

## **WECA AUDIT COMMITTEE – 9 DECEMBER 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 portway parkway station**

In view the allocation of money for the West of England mayoral combined Authority and Bristol city council for building of portway parkway station by Network rail western route and operated by first group Great western railway.

What has happened to the Department for transport grant for this project has it been paid to the sponsor at Network rail western and when is construction and delivery going to be carried out?.

With regard to metro west railway projects what revised timetable is in place for metro west line From Bristol Temple meads to Pill and Portishead.

Delayed by a Development consent order

Bristol Temple meads to Ashley Down Filton North and Henbury loop

As this route is delayed by Planning permissions .

These projects had been given delivery

Dates and targets by the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council with Network rail western route and the Department for transport.

Will the the government take back an money from the Mayoral combined Authority.

#### **RESPONSE**

*Portway Parkway station attracted DfT grant funding through the New Stations Fund. The grant payment is made to the promoter, in this instance Bristol City Council. Network Rail site activities commence Sunday 13 December running through to completion spring 2022.*

*Pill / Portishead – as you may be aware, we continue to wait for Development Consent Order approval. We are hoping this is resolved in a timely manner and we can maintain our existing programme. We will provide any updates in the new year.*

*With regard to Henbury, North Filton Ashley Down, on the whole we have achieved planning for these sites. We are working with the Environment Agency to resolve some flood risk challenges. Once resolved, we will update on a delivery programme.*

*We are working closely with the Department for Transport across our rail programme, and there are no reasons why any awarded money will be taken back.*

#### **QUESTION 2 -**

**Question from: Dave Redgewell**

**Subject: Auditing**

In view of the fact that the west of England mayoral combined Authority is the city region of Bristol and Bath Transport Authority.

What Audit is taking place of the covid 19 bus service recovery grant and allocation of concessionary fare and support services grant to the bus Network.

We note at present that the mayor of the west of England Dan Norris has no direct tax raising powers for local bus service which are collected by the city and county of Bristol South Gloucestershire council and Bath and North east Somerset council and passport to the metro mayor.

In view of the public transport Audits of money spent of bus services and railway services in the mayoral transport Authorities of west Midlands Greater Manchester and Sheffield city Region.

What Auditing is taking place in the west of England mayoral combined Authority.

When will voters and taxpayers see results of the Audit .

**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 continues to be 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. In recent months the Combined Authority has also been required to develop an ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plan for the next five plus years to enable the region to secure funding from the Government's Bus Transformation Fund from April 2022. The next phase of that work, to develop and agree an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Schemes with bus operators, is underway. 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.*

*Concessionary travel is funded by the Transport Levy on the constituent councils, who receive funding direct from Government for the English national scheme. Since the onset of coronavirus in March 2020, reimbursement payments to bus operators have been based on pre-Covid levels of travel instead of actual travel by passholders. This has been done at the direction of Government. An audit of concessionary travel is programmed to take place in the fourth quarter of 2021-22.*