

WECA AUDIT COMMITTEE – 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

QUESTIONS & REPLIES

The following questions were submitted by the deadline (full details of questions and the replies are set out in the following pages):

Q1. Question from: Dave Redgewell

Subject: DfT Grant for bus service

With the ending of the covid bus operator CSSG in England of £27.3 million a month and with covid 19 bus operators recovery grant. Of £226.5 from From October 2021 to April 2022 .

With services reductions in the west of England mayoral Transport authority

What consultation has taken place

With the combined authority councils

Over this funding issue with the city and county of Bristol. and the Bristol mayor

South Gloucestershire council and Bath and North East Somerset.

North Somerset council.

And parish and town council to reduce service reductions and the funding issue as at the metro mayor has no tax raising powers at present. But local authorities do or a Grant request can be made to the Department for transport

On bus routes 18 kingswood town centre warmley North common oidland common keynsham town centre saltford Newbridge Weston and Bath spa bus station

Service 5 Downend Bromley heath oidbury court Fishponds Stapleton village Eastville park Stapleton village St Werburgess st Pauls Bristol city centre.

672 Bristol city centre Bedminster and the chew valley.

What is the level of Grant for the Department for transport and from the 3 local authorities have to commission bus service as at present the Department for transport are still funding bus operators with support from the west of England combined authority.

RESPONSE

The Audit Committee advise that this is not a matter for the Audit Committee and therefore your question has been referred to the next Joint meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Committee and West of England Joint Committee on 15 October 2021 for response.

QUESTION 2 -

Question from: Dave Redgewell

Subject: Auditing

As Bus service provision is one of the main functions of the mayor is to provide bus services through advance quality partnership and commission service in the supported bus network.

In south Gloucestershire the city and county of Bristol and Bath and North east Somerset.

Cross border service with North Somerset I have not seen any Audit work or recent reports on this mayoral function or on the role of Travelwest the public transport walking cycling information on behalf of metro Mayor West of England combined authority North Somerset council

We would welcome Audit of these important public transport services.

This is carried out in the Great Manchester mayor combined authority

Liverpool city region region mayoral transport authority.

The west Midlands combined mayoral transport authority.

But we have not seen a proper Audit report of west of England combined authority public transport or Transportation services.

RESPONSE

Since the Combined Authority took on the direct delivery of bus-based public transport functions in April 2020 the country has been gripped by the Covid-19 pandemic which has led to an unprecedented decline in public transport use. The Combined Authority has therefore been focused on maintaining bus services where possible, drawing on the emergency funding made available by the Government, and working with bus operators and Government officials to plan the recovery, which is only just beginning and will take some considerable time before pre-Covid passenger levels are reached. In recent months the Combined Authority has also been required to develop an ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plan for the next five plus years and is now preparing an Enhanced Partnership Plan to enable the region to secure funding from the Government's Bus Transformation Fund from April 2022. The situation has therefore been far from normal and consequently would not lend itself easily to an audit process. As the country emerges from the pandemic and the Combined Authority can properly establish its business-as-usual functions for public transport, a review of these in the context of the Plans and Strategies in place would be more appropriate.