

WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 27 JANUARY 2021

Agenda item 5 – Items from the public

The public statements received for this meeting are set out on the following pages. The Combined Authority encourages the submission of public statements. Occasionally, there will be matters raised in statements which may require some clarification from the Combined Authority's perspective. In connection with the enclosed statements, the Combined Authority wishes to comment as follows, for information, for anyone reading these statements:

Statement 2 refers to the role of an Integrated Transport Authority - It should be noted that WECA became the Transport Authority for the region when it was set up in 2017, taking responsibility for some operational public transport functions as well as strategic transport policy and planning. From 1 April 2020, our councils' combined public transport resources and the delivery of these functions are now carried out directly by WECA. Working together in this way means we can achieve more to address our challenges as a region, planning public transport across council boundaries. Staff from the three councils have transferred to WECA to form a new combined team and are responsible for public transport across the region, including delivering the following:

- Concessionary travel – administering a service providing free off-peak bus passes for older people and people with qualifying disabilities.
- Bus service information – providing bus timetable information at bus stops and data to journey planners and apps, including real-time predictions.
- Community transport – funding, advice and support for on-demand local transport services, such as dial-a-ride, community buses and voluntary car schemes.
- Supported bus services –procuring and managing bus contracts supported with public money where the service is not commercially viable.
- Metrobus – managing the metrobus partnership with the operator and providing service information to iPoints.
- Travelwest– managing the Travelwest website, including travel information.

Statements received for this meeting (full details set out in following pages):

1. David Redgewell - Transport and regional issues
2. Dick Daniel - Integrated Transport authority role
3. Dave Andrews - Trams
4. Tony Lloyd - North Fringe Public Infrastructure Package

STATEMENT 1 – David Redgewell

We are very concerned that now that public Transport and bus service have transferred to the West of England combined authority as the city region Transport Authority. But without precept powers what resources are being allocated by The city and county of Bristol and Bristol mayor, Banes and south Gloucestershire council to revenue support socially supported bus services, especially to serve Rural and orbital bus services in Bath and North east Somerset, for example Bath spa bus station to Peasedown St John, Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Paulton and Farmborough. Bath spa bus and coach station to Saltford, Keynsham, North Common, Warmley, Kingswood, Hillfields, Staple Hill, Downend, UWE Bus station.

Route 18. Bath bus and coach station, Weston RuH back entrance, Kelston, Bitton, Cadbury Heath, Warmley, Kingswood, Hillfields, Staple Hill, Downend, UWE, Bristol parkway station and Cribbs Causeway bus station.

Route 19. In South Gloucestershire there is Wotton under Edge to Chipping Sodbury and Yate bus station route 84 85 86 with also a Yate bus station to Emerson Green and Kingswood.

Route between Thornbury, Bristol parkway station though North Bristol, Cheswick Lockleaze, Southmead hospital bus station to Southmead, Westbury on Trym, Sea Mills or Lawrence Weston to Shirehampton to Avonmouth and Severn Beach.
Routes 10 and 11.

A network of routes in south Bristol hospital to Hengrove and Stockwood 515.
Routes in Keynsham.

96 route from Brislington to Knowle and Hengrove south Bristol hospital.

There are local services in Bedminster Brislington and Knowle town service.

Operator by Stagecoach west and Hct group (which still need to fit safety screen on their vehicles) during covid 19 operations.

Its is very important as there a large number of socially necessary services are supported by the weca mayoral transport authority.

It is very important that the council continue budget for revenue support within their budget.

A new devolution deal with North Somerset council joining Weca mayoral combined authority allows Weca public transport precept powers.

Infrastructure budget.

And monies for public transport infrastructure such as bus stop shelters, kerbs and drop kerbs, timetable information, real time information systems and Travel west.

Planning for metro west revenue support.

The issue of revenue support for rail services over the next few years for Severn Beach, St Andrew road, Avonmouth Portway, parkway, Sea Mills, via Clifton Down, Redland, Montpelier, Stapleton Road, Lawrence Hill, Bristol Temple Meads, Bath spa and Westbury services.

Bristol Temple Meads to Pill and Portishead and Bedminster and Parson Street.

Bristol Temple meads to Henbury via Ashley Down, Filton Abbey wood, Filton North for the Area and Henbury for Cribbs Causeway bus station.

Bristol to Gloucester and Cheltenham spa, Lawrence Hill, Stapleton road, Ashley Down, Filton Abbey wood, Bristol parkway, Yate, Charfield station, Cam and Dursley and Stonehouse Bristol road.

All these metro west services will need revenue support.

And adding new station at St Anne's park and Saltford on Bristol Temple Meads to Bath spa line.

Portway parkway on the Bristol Temple meads station to Severn Beach.

And Ashton Gate on the Bristol Temple meads to Portishead line.

And the leasing of Rolling stock and a Railway Executive.

We are pleased with the work to reduce Bus services by as part of National lockdown that the way Weca mayoral transport authority with Peter Mann being able to reduce service with James Freeman at First group Stagecoach group Hct and other operators still providing access for key workers and necessary journeys to health care facilities, hospitals, supermarkets, post offices and Banks. Also be able to serve vaccinations centres. Weston super mare and at many local health centres, Bath Pavilion, Ashton Gate stadium and Kingswood health centre. We are also pleased with the Railway service reductions have managed to keep local transport connections moving during lockdown 3.

With regards to North Somerset council joining weca mayoral combined authority after the Growth and regeneration committee of Bristol city council.

Mayor Rees Bristol city mayor asked for weca scrutiny commission to look at the structure and governance arrangements. More open government focus on the delivery of Public Transport services Delivery but for this to happen more staff will need to transfer from the Unitary authorities.

In the west of England partnership days the Transport Boards and Planning and Housing Board were open to the public. The transport forum needs to meet more regularly. In order to make progress we need to do a devolution deal with Money for Bristol Temple meads regeneration of the station and the areas around Temple quay and St Phillips marsh and a new public Transport interchange and to develop the light rail mass transit system with lines from Bristol city centre to Bath via Bristol Temple Meads station, Brislington, Keynsham and Saltford, Bath spa interchange. Bristol city centre Temple meads station, Lawrence Hill Station, Easton, Eastville, Fishponds, Staple Hill, Mangotsfield, Warmley, Oldland Common, Bitton, Kelston, Weston, RuH, Bath spa interchange, Batheaston and Bathford.

Bath spa interchange, Peasedown St John, Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Paulton. Bristol city centre Temple meads, Ashton vale park and ride, south Bristol via Highridge, yandley via Bristol Airport, Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe, Hengrove, Whitchurch, Brislington Callington road link via North Somerset Railway to Bristol Temple meads station and the Bristol city centre.

Bristol city centre to Kingswood and Cribbs Causeway via the M32 Ring Road and Bristol parkway. and Patchway and the Arena at Filton North.

The legal advice given to the growth and regeneration committee by legal services say that North Somerset council could join weca mayoral combined authority between mayoral elections providing a Governance review is carried out a devolution deal is taken forward with Government, public consultation take place in The council of south Gloucestershire county council, The city and county of Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset council and North Somerset council.

We would ask weca scrutiny commission to get on with a work programme to allow North Somerset council to join. as requested by mayor Rees at the Bristol city council Growth and regeneration committee.

On course if the election is delayed than work should progress this year.

On we need to transfer the full public transport infrastructure maintenance team to Weca mayoral transport authority along with railway officer and Trunk officers. From Bristol city council, Banes, south Gloucestershire council and North Somerset council in the future.

We also want to see progress on starts on Portway parkway station, Weston super mare bus and coach station and the disabled passengers lifts at Patchway station. Reopening Travel centre in Bath spa station and Bristol Bus station after lockdown.

Progress on car parks at Severn Beach and Patchway station.

A project to look at bring Pilning Railway station into use as it is close to a the new development. In Pilning and Severn Beach, Cabot park and the use of the Henbury loop railway. and a metro bus link to from Severnside to south Bristol.

And for weca mayoral transport authority and the western gateway transport south west transport board to look at the proposals by Highways England how are in charge of disused railway lines station Tunnel Bridge and viaduct not to demolish without planning permission railway assets required for railway reopening light rail routes walking and cycling routes.

We are very concerned about the plans by Highways England to demolish Railway infrastructure in their control Tunnel Bridges viaducts and Trackbeds and stations. In the case in the west of England combined authority, we have a Bridge at whitchurch that Highways England wish to infill they have also in the passed filled in a Bridge on the Somerset and Dorset railway at chilcompton on the Banes mendip boundary on the Midsomer Norton to chilcompton s and D steam railway. And are proposing to demolish at Bridge on the cheddar valley railway which is now a walkway and cycle way From Yatton station to cheddar with proposal to extend the walkway to wells and shepton mallett.

Can weca mayoral transport authority and the western gateway transport board look into land in the ownership of Highways England and their plans effecting railway proposals walkways and cycle way.

Highway England do not seek planning permission to demolish railway infrastructure we believe that highway England are the wrong people's to looking after England Scotland and Wales disused Railway s and the land should be transferred to Network rail western routes.

On railway reopening we support plans by Banes and weca mayoral transport authority to bid for money for the reopening of saltford station in Somerset in the Department for transport restoring our Railway fund .

The Frome to Radstock Railway line was also added to this project list .

We need the mp Jacob Rees Mogg in these proposals.

On the Bristol Bath to Westbury route

Reopening St Anne's park and saltford would be very useful station .

But will need extra loops near keynsham on the old fry siding site .

On rural public Transport strategy is Banes ,North Somerset and south Gloucestershire making submission with weca mayoral transport authority and western gateway public Transport Board to the Department for transport.

On public transport can we thank Peter mann and his team for keeping bus service operating during the English national lockdown for service for key workers and access to food shopping chemists Banks and post office s heath facilities Hospitals and vaccinations centres. we are very very pleased with the list of centre from the North Somerset Bristol and South Gloucestershire clinical commission group centres and the shuttle bus to From Bath spa bus station to Bath Racecourse vaccinations centre by bus 32 every 15 minutes.

We need a list of centre in Banes from the Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire clinic commission group to be added to the weca and First group websites.

We need a shuttle bus from wells bus station to shepton mallet and the vaccinations centre at the Bath and west show ground.

On bus and Railway service its very important that the Department for transport keep funding our local railway service s through Railway emergency recovery contracts to First group Great western railway and South western railway and Cross country trains.

Especially to local train running for key workers and access to shopping chemist Bank s post office heath care and hospital s and important vaccinations centre like that in Bath .

We also need bus and coach service recovery grant in the future from the Department for Transport. as part of the Government bus strategy.
The 1985 and 2020 Transport act on bus deregulation is certain not to survive as is the Taking over of England railway by Network rail.
At Region level we need a railway executive at weca mayoral transport authority level with North Somerset joining. and a strong western gateway partnership.and south west transport board.

On behalf of south Gloucestershire den and Bristol disability equalities forum
Railfuture Severnside and south west transport network.
The need for more police officers and covid marshals to travel on the Greater Bristol and Bath Bath city region and Somerset public transport network by the Avon and Somerset police port police and the British Transport police.
Following the assault in spitting at a Nurse by a young man on a scooter on a first west of England bus in Bristol.
This person has not been caught can we please have more community safety patrols on the public transport network.

STATEMENT 2 – Dick Daniel

BATA – To WECA Scrutiny Committee 27/1/2021

The WECA region needs action on transport now.

There is a desperate need to take action, it is not just enough to declare a climate emergency, this is particularly true of transport which contributes around 1/3 of emissions.

To get coordinated meaningful action the Bristol, Bath and the wider region need an integrated Transport Authority (ITA) that can raise the investment to join the other major authorities around the UK that already have Integrated Transport Authorities.

An ITA can see the bigger picture, can argue the case with central government for funding and show there is a serious will to 'make it happen'.

This will redress the obsession that the region has had with building ever more roads. Building and widening roads has been shown to encourage car use, the opposite of what is needed to deal with pollution, congestion and the rise of health issues.

Whereas an ITA can raise the money, plan for and install the means for high-quality public transport, based on a back-bone of tram lines and active travel (walking & cycling), this will transform the region and put it on a par with other major regions of the UK.

Around 1000 people a year are dying of air related illnesses in Bristol, much of this air pollution is from PM10 & PM2.5's cause by transport exhaust, tyre and brake dust.

There is an acknowledged climate emergency, 'Transport was the largest emitting sector of UK greenhouse gas emissions in 2018',¹ 'three-quarters of road traffic in 2018 was from cars and taxis'.²

Lack of physical activity is contributing to the rise of major illnesses, such as heart disease, strokes, type 2 diabetes and even exacerbating Covid-19, regular daily exercise, such as walking to school, shops, the bus & tram stop, will make a difference and mean 'a lower risk of developing many long-term (chronic) conditions'.³

Please watch this short 6 minute video of what the city of Ghent has done if you have not seen it before.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgbIBIAFHXM>

Dick Daniel

Board Member, BATA Bath Area Trams Association

1 – Dept for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2018 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863325/2018-final-emissions-statistics-summary.pdf

2 – Office for National Statistics 3. Road traffic increased by 29% from 1990 to 2018

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/roadtransportandairemissions/2019-09-16>

3 – NHS Benefits of exercise, Step right up! It's the miracle cure we've all been waiting for.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-health-benefits/>

STATEMENT 3 – Dave Andrews

We would like to submit the written statement to below and in attachment to WECA Scrutiny Committee 27/1/2021

1. The only affordable, proven method to dramatically reduce congestion and pollution, and to create regeneration in British cities (and Europe) has been to re-install or install trams - Nottingham (the only city not to be required to have a carbon reduction plan as a result), Docklands Light Railway (caused massive development of area and specifically mandated for this by Michale Heseltine), Newcastle, Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Edinburgh (now a great success despite initial teething problems and s being extended). The use of buses, or Metro buses on their own has never achieved this aim and is demonstrably a false hope - the correct vital role for buses is for rural and lightly trafficked areas feeding into a central spine of steel wheeled trams.

If WECA and BCC do not commit to re-installing trams and light rail, as have our neighbours in Cardiff, or have failed to obtain the huge government funding that other Metropolitan mayors have in order to install trams - Birmingham, Manchester Sheffield, and instead carry on building more roads, proven to simply create more traffic and pollution, etc the voters may wonder why.

Dave Andrews

<https://bathtrams.uk/>

<https://claverton-energy.com/>

Full Written Statement from BBATA To WECA Scrutiny Committee 27/1/2021

Over the last 4 years, Bath and Area Trams Association (BATA) has made a strong case for the re-introduction of trams into Bath (Bath expanded based on an extensive tram network from 1885 -1930, ascending the hills with ease), Bristol, Keynsham and linking to Radstock, Midsomer Norton and even Chippenham. BATA supports and promotes buses on the less dense routes and rural routes. Buses integrated with a backbone of trams routes are used in cities and regions that have the best public transport systems in the world.

BATA Chair David Andrews said we are seeking senior well-placed individuals within the area to assist us in our drive and to work with WECA (West of England Combined Authority) and BCC (Bristol City Council) to take this idea forward and reduce the existing road centric plans.

BATA say anyone who has visited cities such as Vienna, Amsterdam or Bordeaux will have seen how trams are an integral part of their highly successful public transport systems. These cities have far less congestion and rate as some of the most liveable cities in the world. This is why trams have been reinstated in many cities & city regions of Holland, France and Spain and are even catching on in the USA.

The reason for their success in combating congestion is that they have been proven to attract 30 to 40% of car drivers into trams, whereas this has never been shown to happen with buses.

This attraction to car drivers is down to the much better quality of service a tram offers, in the same way that car drivers buy the most prestigious car they can, people like to use the most prestigious public transport, trams.

Modern trams are very smooth, quieter, comfortable, has more space per person than buses and can carry large numbers of people with ease. Because a tram can carry many more [passengers per driver, and have a far higher line capacity](#), it has lower overall and maintenance costs, much less than that of a bus and over its lifetime is [cheaper per passenger mile than a bus](#).

As trams run on rails and thus concentrate passengers it is politically easier for highway authorities to give priority and benefit from [Green Wave Traffic Light Priority](#) where the traffic lights can be tuned to permit the trams' smooth flow through the city without in fact disrupting cars.

Due to these different economics, tram timetables can be as many as one every 6 minutes through a much larger part of the day and more frequently than a bus. This is because having expended the capital on the infrastructure spread over 40 years, the marginal cost of running the vehicles is very low, so there is no great incentive to reduce services during off-peak hours, at holiday's or on Sundays, indeed services cannot be scrapped and rearranged as happens to bus services at present.

[Modern track installation methods means that track can be rapidly installed avoiding disruption](#). Mistakes have been made in Britain, notably the Edinburgh tram, but learning from these by putting experienced experts in charge, which did not happen in Edinburgh means they can be avoided. It is worth noting that the Edinburgh tram is now highly successful and the lines are looking to be extended.

Trams are electric and can be run entirely on renewable energy, which can be delivered either by overhead wire, as is traditional, or through various wire-free options. Another of the proven benefits of a fixed rail-based tram system is the sense of certainty which it creates for businesses and home builders alike, [property values have been shown to increase in an area serviced by trams](#).

[To summarise, no bus, super bus or metro bus system in the UK has ever managed to attract significant numbers of car drivers sufficiently to improve the commercial or natural environment because buses offer an unacceptable low quality of service to car drivers](#). On the other hand, all of the tram systems installed in the [UK have attracted significant numbers of passengers and had a positive impact on congestion](#), the environment and the commercial activity. For example, Nottingham is the only city that has not had to have a clean air plan and this is due in part to its tram system, and the city has thrived (as have Edinburgh, Sheffield, Docklands, Newcastle, Birmingham) etc since its reintroduction.

Our vision sees Bath, Bristol and the surrounding region benefiting, economically, environmentally and socially hugely with the reintroduction of a public transport system based on the backbone of modern highly efficient trams. WECA and BCC need to emulate the aforementioned now thriving cities, and [Cardiff too which is re-introducing trams](#).

Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FoSBR)

Statement to WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 27th January 2021 0 at 10.30 am via Zoom



STATEMENT 4

1. North Fringe Public Infrastructure Package

This package, part of the Investment Fund proposal, requires funding to develop a revised, more comprehensive, Transport Assessment (TA) for the YTL Brabazon arena and associated facilities which have recently been awarded planning permission. The original TA for the planning proposal was rushed and not sufficiently detailed.

The application for this package clearly sets out that "The focus of the transport strategy will be on sustainable measures and limiting the use of car borne trips as far as possible supporting the climate change agenda". It also notes that this investment project is linked to the re-opening of North Filton railway station (part of MetroWest Phase 2). However looking through the project scope, it appears that the study will concentrate solely on highway aspects and it is not easy to see where public transport will be considered within this Transport Assessment.

We consider that the role of both rail and bus/ metrobus needs to be considered as part of the transport mix - and the study should look at ways that rail and bus provision can be maximised so as to reduce the need for more roads with all their attendant congestion problems.

With respect to rail transport, we strongly suggest that the consultants be asked to include the effect of the Henbury Spur rail service on the road infrastructure requirement in the TA. In addition, we suggest that not only the presently envisaged hourly service should be taken into account - but also the effect of increasing frequency to a 30-minute or even 15-minute service. Operationally it is possible to at least have a 30-minute service on that line. Going further, the TA should also investigate the effect of opening the Henbury Spur right through to Avonmouth (the Henbury Loop) or even going eastwards through the Filton Diamond to Parkway, on transport requirements for the North Bristol Fringe. Rail is uniquely suitable for moving a large amount of people to and from the Arena and strategically timed rail services could do much to minimise the number of cars travelling to large events.

Tony Lloyd, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FoSBR) www.fosbr.org.uk

WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 JANUARY 2021

PUBLIC QUESTIONS & REPLIES

Question 1 – submitted by David Redgewell

Subject: WECA & North Somerset

Does WECA mayoral combined authority agree with the legal officer at the city and county of Bristol at the Growth and Regeneration committee that North Somerset council could join the WECA mayoral combined authority without a mayoral election if a Governance review is carried out? (A order is placed in the House of Commons and House of Lords. That full public consultation is carried out in South Gloucestershire council area ,Bath and North East Somerset council area, the city and county of Bristol council area and North Somerset council area. And a devolution deal which could include precept powers for public transport services, is negotiated with central government local government minister and Thornbury and Yate MP).

REPLY:

The advice given by Bristol City Council's legal officer is included as a factual, legal briefing note in the published agenda papers of the 6 January 2021 meeting of Bristol's Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission.

As can be seen from the letters from Government to the Combined Authority in relation to expanding WECA, i.e. to include North Somerset, there is an expectation that this would take effect from the start of the Mayoral term of office.

Question 2 – submitted by David Redgewell

Subject: Portway station

With the Department for Transport concerns about public transport network schemes starting in this financial year, WECA mayoral combined authority could lose the finance.

So could WECA mayoral transport authority advise us of the start date of work and opening date of Portway parkway station and interchange? (with work starting with Network rail western routes and First group Great Western railway)

REPLY:

Detailed design for the project is currently underway and progressing well, with construction due to start on site in March. The station is due to open in December 2021. The station is being funded jointly by WECA, the Department for Transport's New Stations Fund and Bristol City Council. In August 2020, WECA secured £13.7m from the government's Getting Building Fund, aimed at capital projects to accelerate national recovery. Part of this new funding has been allocated to the Portway P&R Station project to ensure that it remains fully funded.

Question 3 – submitted by Gordon Richardson

Subject: Portway station

Will the new station at Portway parkway be open with full disabled access in time for the new MetroWest service in December 2021? (Severn Beach, St Andrew's Road. Avonmouth Dock, Portway Parkway, Shirehampton, Sea Mills, Clifton Down, Redland, Montpelier, Stapleton Road, Lawrence Hill, Bristol Temple Meads, Keynsham, Oldfield Park, Bath Spa, Freshford, Avoncliff, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge and Westbury - New MetroWest service).

REPLY:

Portway Station will be fully compliant with Equality Act 2010 requirements and with the *Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations: a code of practice* by the Department for Transport. A Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the project and designs approved by Network Rail's Built Environment Accessibility Panel. Works will be undertaken to the existing car park to accommodate accessible Blue Badge parking bays and to ensure an accessible walking route from the site entrance and bus interchange.

Question 4 – submitted by Gordon Richardson

Subject: Weston-Super-Mare bus and coach station

In Weston-Super-Mare, what is the start date for work to start on the Bus and coach station facilities outside Tesco stores - again this project has to start in this financial year with fully accessible bus and coach stands and toilets information point.

REPLY:

North Somerset Council are leading this project and have confirmed that the contract start date for the Weston-super-Mare Town Centre Enhancement scheme, which includes the bus interchange, is 1 February 2021 with work anticipated to be completed in November 2021. For clarity, the plan is for accessible bus and coach stands, information points but toilets are not included.