

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

Friday, 29 January 2021

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>
2	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>The Chair advised that Professor Steve West was unable to attend the full meeting but would join the meeting at 11.15 am to present comments on behalf of the Local Enterprise Partnership.</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: That the minutes of the joint meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Committee and the West of England Joint Committee held on 4 December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>
5	<p>CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>Noting that this was the last planned meeting before his retirement from politics, the Chair commented and reflected on the work and difference made by the Combined Authority since its inception in 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Combined Authority had brought about the opportunity to bring in very significant government investment and to attract other investment to build on the region's strengths and improve the region's transport, other infrastructure and skills provision to meet the needs of businesses. He was very proud of the collaborative, partnership work that had taken place over the last 4 years with the full involvement of unitary authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnership. This was unlocking huge potential and investment and having a real impact on people's lives. For examples, thousands of new jobs have been created through this investment. * Key plans and strategies have been developed collaboratively, ranging from the Local Industrial Strategy and Employment and Skills Plan to the Joint Local Transport Plan to drive this activity forward in a structured way and maximise benefits for the region. * Important decisions would be considered at this meeting and in the coming weeks, including approving a regional housing delivery strategy, backing a first-stage Freeport bid and overseeing actions to lead the region's economic recovery from the pandemic. <p>He concluded his comments by thanking committee members and all partners for their work and engagement in taking all this work forwards.</p> <p>Committee members responded to the above comments and thanked Mayor Bowles for his work and commitment to the development of the region during his time in office as the first elected West of England Mayor.</p>
6	<p>ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (QUESTIONS; STATEMENTS; PETITIONS)</p> <p>The Chair drew attention to the fact that a number of questions and statements had been submitted to this meeting on the issue of the Bristol airport expansion. He clarified that this was not a matter on today's committee agenda but Mayors and Leaders would be meeting</p>

separately to discuss the points that people were making on this issue.

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

1. Mary Collett - Bristol airport expansion
2. James Collett - Bristol airport expansion
3. Jude Connor - Bristol airport expansion
4. Laurence and Joanne Copleston - Bristol airport expansion
5. Matt Gitsham - Bristol airport expansion
6. Bob Bater - Bristol airport expansion
7. Rosemary Collins - Bristol airport expansion
8. Helen Struthers - Bristol airport expansion
9. Jackie Head - Bristol airport expansion
10. Viv Perry - Bristol airport expansion
11. David Redgewell - WECA & North Somerset
12. David Redgewell - Portway station
13. Gordon Richardson - Portway station
14. Gordon Richardson - Weston-Super-Mare bus & coach station
15. Haydn Gill - Road building (with reference to the Investment Fund report)
16. Haydn Gill - Funding of cycling and walking schemes (with reference to the Investment Fund report)
17. Amy Fletcher - Bristol airport expansion
18. Kevin Flanagan - Bristol airport expansion
19. Richard Baxter - Bristol airport expansion
20. Ruth Jones - Bristol airport expansion
21. Dawn McGhee - Bristol airport expansion
22. Lisa Hardless - Bristol airport expansion
23. James Ward - Bristol airport expansion
24. Cllr Jerome Thomas (Bristol City Council) - Unspent WECA money
25. Sarah Cemlyn - Bristol airport expansion
26. Kim Hicks - Spatial Development Strategy
27. Sally Lawson - Bristol airport expansion
28. Johnny Devas - Bristol airport expansion
29. Ben Moss - Bristol airport expansion
30. Sarah Poppy Jackson - Bristol airport expansion
31. Duncan Still - Bristol airport expansion
32. Cllr Martin Fodor (Bristol City Council) - E-scooter trial in the West of England
33. Question from: Nicola Bindon - Bristol airport expansion

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 154 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. Dominic Winter - Bristol airport expansion
2. James Collett - Bristol airport expansion
3. Matt Gisham - Bristol airport expansion
4. David Clegg - Bristol airport expansion
5. Wendy Clegg - Bristol airport expansion
6. Jill Coleman - Bristol airport expansion
7. Bob Langton - Bristol airport expansion
8. Mary Wood - Bristol airport expansion
9. Johanna Spiers - Bristol airport expansion

10. Helen Struthers - Bristol airport expansion
11. Isobel Clark - Bristol airport expansion
12. Tony Muir - Bristol airport expansion
13. Jackie Head - Bristol airport expansion
14. Cllr Robert Griffin (South Gloucestershire Council) - M49 link road
15. David Redgewell - Transport/regional issues
16. Viv Perry - Bristol airport expansion
17. John Belton - Bristol airport expansion
18. Katherine Martin - Bristol airport expansion
19. Tony Wilson - Bristol airport expansion
20. Bob Dearden - Bristol airport expansion
21. Jane Mansfield - Bristol airport expansion
22. Tina Kilroy - Bristol airport expansion
23. Mike Roberts - Bristol airport expansion
24. Anna Ballard - Bristol airport expansion
25. Patrick Toland - Bristol airport expansion
26. Julie Gilfoyle - Bristol airport expansion
27. Emily Thwaite - Bristol airport expansion
28. Marion de Berker - Bristol airport expansion
29. Dr Hilary Farey - Bristol airport expansion
30. Felix Watts - Bristol airport expansion
31. Sian Charnley & Dr Norman Charnley - Bristol airport expansion
32. Lisa Hardless - Bristol airport expansion
33. Mary Culhane - Bristol airport expansion
34. Jacqueline Evans - Bristol airport expansion
35. Robert Clarke - Bristol airport expansion
36. Chris Head - Bristol airport expansion
37. Lisa Furness - Bristol airport expansion
38. Mark Brown - Bristol airport expansion
39. Shankari Raj - Bristol airport expansion
40. Michael Lloyd-Jones - Bristol airport expansion
41. Jack Doran - Bristol airport expansion
42. Lesley Wilson - Bristol airport expansion
43. Cordelia Hamilton - Bristol airport expansion
44. Pat Walmsley - Bristol airport expansion
45. Natalie Edwards - Bristol airport expansion
46. Claire King - Bristol airport expansion
47. Bob Helson - Bristol airport expansion
48. Mark Bishop - Bristol airport expansion
49. Luke Curran - Bristol airport expansion
50. Judith Sluglett - Bristol airport expansion
51. Mike Chaloner - Bristol airport expansion
52. Conor O'Neill - Bristol airport expansion
53. Thomas Krol - Bristol airport expansion
54. Mark Wood - Bristol airport expansion
55. Joe Bullard & H  l  ne Sauv   - Bristol airport expansion
56. Julie Milton - Bristol airport expansion
57. Mary Collett - Bristol airport expansion
58. Dr Jane Paxton - Bristol airport expansion
59. Caroline New - Bristol airport expansion
60. Vanessa Glasgow - Bristol airport expansion
61. Alison Allan - Bristol airport expansion
62. Dawn McGhee - Bristol airport expansion
63. Duncan Still - Bristol airport expansion
64. Marion Steiner - Bristol airport expansion

65. Utah Weber - Bristol airport expansion
66. Maggie Singham - Bristol airport expansion
67. Peter Andresen - Bristol airport expansion
68. Nicola Bindon - Bristol airport expansion
69. Janine Amos - Bristol airport expansion
70. Lynette Blanchard - Bristol airport expansion
71. Tony Jones - Bristol airport expansion
72. Andrea Mackay - Bristol airport expansion
73. Cllrs Trevor Jones and Nic Labuschagne (South Gloucestershire Council) - Strategic Outline Business Case for the Winterbourne and Frampton Cotterell bypass
74. Joy Kearney - Bristol airport expansion
75. Rosemary Clarke - Bristol airport expansion
76. Tim Reynolds - Bristol airport expansion
77. J. Purkis - Bristol airport expansion
78. Darcy Mitchell - Bristol airport expansion
79. Olwen Gillespie - Bristol airport expansion
80. Sophie Wright - Bristol airport expansion
81. Duncan Struthers - Bristol airport expansion
82. Cllr Carla Denyer (Bristol City Council) - Bristol airport expansion
83. Julia Hammond - Bristol airport expansion
84. Jacqueline Walkden - Bristol airport expansion
85. Helen Tann - Bristol airport expansion
86. Benedict Pagani - Bristol airport expansion
87. Ollie Lax - Bristol airport expansion
88. Mavis Zutshi - Bristol airport expansion
89. Kate Oliver - Bristol airport expansion
90. Meg Buick - Bristol airport expansion
91. Colin Gardner - West of England housing delivery strategy
92. Colin Welch - Bristol airport expansion
93. Chloe Naldrett - Bristol airport expansion
94. Amanda Swannell - Bristol airport expansion
95. Angela Taylor - Bristol airport expansion
96. Johnny Devas - Bristol airport expansion
97. Julia Beasley - Bristol airport expansion
98. Leah Dawson - Bristol airport expansion
99. Claire Goulding - Bristol airport expansion
100. Ellie Tallis - Bristol airport expansion
101. Katheryna Sansone - Bristol airport expansion
102. Helen Bailey - Bristol airport expansion
103. Marcus Dawson - Bristol airport expansion
104. Nicola Harwin - Bristol airport expansion
105. Valerie Russell Emmott - Bristol airport expansion
106. Ewan McLennon - Bristol airport expansion
107. Neil McAllister - Bristol airport expansion
108. Naomi Levy - Bristol airport expansion
109. Jane Joyce - Bristol airport expansion
110. Victoria Bortagaray - Bristol airport expansion
111. Louise Edwards - Bristol airport expansion
112. Steven McAllister - Bristol airport expansion
113. Aidan Chitty - Bristol airport expansion
114. Kirsty Gisbourne - Bristol airport expansion
115. Mark Evans - Bristol airport expansion
116. Richard Edwards - Bristol airport expansion
117. John McAllister - Bristol airport expansion
118. Isobel Morris - Bristol airport expansion

- 119. Emily Sheath - Bristol airport expansion
- 120. Julie F. Decarroux - Bristol airport expansion
- 121. Deborah Erskine - Bristol airport expansion
- 122. Charlotte Underwood - Bristol airport expansion
- 123. Sam Lockwood - Bristol airport expansion
- 124. Derrick Stirling - Bristol airport expansion
- 125. Philip Green - Bristol airport expansion
- 126. Andy Saunders - Bristol airport expansion
- 127. Richard Andrews - Bristol airport expansion
- 128. Diane Godwin - Bristol airport expansion
- 129. Beth Isaac - Bristol airport expansion
- 130. Cllr Jerome Thomas (Bristol City Council) - Bristol airport expansion
- 131. Georgina Byrom - Bristol airport expansion
- 132. Emily Cochrane - Bristol airport expansion
- 133. Gordon Richardson - Bus and rail services
- 134. James Eldred - Bristol airport expansion
- 135. Philippa Bayley - Bristol airport expansion
- 136. Simon Omiotec - Bristol airport expansion
- 137. Laura McAllister - Bristol airport expansion
- 138. Dr Grace Thompson & other local doctors - Bristol airport expansion
- 139. Hazel Morfett - Bristol airport expansion
- 140. Angela McKee - Bristol airport expansion
- 141. Chris Reynolds - Bristol airport expansion
- 142. Janet Grimes - Bristol airport expansion
- 143. Kathy Fawcett - Bristol airport expansion
- 144. Sarah Walsh - Bristol airport expansion
- 145. Polly Eldridge - Bristol airport expansion
- 146. Cllr Martin Fodor (Bristol City Council) - Transport decarbonisation study
- 147. Ian Pettit - Bristol airport expansion
- 148. Jennifer Fawcett-Thorne - Bristol airport expansion
- 149. Richard Baxter - Bristol airport expansion
- 150. Samuel Williams - WECA investment programme and improvements
- 151. Sally Lawson - Bristol airport expansion
- 152. Lilian Fawcett - Bristol airport expansion
- 153. Laura Pendlebury - Bristol airport expansion
- 154. Stanley Fawcett - Bristol airport expansion

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) Board commented as follows:

1. Impact of Local Growth Fund

The LEP has overseen the management of the Local Growth Fund which supports co-ordinated activity across the region to support businesses, develop skills for the future and ensure the appropriate infrastructure is in place. The fund totals £202.1m in the West of England, with a further £13.7m secured through the Getting Building Fund which provides funding in this financial year to support capital projects which could help to accelerate national recovery. These spend requirements are on track and the region was starting to see some of the real benefits as projects come to fruition. These include:

* Projects to support Research & Development, including:

- the opening of Foodworks South West.
- the Virtual Reality Lab in Bristol.
- Future Space, supporting the National Composites Centre.
- Significant investment into the soon-to-be completed Grow On 2 and Institute of Advanced Automotive Propulsion Systems at the Bristol and Bath Science Park.

* Enabling works to support major regeneration opportunities including Bath Quays North and South and Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus.

* Significant new Further Education provision including:

- the Future Technology Centre at Weston super Mare.
- the Construction Skills Centre at Radstock.
- SGS Brunel Centre in North Bristol, to deliver STEAM subjects.
- City of Bristol South Bristol Construction Centre

In addition, projects were in place to support walking, cycling and public transport including significant investment in the Cribbs Patchway MetroBus Extension and the MetroWest rail programme.

2. Supporting regional recovery

At its recent meeting, the LEP Board discussed the ongoing challenges the pandemic and current lockdown were presenting to our businesses and residents. LEP Board members were playing a leading role in the Regional Recovery Taskforce's recovery plan. Some of the actions prioritised in this plan were due to launch soon including:

* Small Business Grant funds, offering support grants ranging from £1500 - £6000 due to launch in March.

* The Talent Retention Platform to advertise employment opportunities to those businesses facing the prospect of making their staff redundant, due for launch in April.

This will take the total investment in the region's businesses and skills to over £100m over the next four years.

Innovation was one of the key pillars of the Local Industrial Strategy, and the LEP Board welcomed the Full Business Case for the Innovation for Renewal and Opportunity project and award of £5.716m from the WECA Investment Fund to support businesses across the region through an extension of the highly successful Business Innovation Fund and package of support for the manufacturing and supply chain. This intervention would provide a key foundation for the West of England Freeport bid.

3. Business planning for the future

The LEP Board welcomed the WECA Business Plan for 2021-22 which demonstrated how WECA was continuing to work in partnership to drive recovery across the region. The LEP Board and the Regional Recovery Taskforce will continue to work with WECA and partner organisations to ensure that the support available is targeted to those most in need.

The LEP Board also supported the proposals for a regional housing delivery strategy to accelerate the availability of affordable housing for residents, and the work to maintain the bus network that was so essential for many key workers. The Board also welcomed the study into transport decarbonisation as a step towards clarifying the strategic interventions required to help achieve the target of carbon neutrality by 2030.

4. Representing the region's businesses

The LEP Board has a responsibility to ensure the business voice is represented in regional decision making and investment. The Board continues to press government to ensure future funding is identified in the forthcoming budget and comprehensive spending review to ensure continued delivery of the best outcomes for our region. The Board noted the ongoing success in attracting a number of new funding streams into the region and the way that we are able to work in partnership, across local boundaries to ensure we maximise the opportunities for everyone in our region.

9 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 27 January. 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. North Somerset Council joining WECA

Mayors and Leaders were already aware of Scrutiny members' concern that it had not been possible to take forward the proposition of North Somerset joining WECA in advance of the next WECA Mayoral election scheduled for May. Scrutiny members had agreed to hold an additional meeting(s) specifically to discuss how North Somerset Council joining WECA could potentially be taken forward as soon as practically possible after the Mayoral election. Scrutiny members noted that all authorities concerned would need to agree to take this forward.

The specific questions and issues that Scrutiny members wished to understand and explore, were likely to include:

- how we can seek clarification from / lobby the government about the extent of additional resources and devolved powers that could be secured for the region through North Somerset joining WECA; and compare this with what each authority is seeking through further devolution.
- how to take forward discussions with government about this happening outside of the WECA Mayoral electoral cycle.
- in the meantime, how can we ensure the maximum degree of involvement of North Somerset in WECA arrangements.

2. West of England Housing Delivery Strategy (agenda item 12)

Scrutiny members recognised that the housing delivery strategy was essentially about how to accelerate the delivery of housing utilising the available tools, mechanisms and funding available to WECA and delivery partners.

They emphasised though the critical importance of accelerating affordable housing across the region. This needs to be seen in the context that individual unitary authorities have more ambitious affordable housing definitions than that defined through national planning policy. The local authorities need an agreed definition of affordable housing and this should be included as a definition in the housing delivery strategy to make clear what is meant by these words. Implementing the strategy must help deliver these local ambitions by accelerating delivery and maximising new affordable housing.

Scrutiny members also noted that the strategy does not have formal, fixed targets but has been constructed to support existing Local Plans and the draft Spatial Development Strategy

and updated/new Local Plans as they are developed.

3. Bus network recovery (agenda item 19) and Transport Decarbonisation study (agenda item 20)

The Scrutiny Transport sub-group had fed back comments following a detailed briefing given to them by officers on 21 January.

Scrutiny members had highlighted the following points:

* They would like to be kept informed of the position once a clearer view emerges from government about the National Bus Recovery Strategy and any proposed transitional arrangement e.g. a Bus Recovery Partnership with the Combined Authority.

* It was noted that as part of the previous Bus Strategy work, officers had developed a framework to evaluate the relative costs and societal benefits of bus services and that an evidence-based tool had accordingly been developed that would help evaluate future tenders for bus services based on key principles included in the Bus Strategy. It was noted that the views of the Transport Board on this framework would be sought at their February meeting and Scrutiny members welcomed the offer that was made by officers to share this framework tool with them.

* In terms of the potential options that may be highlighted through the Transport decarbonisation study, and whilst recognising the significant scale of this challenge, Scrutiny members were particularly keen that as much as possible was done to help prepare for and enable zero-emission vehicle use into the future.

4. WECA annual business plan 2021-22

Scrutiny members generally welcomed the plan and the clarity of the information set out.

In terms of the four Business Growth objectives set out on page 12, whilst appreciating there was a lot of activity behind these objectives, it was felt it would have been helpful to include specific objectives in relation to clean business growth.

In terms of the Corporate Risk Register at Appendix 2, it was suggested that an additional risk should be added around the risk of extreme weather events.

It was also felt that it would be important to consider, in the context of WECA's business plan moving forwards (and the Climate Emergency Action Plan), the implications of 'The Sixth Carbon Budget' report (the UK's path to net zero) published in December by the Climate Change Committee.

5. Finance reports

Scrutiny members had received a full briefing on the six finance reports and generally welcomed the proposals in the Investment Fund report. It was noted that (given the Mayoral election and with a longer break than usual between committee meetings) the finance reports sought approval of a number of delegations to officers to help ensure in particular that progress could continue to be made on projects included within the approved £350m investment programme – whilst understanding the need for this, Scrutiny members asked to be kept informed about delegated decisions as they are taken.

In relation to Treasury Management, Scrutiny members would like to be involved in discussions around developing an ethical investment programme.

<p>10</p>	<p>COMMENTS FROM THE COMBINED AUTHORITY'S BOARDS</p> <p>Specific comments from the four Combined Authority Boards about items included on this meeting agenda were noted as per the report included in the committee agenda pack.</p> <p>The meeting was then adjourned at 11.55 am and reconvened at 12.05 pm.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>WECA ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN 2021-22</p> <p>The Combined Authority Committee and the Joint Committee considered a report seeking approval of the WECA Annual Business Plan 2021-22 (agenda item 11).</p> <p>The Chair highlighted that the Business Plan presents the Combined Authority's planned strategic activities over the coming year and sets out how the authority will work with partners to achieve these. It brings together the overarching objectives of inclusive growth and addressing the climate emergency and aligns with the published Recovery Plan and the Local Industrial Strategy.</p> <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 Savage.</p> <p>Cllr Savage welcomed the report and commented that it was important to acknowledge the importance of the Business Plan for the Combined Authority as national bodies and regional and local authorities collectively work together to rebuild the economy and steadily recover from the events of the past year. The breadth of funding opportunities, for example, as set out in the agenda papers for today's meeting, demonstrated the value of local authorities working together and having a strong devolved remit.</p> <p>Cllr Romero commented that it was difficult to plan during a pandemic for what life might be like after the pandemic; for example, there was uncertainty about the degree to which working behaviour patterns may permanently change in the longer term. She welcomed the fact that the Business Plan reflects this and the need for the region to adapt as the pandemic eases.</p> <p>Mayor Rees generally welcomed the Business Plan, noting that the plan recognises that the world is changing because of the pandemic and there will be an ongoing need to adapt and ensure 'in-built' flexibility as authorities face the challenges ahead.</p> <p>Cllr Davies echoed the above comments and stressed the need to move at pace in delivering key projects and boosting job creation. As part of the economic recovery, it will be essential to maximise the use of local firms.</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 the West of England Combined Authority Business Plan for 2021-22.</p> <p>The West of England Joint Committee RESOLVED: - To approve the West of England Combined Authority Business Plan for 2021-22.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>WEST OF ENGLAND HOUSING DELIVERY STRATEGY</p> <p>The Joint Committee considered a report seeking approval of the West of England Housing</p>

Delivery Strategy (agenda item 12).

The Chair welcomed the report, highlighting that it was the result of extensive collaboration with the unitary authorities. He further commented that:

* The shared ambition is to increase and accelerate delivery of new homes of all tenures, particularly affordable housing, to support priority locations where market failure either prevents housing coming forward quickly enough, or at all.

* Through intervening at a strategic, regional level, the intention is to maximise the impact of aligning focus and resources and deliver better outcomes for communities.

* The strategy is based on an initial funding package to 2023 of approximately £40m from the WECA Investment Fund and a bid for £500k One Public Estate 8 funding.

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

Cllr Savage welcomed the strategy. He added that the West of England has always been an attractive and relatively prosperous place to live and that the demand this brings for new housing cannot be underestimated. He also welcomed the investment coming through that will support authorities in delivering housing; a really good example was featured in a later agenda item, namely the use of housing and regeneration enabling funding. From South Gloucestershire's perspective, this enabling funding gives the authority the ability to invest in capacity to pro-actively develop housing and land acquisition propositions, to bring forward strategic schemes and meet the aims and aspirations that the authority has to 'raise the bar' in standards of new development and truly serve the needs of communities.

Cllr Romero welcomed the strategy. She commented that affordable housing, in a variety of guises, was a top priority for Bath & North East Somerset. The strategy will help the authority to deliver this priority.

Mayor Rees welcomed the strategy and the formalising of the strategic partnership with Homes England. The region has developed a reputation for its focus on delivery and for being prepared to consider taking forward new models of delivery; this is crucial in attracting developers and inward investment. He added that the city region is an attractive place, as is shown by the number of people moving to Bristol and surrounding areas from London. Analysis shows that Bristol itself will grow by approximately 96,000 people in the next 25 years; currently, there is a housing crisis in Bristol, not just in terms of housing supply but also in terms of affordability and social segregation, 'gentrification' and other dynamics; on top of this, the housing crisis must be tackled in the context of the climate and ecological emergency. It will be imperative to recognise that the kind of homes we build, and where we build them will be among the most significant determinants of our planetary impact over the coming decades. It will be essential to create the framework by which we will meet this regional challenge which is part of our participation in a global challenge. In this context, he was pleased to see the strategy come forward and was supportive. It would also be important to be mindful of pursuing discussions with the government and Homes England around recently announced changes to the housing formula (housing targets for local authorities) which brought increased challenges to housing delivery.

Cllr Romero then additionally commented on the challenges brought about through the government's announced changes to the housing formula. She also stressed how important it is for Bath & North East Somerset to be able to create affordable homes in rural areas as well as in towns, especially in the context of how working patterns may change post-Covid. If working from home became the 'new norm', there is likely to be more demand from people wishing to work and live in rural areas; she hoped that there will be scope within the strategy for this to be delivered too.

Cllr Davies welcomed the strategy but commented, for context, that the vast majority of this funding will not go to North Somerset as it was not a member of the Combined Authority; the challenges for North Somerset are at least as great as those faced by other authorities in the region, for example in terms of the same pressures on housing delivery, including delivering homes in rural areas. The most important point of all, in his view, is that this strategy has been written at a time of great uncertainty, and it may be necessary to regularly review the strategy as the region and the country adapt as the pandemic eases.

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

The **West of England Joint Committee** RESOLVED:
- To approve the draft West of England Housing Delivery Strategy.

13 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP REVENUE BUDGET SETTING REPORT 2021-22

The Joint Committee considered a report seeking approval of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) revenue budget 2021-22 (agenda item 13).

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

Cllr Davies noted the comments made earlier at the meeting by the Chair of the LEP and referred to the challenges faced in securing future funding to support the economic recovery and support businesses as they seek to recover from the pandemic. He was supportive of the report but it was important to recognise that there is a degree of uncertainty moving forwards.

Mayor Rees was supportive of the report. He also welcomed the LEP's support for good social policy as an integral part of their work, e.g. in terms of the importance of investing around mental health, educational 'catch-up', recovery and providing quality housing. The pandemic has reinforced the fact that is not possible to neatly separate the economy from the social conditions in which it has to operate.

Cllr Romero commented on the need to recognise the degree of uncertainty faced by all authorities at this time. This has the potential to impact on revenue budgets as activity is prioritised to try and stimulate economic activity. It will accordingly be important to keep budgets under review.

Cllr Savage indicated his support for the report.

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 LEP Budget for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1.
2. To approve a 2021-22 contribution of £110k per each West of England Unitary Authority (to be reviewed for 2022-23 onwards) as match funding to attract the government's LEP capacity funding.
3. To approve a £160k drawdown from the LEP general reserve to fund the shortfall in 2021-

22 LEP operating costs.

4. To note the forecasted LEP revenue outturn for 2020-21 as set out in Appendix 2.

14

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 14).

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

* Appendix 1 set out requested scheme changes in respect of the Local Growth Fund.

* Appendix 2 set out requested scheme changes in respect of the Economic Development Fund (EDF) and Revolving Infrastructure Fund (RIF).

* Appendix 3 set out the business case assessment summary table for the Weston General Stores project. Weston General Stores was allocated £1.7m of Getting Building Fund through the application process to government in Summer 2020. An Outline Business Case for this project had now been submitted by North Somerset Council seeking this funding towards the £1.765m project cost.

* The report also included an allocation of funding to enable work to be progressed on an Outline Business Case for works in the vicinity of the M49 Junction.

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

Cllr Davies welcomed the report, particularly in relation to the proposals to take forward work on the Weston General Stores project and the M49 junction.

Mayor Rees also welcomed the report, including the change request which would see funding re-allocated to Bristol Beacon.

Cllr Romero indicated she was supportive of the report.

Cllr Savage was also supportive of the report; with reference to the points raised in the public forum statement from South Gloucestershire Councillor Robert Griffin, he also particularly welcomed the proposed allocation of funding to enable work to be progressed on the Outline Business Case for works relating to the M49 junction, which will help to maximise the potential for this designated enterprise area.

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 Outline Business Case for the Weston General Stores and, should there be urgency, delegate the approval of the Full Business Case to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the West of England Chief Executives.

2. To delegate the approval of an Outline Business Case for works in the vicinity of the M49 Junction to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the West of England Chief Executives.

3. To approve the change requests for schemes within the Local Growth Fund programme as

set out in Appendix 1.

4. In advance of the next meeting of the Joint Committee, to delegate the following to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the West of England Chief Executives:

a) Approval of changes to funding profile and programme for schemes within the current Local Growth Fund, Getting Building Fund, Economic Development Fund and Revolving Infrastructure Fund programmes.

b) Approval of the reallocation of funding for schemes in the approved Local Growth Fund/Getting Building Fund programme including swaps with the Economic Development Fund, and exceptionally, the Investment Fund.

5. To approve the change requests for schemes within the Economic Development Fund and Revolving Infrastructure Fund programme set out in Appendix 2.

15 MAYORAL BUDGET SETTING REPORT 2021-22

The WECA Committee considered the Mayoral budget setting report for 2021-22 (agenda item 15).

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

* The proposed Mayoral budget for 2021-22 was set out at Appendix 1. The Mayoral Budget covered those functions that fall under the specific responsibility of the Mayor in accordance with the West of England Combined Authority Order 2017. For 2021-22, these functions primarily relate to the payment of highways and transport capital grants to the constituent councils.

* Monitoring against the Mayoral budget is reported to each meeting of the WECA Committee. The current forecasted outturn position for the 2020-21 financial year was set out in Appendix 2.

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

Cllr Romero was supportive of the report. She commented that in moving forward, she was working on the assumption that there will be the opportunity to consider how the authorities work together and the financial implications around this through some form of governance review.

Cllr Savage welcomed the report and expressed the hope that the new Mayor, when elected, will continue to be lean and efficient in the funding and running of the Mayor's office.

Mayor Rees supported the report. He added though that there is likely to be a need to review matters as necessary given the current uncertainties faced due to the pandemic.

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 the Mayoral Budget for 2021-22 together with the funding contribution from the WECA Budget of £0.645m as set out in Appendix 1.

2. To agree the specific Highways and Transport Capital Grant allocations totalling £17.572m to the constituent councils for 2021-22 as set out in Appendix 1.

3. To note the Mayoral Fund 2020-21 forecasted revenue outturn as detailed in

Appendix 2.

16 COMBINED AUTHORITY BUDGET 2021-22 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST

The WECA Committee considered a report seeking approval of the Combined Authority budget 2021-22 (agenda item 16).

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

* The proposed WECA budget for 2021/22 was set out at Appendix 1.

* Monitoring against the WECA budget was reported to each meeting of the WECA committee. The current forecasted outturn position for the current financial year was set out at Appendix 2.

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

Cllr Romero commented that there was some concern about some contracts, particularly the Park and Ride contract but she was aware also that this matter was being examined currently and could be discussed further as necessary by Mayors and Leaders.

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 a Transport Levy to the constituent councils of £19.5m for 2021/22, with a recharge of £2m applied to North Somerset Council, as detailed in Figure 6.

2. To approve the allocation of £200k from the 2020-21 surplus Treasury Management income to the delivery of the ICT programme of works.

3. To approve the surplus above 2021-22 base budget on Treasury Management income to be transferred to a treasury management reserve to cover the risk of capital losses, volatility of future income returns and lower interest rates payable in future years.

4. To approve the detailed WECA budget for 2021-22 as detailed in Appendix 1.

5. To note the WECA revenue outturn position for 2020-21 as detailed in Appendix 2.

17 CAPITAL STRATEGY INCLUDING TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

The WECA Committee considered a report seeking approval of the capital strategy 2021-22 (agenda item 17).

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

* This report set out the detailed capital budget for 2021/22 and the indicative budget up to 2024/25.

* The WECA Investment Strategy 2019 to 2023 was set out at Appendix 2. This was the approved Investment Strategy detailing the prioritisation, governance and allocation of Investment Funding and Transforming Cities Funding. The current investment programme, which runs up to March 2023, has an overall funding allocation of £350m.

*The full detail of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021-22 was set out at Appendix 3,

setting out the proposals and guidance that the authority will use to manage its daily cash-flow activities during the financial year ahead.

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

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 the Capital Budget as shown in Appendix 1.
2. To approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021-22 detailed in Appendix 3.
3. To note the WECA Investment Strategy as shown in Appendix 2.

18

INVESTMENT FUND

The Combined Authority Committee considered a report setting out the latest proposed approvals in relation to the Investment Fund (agenda item 18).

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

* He reminded members that a slightly updated version of the report had been published and was available on the Combined Authority website. This updated version contains additional explanatory wording and context at paragraph 9 of the report (the section of the report that refers to the Winterbourne & Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath & Westerleigh bypasses).

* As with previous Investment Fund reports, he highlighted the wide range of significant project approvals being taken forward, all of which continue to demonstrate how the Combined Authority is driving forward at pace in delivering significant projects.

* The specific proposals in this report included:

- Development funding applications for the 10 Year Rail Delivery Plan and North Fringe Public Infrastructure projects.
- The Outline Business Case for the Bottle Yard Studios at Hawkfield Business Park in south Bristol
- A funding allocation to match fund the Kingswood Future High Streets bid to government.

* Finally, but importantly, the Investment Fund has been subject to a 5-year government Gateway review process which is now concluding. Throughout this process, the Combined Authority had to provide relevant evidence to successfully pass the Gateway in order to unlock funding for the next 5 years. This initial Gateway process will formally conclude by March 2021 and it is strongly anticipated that this will result in the release of £150m funding for the next 5 year period.

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, and in particular the recommendation to approve the Outline Business Case for Bottle Yard Studios and the associated funding. The Bottle Yard studios had been a key factor in encouraging Channel 4 to establish a creative hub in Bristol and will be a major contributor to the region's economy. Encouraging responses to this investment have been received from Creative England and the British Film Commission; this further adds to the reputation of the region as an area that is a key base for the creative

sector. He also welcomed the recommendation to allocate funding to support Kingswood High Street improvements, recognising the importance of supporting high streets and local centres across the region as they adapt as the pandemic eases.

Cllr Savage welcomed the report and was very pleased to see the recommendation supporting Kingswood High Street improvements, following the Future High Streets fund announcement. This was the culmination of a very long and competitive bidding process resulting in a government funding award of £12.5m; the further funding from WECA will enable South Gloucestershire to respond positively to the government with assurance that delivery can be maximised. This will see transformational schemes delivered along Kingswood High Street and will be backed by a report to South Gloucestershire's Cabinet on 1 February which recommends using borrowing set aside through South Gloucestershire's property investment strategy into place shaping. Property acquisition could now proceed, as could completing the restoration of the Grade 1 listed Whitfield Tabernacle, as well as developing design options for Regent Street and promoting active travel options. He was also pleased to see the progression of the Strategic Outline Business Case for Winterbourne & Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath & Westerleigh bypasses, which will address existing network problems and cater for growth already on course for planning permissions already granted. He also reflected the comment from Cllr Labuschagne during the public forum to emphasise that these bypasses will be multi-modal, providing travel choices for people; this is an important principle for new schemes of this nature. This will be complementary to the Yate Park and Ride. Finally, he welcomed the 10 year rail plan, which builds on the investment in MetroWest.

Cllr Romero commented that Bath and North East Somerset has benefitted from the Investment Fund, including Love Our High Streets funding which is critical to the future recovery of key shopping areas across the region. Keynsham, for example, has benefitted from this funding and it is really commendable that this investment is being made where it is needed.

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 the Feasibility and Development Funding Application for the 10 Year Rail Delivery Plan and award of £470k.
2. To approve the Strategic Outline Business Case for the Winterbourne & Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath & Westerleigh Bypasses.
3. To note the submission of the DfT E-Cycles Extension Fund Bid.
4. To approve the Feasibility and Development Funding Application for the North Fringe Public Infrastructure Package and award of £350k.
5. To delegate the approval of Outline Business Cases through the Development Infrastructure Fund that come forward in advance of the next meeting of the WECA Committee to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils, subject to fit with the agreed criteria and headroom being available.
6. To approve the Outline Business Case for Bottle Yard Studios – Hawkfield Business Park subject to the completion of a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan with the award of £135k to develop the Full Business Case and an allocation of a further £11.73m

7. To allocate up to £7.56m to Kingswood High Street subject to the award of funding through the Future High Streets programme with the approval of funding delegated to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils.
8. To approve the Full Business Case for the Innovation for Renewal and Opportunity project and award of £5.716m and to delegate grant giving to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils.
9. To delegate the approval of the use of the £1m Innovation for Renewal and Opportunity influence fund, to support specific innovation projects which align with the project objectives and outcomes, to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils.
10. To approve the change requests for schemes within the current programme as set out in Appendix 2.
11. In advance of the next meeting of the WECA Committee, to delegate the approval of changes to funding profile and programme for approved schemes to the WECA Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent Councils.
12. To amend the approved capital programme for individual project approvals agreed at the December Committee and within this report.

19

BUS NETWORK RECOVERY

The WECA Committee considered a report providing an update on how the bus network was recovering from the coronavirus emergency, explained possible bus service funding models under consideration by the government, and sought delegated authority to enable urgent decisions to be taken, if necessary, between committee meetings (agenda item 19).

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

- * The report set out the background to the fact that in light of the pandemic and its effects on bus services, the government was considering devolution of the emergency funding arrangements to the Combined Authority as the first step in a transition to a potential formal Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators.
- * The full details of the government's proposals were awaited. The report accordingly set out the process for the award of new local bus service contracts to replace those expiring in August 2021 and proposed that authority be delegated to the Combined Authority Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent councils, to take a decision on accepting devolved emergency funding to support local bus services and associated powers should a suitable offer be made by government.

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

Cllr Romero commented that the further detail awaited from the government will be important; whilst the opportunity for greater control over bus services will be welcome, there is also a real concern that with the bus services as they have become during the pandemic, there is a need to avoid ending up in a situation where there is a service in place which has insufficient financial support - additional resource will be essential. If the Combined Authority does take on additional responsibilities, it will be necessary to ensure that bus service need is assessed, as for example, in rural areas, the need for rural bus services is often pitted against the economics of providing services elsewhere, across towns and cities; it will be important to be mindful of this factor as further detail emerges.

Cllr Savage welcomed the report and commented that it was clear that public transport will have a key role to play post-Covid. It was important to be pro-active as a Combined Authority in working with the bus companies and understanding future trends, threats and opportunities. The position will need to be monitored closely and assessed over the next 12 months and beyond.

Mayor Rees commented that whilst greater control over local transport solutions is desirable, it must be adequately resourced. There is a concern that bus patronage will not recover for some time, which brings additional, significant risk to managing bus services. Increasing numbers of bus service routes are being seen as unprofitable, therefore a considerable amount of additional government funding will be required to accompany additional responsibilities, so that a comprehensive bus offer can be developed locally. Whilst supporting the report, there are a number of risks to be assessed carefully at a future point as further detail is provided by the government.

Cllr Davies commented on the uncertainty of the situation. If viewed in the context of the climate change aspirations locally about using different, more environmentally friendly vehicles, investment in this for bus companies will need to take place over a considerable period of time; if the government proposal amounts to a 'quick fix' for a few months, this would suggest significant additional investment will not be available to support measures that will improve air quality in towns and cities. On that basis, a longer-term approach will be preferable; much more than a few months of additional, limited funding will be required if we are to attract people back to using public transport and achieve climate related actions.

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 agree:

1. That a procurement process be initiated for new local bus service contracts to replace those expiring in August 2021.
2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Transport Integration, in consultation with Members of the Transport Board, to award new local bus service contracts to replace those expiring in August 2021.
3. That authority be delegated to the WECA Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent councils, to agree to take on devolved emergency funding to support local bus services and associated powers should a suitable offer be made by Government.

20

TRANSPORT DECARBONISATION STUDY

The WECA Committee considered a report seeking approval to undertake a study to develop the evidence base for producing a transport decarbonisation Issues and Options paper (agenda item 20).

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

* The WECA Climate Emergency Action Plan sets a target for the region to be carbon neutral by 2030. For transport, the Action Plan sets out aims to reduce the number of car trips, increase the uptake of low carbon vehicles, increase active travel and the uptake of public transport. There is, however, an evidence gap as to what measures are required and when, in order to achieve carbon neutrality in the region by 2030. To resolve this, it was proposed to undertake a decarbonisation study.

* The study will generate a set of options, each with a proportionate contribution towards the overall 2030 commitment, so that packages of options and their combined impacts can be considered. This will provide the evidence base for decision making on which strategic interventions to progress and take forward to design, consultation and delivery.

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

Mayor Rees commented that it will be important to consider how future transport solutions relate to key planning considerations, including how transport connects to new homes and employment land.

Cllr Romero welcomed the study but stressed there is a need to work at pace; this though is a step in the right direction.

Cllr Savage welcomed the study and the exploration of options to meet our climate emergency and low carbon objectives. He added that the West of England has always been a leader in innovation, including engineering, and he looked forward to the developments that may be produced through this work. He also welcomed the fact that this work will feed into the wider Western Gateway transport study that recognises how the Combined Authority area interlinks with that wider region and the importance of that regional connectivity to meeting our social, economic and environmental objectives.

Cllr Davies echoed Cllr Savage's point about linking this work with the wider Western Gateway transport study as it will be important to consider how the study will relate to that wider economic area.

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 the proposal to undertake a transport decarbonisation study.
2. To delegate authority to the WECA Director of Infrastructure in conjunction with Unitary Authority Infrastructure Directors to agree the final scope and commissioning of the transport decarbonisation study.

21

INFORMATION ITEM - DECISIONS TAKEN AT THIS MEETING

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 1.04 p.m.

Signed:

Date: