

WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE ITEM 11

15 October 2021

REPORT SUMMARY SHEET

CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENT

Purpose

To update the committee on the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), the next steps, and to confirm the key principles behind the Local Contribution.

Summary

This report includes the following key information

- CRSTS principles
- Summary of proposed packages of work to be funded
- Local contribution and key principles
- Next Steps

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

The Combined Authority has actively reviewed its key activities and work programme to reflect changing priorities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific issues relating to the Covid-19 situation that impact on or are addressed through this report are as follows:

- Our approach to this funding submission have taken into account the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and we will consider long term implications for the next stage of our submission.

Recommendations

Members of the Combined Authority Committee are asked to approve:

It is recommended that the Committee agree and support the principles behind establishing the Local Contribution.

Contact officer: Kathryn Vowles

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ITEM 11

REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

DATE: 15 OCTOBER 2021

REPORT TITLE: CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENT

DIRECTOR: KATHRYN VOWLES, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE

AUTHOR: KATHRYN VOWLES

Purpose of Report

1. To update the committee on the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), the next steps, and to confirm the key principles behind the Local Contribution.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee agree and support the principles behind establishing the Local Contribution.

Background / Issues for Consideration

2. Our CRSTS initial submission was made on 17 September 2021. Local transport networks are a weakness nationally, impacting productivity. The National Infrastructure Assessment stated that addressing this weakness, and active travel, must be the way we deliver capacity for growth.

3. The CRSTS aims to:

- drive growth and productivity through infrastructure investment;
- level-up services towards the standards of the best; and
- decarbonise transport, especially promoting modal shift from cars to public transport, walking and cycling

4 The settlement consolidates existing funds (to the value of approximately £155m over 5 years) including; Integrated Transport Block, Highways Maintenance Funding, Potholes Action Fund and the last year of TCF funding (approx. £30m).

5. The settlement is in addition to existing funding streams, including bus revenue support, cycling and walking funding, Local Electric Vehicle Charging funds etc. All subject to decisions at Spending Review 2021.

Proposed packages

6. Our work packages focus on improving key strategic corridors and the linkages into those corridors, particularly across the bus network. The co-ordinated solution:

- Represents an effective approach to emissions reduction
- Levels-up and transforms our most deprived areas
- Reduces blockers to productivity, and connects our jobseekers to employment
- Delivers high-quality, interconnected transport options for everyone across the West of England.

7. We aim to support strong, active and inclusive communities, who are informed and involved in decision-making and enable us to improve the region to enhance the quality of life for our residents. The co-ordinated solution has been developed following extensive joint working with the local authorities of Bristol, South Gloucestershire, and Bath and North East Somerset, supported by an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement.

Work-package 1 - improving our strategic public transport corridors

8. The solution now proposed includes building on the success of metrobus, looking to enhance the existing services whilst adding other arms that will complete a more comprehensive network. We therefore propose to develop a new set of strategic public transport corridors that consist of:

- Continuous bus lanes
- Bus gates to filter traffic and improve priority
- Traffic signal prioritisation
- Segregated walking and cycling infrastructure
- Low traffic neighbourhoods adjacent to the corridors
- Transport hubs
- Standardised bus stops.

9. The strategic public transport corridors complement our Key Route Network and are categorised as City Corridors and Town Corridors. The corridors were selected and prioritised according to: existing highway congestion, connecting households with employment and education, current and future patronage, supporting areas of deprivation, and deliverability.

10. City Corridors are where a high level of separation is possible and desired. This will provide the backbone for the bus network with high frequency services driven by connections from rural and suburban areas and great opportunities for interchange between modes. City Corridors for investment include:

- Bristol City Centre, changes to facilitate priority access for the routes set out below

- A4 Portway (plus expansion of existing Park & Ride site to incorporate links to the new rail station and change to a transport hub)
- A370, improved connections to the existing Long Ashton Park & Ride site, along Cumberland Road
- M32, delivery of a new transport hub and changes to the corridor
- A4 Bristol to Bath, segregated route between our two main cities with a new transport hub at Hicks

11. Town Corridors are the next tier, with bus services connecting the towns and suburbs into the high frequency routes of City Corridors. We will provide segregation where possible, especially at key congestion hotspots, but full separation will be more challenging. Town Corridors for investment include:

- A38 connections from Thornbury to the M32 and from Thornbury to Charfield
- A432 connections from Yate to the M32
- A37 improving access from the Somer Valley area into central Bristol
- A367 improving access from the Somer Valley area into central Bath
- A4018 ensuring joined up connections between central Bristol and key residential, employment and retail developments in the North Fringe.

12. The objective within each of these corridors is not simply to improve public transport journey times, service frequency and reliability, it is also to improve the integration of public transport with walking, cycling and the public realm surrounding network access points. The investments will build on metrobus routes and transport hubs to form the backbone of the public transport network.

13. In presenting a co-ordinated public transport offer for these corridors we intend to introduce common West of England branding to our bus services and develop simplified and integrated ticketing and fares, together with real time travel information. With this we aim to make it easier for everyone to use public transport.

Work-package 2 - walking and cycling

14. Our plans for walking and cycling support the goal of the Combined Authority for these modes to become the preferred choice for short journeys, delivering cleaner air, healthier places and lower carbon emissions to meet the ambitious decarbonisation target by 2030. They build on the significant and exciting first steps to realise this in our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

15. We will invest in walking and cycling facilities across the region, to improve the attractiveness of active travel, including new modes such as e-scooters. The facilities include increased provision of cycle parking spaces and off-road and segregated walking and cycling routes.

16. These walking and cycling investment plans are integral to our strategic corridor approach, providing links between where people live, where they work, and where

they access essential services and leisure activities, especially in economically disadvantaged areas.

17. Alongside this, we are committed to delivering a number of Liveable Neighbourhoods. In this way, the co-benefits of walking and cycling schemes will be realised by the communities; unlocking better places to live and work.

Work-package 3 – developing our regional rail network

18. We have a 10 Year Rail Delivery Plan, setting out the changes required to attract car users and incentivise rail use. Building on MetroWest 1 and 2, and the Bristol Temple Meads Eastern Entrance, this plan will transform the regional rail network, making stations accessible and providing capacity for ‘turn up and go’ services. This will increase access to jobs and neighbourhoods, ensuring equal opportunities while reducing reliance on cars and the region’s carbon impact from transport. Our five-year programme can be broken down as:

- New stations: Building on our delivery experience of constructing five new stations under the MetroWest programme, a new station will be delivered at Charfield providing access to the rail network for up to 14,500 residents within 5km, reducing car dependency in Charfield and neighbouring areas.
- Accessibility: Working to make our stations safe, attractive and accessible, and easy to access via walking and cycling. Focusing first on those stations providing services to our most deprived communities: Lawrence Hill, Bristol; Parsons Street, Bristol; Bedminster, Bristol; Stapleton Road, Bristol; Oldfield Park, Bath.
- Future services: To further improve connectivity and capacity we are progressing plans to extend MetroWest to the south, increasing frequency of services between Bristol Temple Meads and locations such as Weston-super-Mare and Taunton. This will better link people and jobs, enhancing the economic prospects of our residents and supporting reduction of car travel. This increase in services will likely require infrastructure interventions and we are undertaking a feasibility assessment to understand the extent of physical works.

19. In addition to upgrading existing stations, we are evaluating major enhancements at Bristol Temple Meads, improving capacity to meet demand whilst celebrating the station’s unique heritage and its role as a gateway to the city. Network Rail, Bristol City Council, Homes England and the Combined Authority will collaboratively develop plans for northern and southern entrances to Bristol Temple Meads. Project delivery will be integrated with planned Temple Quarter Regeneration Programme works. We anticipate this to be funded through an existing bid to Homes England and MHCLG to increase housing capacity in the city centre.

20. Through our rail programme the Combined Authority has created high-performing partnerships with industry partners. Our work will be delivered through our existing partnership with Network Rail and GWR, and by directly-appointed experienced consultants and contractors where appropriate. The delivery of the Eastern Entrance is testament to that partnership.

Work-package 4 - innovation

21. To foster innovation, we plan to set aside £20m of our allocation to dedicate as an Innovation Fund, to which applications can be made to implement or trial innovative projects. This is in addition to the embedded project innovation and value engineering investment where we will use modern methods of construction to reduce build programmes and the carbon impact of schemes. This will build upon our demonstrable success in the trialling and uptake of transport innovation in the region – our weekly e-scooter use is amongst the highest in the country.

21. It is anticipated that a significant proportion of this fund will be used to deliver electric vehicle charging infrastructure and integrated ticketing systems in accordance with Government strategy.

22. Expanding the work of the Future Transport Zone programme (FTZ), we will also deliver rural connectivity pilot schemes to link rural communities to our enhanced transport networks.

23. The Mobility as a Service platform, being developed through the FTZ, will enable the single point of access for customers to public transport ticketing. Further enhancement will allow the provision of new and expanded multi-operator tickets, and the development of multi-modal ticketing options. In addition, the development of contactless PAYG systems, enabling customers to ‘tap on and off’ from vehicles with capped fares across multiple modes and operators, will reduce barriers to travel; enabling seamless travel across the network. This will greatly enhance transport users’ choices and drive growth in their use of the transport services and infrastructure delivered across the CRSTS programme.

Work-package 5 - mass transit

24. We propose to strengthen the provision of public transport services across the region. In addition to the strategic corridors and regional rail enhancements identified above, we propose to:

- Accelerate plans for a mass transit system. We will develop a business case for an affordable and deliverable mass transit system to progress the strategic objectives of the region.
- Improve bus journey times and service frequencies between Bristol and Bath, and provide a better and more frequent service to the airport.
- We will also progress the identification and acquisition of land to support our public transport ambitions and progress the design of transport hubs.

Work-package 6 - maintenance and small schemes

25. We will dedicate a section of the highway maintenance funding to cater for as yet unidentified localised safety and highway management improvements at locations which are outside the main proposals in the submission. This portion of funding will

allow us to address any safety or traffic management issues which arise, in a timely fashion.

26. Maintenance and smaller schemes will complement other work-packages and will be coordinated to minimise disruption to the network.

Local contribution

27. Our submission has included a proposed Local Contribution of 20% for the capital programme. Maintenance Funding and Integrated Transport Block does not require a Local Contribution (unless considered an Enhancement). Local Contribution must represent genuine additionality.

28. The table below sets out the key principles for managing Local Contribution:

1	Local Contribution has to demonstrate additionality or acceleration linked to the specific capital investment made.
2	Existing government grants can't be counted as Local Contribution which will discount IF, GBF and TCF
3	EDF might be considered if we can demonstrate that the specific capital investment has accelerated, or increased, the business rates attainable
4	Although the CRST covers 5 years, the Local Contribution is likely to extend beyond this period. WECA might be able to 'cashflow' for up to a further 3 years (subject to committee approval)
5	The Local Contribution will be collated as an overall regional control total which has to be achieved to match the CRST capital funding provided.
6	Unitary Authorities will underwrite the match funding pertinent to their area. This will not be an equal split - but based on the specific investment programmes.
7	The total match funding element will be managed at a programme level, adopting a pooled approach, with the proportionate risks of the programme managed through the WoE Section 151 Officer Group.
8	Additional maintenance costs associated with the construction of any new assets can be incorporated within the overall CRSTS bid – however, there will be no certainty of this funding being available beyond the initial 5 year period.
9	Investment in the National Bus Strategy development has to dovetail into the CRSTS investment programme and income attainable.
10	Examples of Local Contribution will include: use of EDF to accelerate project delivery / uplift in land value / developer contributions / increase in commercial income / work based parking levy / Clean Air Zones etc

11	Where possible, we will promote consistency in the application of all relevant policies and initiatives across the region.
12	Local Contribution can be counted outside of the WoE Combined Authority area where investment provides benefit to the wider geography.
13	As per current practice, a 'single pot' approach will be retained across all funding streams in order to optimise overall funding available to region.
14	Bi-monthly monitoring reports will provided to WoE S151 Officers detailing emerging investment programmes and profiled match income.

29. Our submission has been strengthened through our collaborative and robust approach to providing a consistent 20% based on the principles above. We will have to provide further detail, and confirm that 20%, through the business case submission post Spending Review.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee agree and support the principles behind establishing the Local Contribution.

Next steps

30. Our submission on 17 September will inform the Comprehensive Spending Review. We are anticipating that we will be provided an indicative allocation at the Spending Review on 27 October. We will then prepare a revised submission supported by a programme level business case. Our Location Contribution will need to be confirmed at that time. We are expecting to have our final award confirmed well before FY 22/23.

Consultation

31. Our work packages have been developed in consultation with constituent authorities and based on plans and strategies subject to extensive public consultation. Scheme development will include all applicable public consultation as applicable.

Other Options Considered

32. Not Applicable

Risk Management/Assessment

33. A full risk assessment and management plan is underway to support the programme level business case to be submitted at the next stage.

Public Sector Equality Duties

34. 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 victimisation 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.

35. 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.

36. 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.

37. A programme level Equalities Impact Assessment will be prepared as part of the submission of our programme level business case.

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate:

38. Our submission has included a 20% Local Contribution of additional funding to support our overall programme. This will be confirmed in the submission of our programme level business case in line with the principles described above.

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

Legal Implications / Land/Property Implications/ Human Resources Implications

39. Full legal, land, property and HR implications will be established alongside our programme level business case.

Advice given by: Shahzia Daya, Director of Legal

Climate Change Implications

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

The premise of our submission to the Department for Transport is the decarbonisation of our regional transport system. The West of England region declared a climate emergency in 2019, setting a target to be carbon neutral by 2030. To reach this target, we need to cut 464 kilotonnes of CO₂ each year, and transport will need to be a major contributor to this. Both our Climate Emergency Action Plan and our Local Industrial Strategy focus on clean, inclusive growth and prioritise the decarbonisation of the transport system.

Significant work has already been undertaken in the region across many sectors, and carbon emissions in the region in 2019 (including North Somerset) are 62% of their 2005 figure. Public sector carbon emissions have dropped by more than 50%, while industrial emissions in Bristol are less than a third of their 2005 baseline. However, progress on reducing transport carbon emissions has been slower than average. The average reduction in carbon emissions from transport has been less than 10% since 2005.

The CRSTS will provide us with the funding and the opportunity to make critical improvements that will aid our decarbonisation goals, including developing a private transport infrastructure for electric vehicles and increasing public transport demand. Further detail will be established within our programme level business case.

Background papers:

None

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 writing to West of England Combined Authority, 3 Rivergate, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EW; email: democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk