 2.2 The [regional recovery plan](#), published in October 2020, sets out a number of priorities for the region as we move into 2021. Alongside this the [climate emergency action plan](#) was adopted in October 2020 and sets out how we will work with partners across the region and nationally to help achieve our ambition of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
 - 2.3 The business plan for 2021-22 is attached as Appendix One to this report.
 - 2.4 The business plan presents our planned strategic activities over the coming year and sets out how we will work with our partners to achieve these. It brings together our overarching objectives of inclusive growth and addressing the climate emergency, and aligns with our published recovery plan and [Local Industrial Strategy](#).

- 2.5 The business plan is intended to provide a strategic framework for delivery that will enable us to flex our programmes and projects to respond to the ongoing challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.6 For 2021/22 we have strengthened the section on strategic outcomes to reflect the totality of the planned investments through both the WECA Investment Fund and the Local Growth Fund.
- 2.7 Regular reporting on progress in delivering against the business plan is a key element of WECA's [monitoring & evaluation framework](#). This sets out the overall approach to performance management and provides links to the monitoring & evaluation plans for each activity. The monitoring and evaluation framework is reviewed annually with Government and an updated version will be brought to WECA Audit Committee early in 2021.
- 2.8 As set out in our monitoring & evaluation framework, we will bring quarterly progress reports on delivery of the business plan to Committees and prepare an annual report on activity during the 2020-21 financial year for the mid-year Committee meetings.

Consultation

- 3 The business plan has been discussed with West of England Chief Executives.

Other Options Considered

- 4 None.

Risk Management/Assessment (if appropriate to this item)

- 5 WECA's [risk management framework](#) is reviewed annually. An updated version will be brought to WECA Audit Committee in early 2021 for approval.
- 5.1 The corporate risk register identifies the key risks to delivery of the business plan. This is reviewed monthly by WECA's Management Team, and quarterly by WECA's Senior Management Team. A summary of the key risks, and their mitigations, is included as Appendix Two to this report.

Public Sector Equality Duties (if appropriate to this item)

- 6 The public sector equality duty created under the Equality Act 2010 means that public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.1 The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:
- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.

- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
 - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- 6.2 The general equality duty therefore requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.
- 6.3 The West of England Combined Authority is committed to the promotion of equality and diversity and ensuring that its strategies, policies and practices work to deliver positive outcomes for everyone within the region. We recognise that residents in the region do not have equal access to its success and the opportunities on offer and we are committed to work towards addressing this wherever possible
- 6.4 WECA's [Equality Framework](#) for 2020 identified a number of internal and external priorities for 2020-21 and a report on progress will be included in the Annual Progress Report.

Finance Implications, including Economic Impact Assessment (if appropriate to this item)

- 7 Activities within the 2021-22 business plan are aligned with the budget proposals being discussed by the Committees on 29th January 2021. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

Advice given by: Malcolm Coe, Director of Investment and Corporate Services

Legal Implications – if appropriate

- 8 The business plan provides a strategic framework for WECA to implement devolved decision making. Consultation and consideration of relevant statutory duties will be undertaken as appropriate throughout the decision-making process.

Advice given by: Shahzia Daya, Director of Legal Services

Climate change implications

- 9 On 19 July 2019, the West of England Combined Authority declared a climate emergency, recognising the huge significance of climate change and its impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of the region's residents. The Combined Authority is committed to taking climate change considerations fully into account as an integral part of its governance and decision making process.

Each report/proposal submitted for Combined Authority / Joint Committee approval is assessed in terms of the following:

Will the proposal impact positively or negatively on:

- * The emission of climate changing gases?
- * The region's resilience to the effects of climate change?
- * Consumption of non-renewable resources?
- * Pollution to land, water or air?

Particular projects will also be subject to more detailed environmental assessment/consideration as necessary as part of their detailed project-specific management arrangements

- 9.1 *Taking the above specifically into account, please comment on any climate change implications arising as a result of this report, and include details of any mitigation*
- 9.2 In order to meet the climate emergency declaration of carbon neutrality by 2030, we will need to change the way that we act and make decisions.
- 9.3 Achieving carbon neutrality will require change across the system from national government, the UAs, residents and businesses. WECA will also play a role in providing regional leadership and in the decisions we make in terms of procurement, capital spends, and policy setting (including spatial, transport and skills). WECA can play a key convening and influencing role but we do not have the power or resources to deliver this ambition on our own.
- 9.4 Our [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) was approved by Committee in October 2020. It highlights five grand challenge areas to help meet our ambition of carbon neutrality by 2030.:
- Low carbon transport system
 - Low carbon business
 - Renewable energy
 - Low carbon buildings
 - The green environment

Addressing the climate emergency is one of the overarching objectives of our 2021-22 business plan. Specific activities will be subject to more detailed environmental assessments as part of our project management arrangements.

Land/property implications

- 10 None arising from this report, but the impact of individual schemes will be assessed through existing planning processes

Advice given by: David Carter, Director of Infrastructure

Human Resources Implications

- 11 Activities within the 2021-22 business plan will be supported through existing resources as included in 2021-22 budget. Where individual projects may have workforce implications these will be identified and discussed with relevant Directors to ensure any management of change is undertaken according to policy and best practice.

Advice given by: Alex Holly, Head of People and Assets

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – West of England Combined Authority Business Plan 2021-22
Appendix 2 – Summary of Corporate Risks

Background papers – supporting frameworks

[WECA Risk Management Framework](#)

[WECA Monitoring & Evaluation Framework](#)

[Equality Framework](#)

Background papers – aligned plans and strategies

[Regional Recovery Plan](#)

[Climate Emergency Action Plan](#)

[Local Industrial Strategy](#).

West of England Combined Authority Contact:

Any person seeking background information relating to this item should seek the assistance of the contact officer for the meeting who is Ian Hird on 07436 600313; or by email: democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

