

**REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE**

DATE: 16 JUNE 2023

**REPORT TITLE: TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME & REGIONAL
STRATEGY**

DIRECTOR: JESS LEE, HEAD OF STRATEGY & INNOVATION

AUTHOR: RACHEL PYKETT, HEAD OF POLICY

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report sets out progress and next steps on the West of England Combined Authority's route to improvement. The report provides Committee with an update on the West of England Combined Authority transformation programme that is underway to respond to and take forward recommendations from the recent Grant Thornton external audit report, the West of England Combined Authority commissioned an Independent Peer Review and the West of England Combined Authority Committee approved the action plan. This report provides a more detailed update on the progress to deliver a revised regional strategy as part of the transformation programme.

Recommendation

- Committee is recommended to:
 1. Consider and comment on the structure and actions of the West of England Combined Authority transformation programme.
 2. Consider progress towards the revised regional strategy, providing any steers on issues you would like factored in as the work progresses.
 3. Note that a further update on the transformation programme will be provided to the October Committee meeting.
 4. Note intention to invite further external review of progress after approximately 12 months.

Reasons for recommendation

- At March Committee, the action plan agreed committed to bringing an update on progress in delivering actions to June Committee.

Voting arrangements

- At March Committee, members requested an update on transformation and the regional strategy at their next meeting. This paper sets out the update requested. There are no votes associated with this item.

Background / Issues for Consideration

- 2 At the West of England Combined Authority Committee meeting on 17th March 2023, Committee:
 - Approved the action plan that had been developed in response to the Grant Thornton external audit report.
 - Agreed the conclusions of the Independent Peer Review that was committed to in December 2022.
 - Delegated to the Combined Authority Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Executives of the Unitary Authorities, to incorporate recommendations from the Independent Peer Review into the action plan as appropriate.
- 2.1 Since March Committee, CEOs have worked together to establish a Combined Authority transformation programme. The programme draws together the conclusions and recommendations from the work highlighted in paragraph 2. As there is a degree of duplication and overlap in the conclusions that have been reached, the transformation programme actions have been streamlined.
- 2.2 Four workstreams have been established, along with a set of programme level actions. Workstreams cover:
 - Purpose and strategy
 - Workforce and culture
 - Governance and structures
 - Effectiveness, efficiencies and delivery
- 2.3 Figure 1 provides an overview of the transformation programme, including a summary of the aims and core actions within each workstream. An update on actions across each workstream are set out in more detail later in this report.

Figure 1: Transformation programme overview

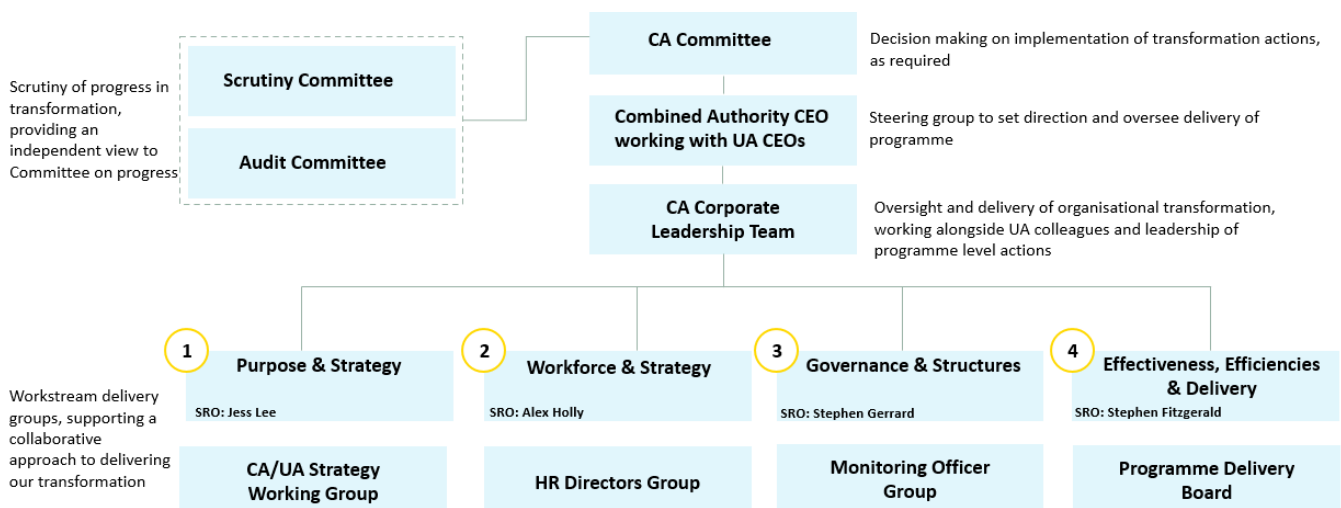
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	Purpose & Strategy	Workforce & Culture	Governance & Structures	Effectiveness, Efficiencies & Delivery
	Programme Level Actions (actions that cut across all workstreams, including stakeholder comms and engagement)			Workstream lead: Jess Lee
Aims of workstream	Developing a shared view of the role and purpose of the Combined Authority	Ensuring that the Combined Authority has the right resources, people management processes and culture to enable successful delivery	Ensuring that the Combined Authority has the appropriate governance structures and constitutional arrangements to support effective decision making	Ensuring that the Combined Authority can deliver on corporate objectives and achieve efficiencies, delivering value for money
Summary of core actions to deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of regional priorities • Facilitated, structured discussions on core purpose of the CA • Refreshed regional strategy • Facilitated work with business community to redefine role of Business Board • Joint Committee meetings held alongside the CA Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out 'step change' programme that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish working behaviours and principles for the CA • Strengthen the corporate core • Build enhanced relationships with UAs • Complete a management restructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop CA operating principles • Establish a set of committees/ meetings to deliver on CA operating principles • Consider use of Leader portfolio model • Revise CA constitution as required to deliver ambitions of the transformation programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit the business case/project evaluation process • Build use of the Programme Delivery Board to ensure delivery remains on track and delivers <u>vfm</u> • Build the internal CA organisational Governance Board to strengthen governance and processes within the organisation • Consider routes to maturing the approach of the CA to attracting and delivering investment
Workstream lead	Jess Lee Head of Strategy & Innovation	Alex Holly Head of People & Assets	Stephen Gerrard Director of Law	Stephen Fitzgerald Interim Director of Finance & Resources

* The table above sets out workstreams. Work will progress on all the different workstreams both simultaneously and sequentially as appropriate.

Programme Governance

- 2.4 At March Committee, members delegated to the Combined Authority CEO, in consultation with the Chief Executives of the Unitary Authorities, the incorporation of the areas set out in the Independent Peer Review into the West of England Combined Authority action plan.
- 2.5 CEOs have agreed the structure of a transformation programme to take forward this work and the CEO group is acting as the steering group for this programme, providing oversight and direction. They are receiving regular updates on programme wide progress and are in the process of receiving workstream specific updates. CEO oversight is ensuring actions remain on track as appropriate, and that work underway reflects the perspectives of all partners as much as possible given accountabilities.
- 2.6 For each workstream, arrangements are in place to ensure delivery is progressed in collaboration between Unitary Authority and Combined Authority officers. Where needed, new officer groups have been established to support collaboration. Where appropriate working groups are already in place, arrangements to ensure collaboration have been strengthened where required.
- 2.7 Decisions flowing from the transformation programme that require Committee decisions will come to Committee as required, with independent review from the Audit and Scrutiny Committees. Figure 2 provides a summary of transformation programme governance. For workstream 4, work that falls outside the remit of the Programme Review Board will be taken direct to CEOs.

Figure 2: Transformation Governance

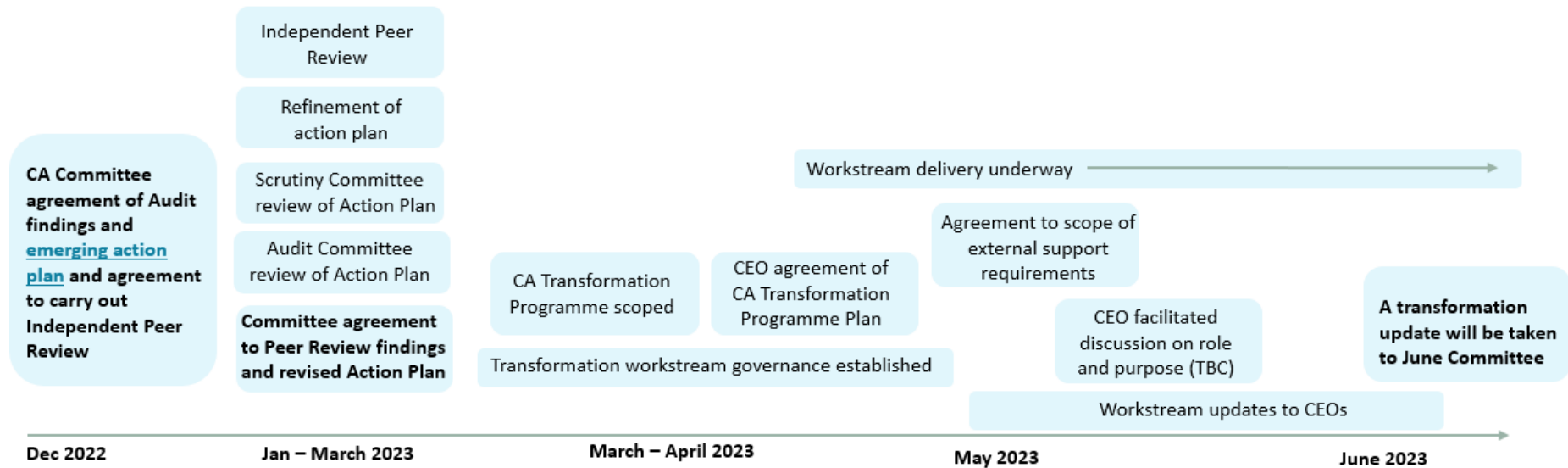


Action to date

2.8 Since Committee agreed an emerging action plan in response to the Grant Thornton external audit, swift work has taken place to conduct an Independent Peer Review and establish a transformation programme. Figure 3 provides an overview of progress to date.

Figure 3: Progress to date in delivering the West of England Combined Authority transformation programme

Phase 1 of the Transformation Programme has focused on identification of areas for action and agreement of the work programme required to deliver



2.9 The timeline for the next phase of the transformation programme is in development and each workstream is in the process of detailed CEO review.

Workstream updates

- 2.10 The following sections of the report provide an update on each workstream across the transformation programme. A more detailed update is included in relation to workstream 1 (purpose and strategy), recognising that actions in this workstream will drive progress across the rest of the programme. Focus is therefore being placed on progressing this workstream swiftly. However, as the following pages show, there is progress to report across all aspects of the programme.
- 2.11 Key progress to note since the March 2023 Committee discussion includes:
- The bringing together of recommendations and actions from independent reviews and West of England Combined Authority Committee agreed action plan into a single transformation programme plan.
 - The development of a forward plan of decisions for Committee approval.
 - A work programme approved by CEOs to deliver a refreshed regional strategy with the aim of completing this work by Autumn 2023.
 - Preparation for externally facilitated CEO discussion to help shape work in planning Mayors and Leaders discussions on the role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority.
 - Progress in delivering a 'step change' workforce strategy across the West of England Combined Authority organisation, including progress in recruitment of permanent members of the West of England Combined Authority Corporate Leadership Team.
 - Completion of a range of governance actions recommended in the Grant Thornton external audit report to strengthen processes around the commissioning of legal advice.
 - The ongoing strengthening of the Programme Delivery Board, which brings together senior West of England Combined Authority and Unitary Authority officers to review progress on projects, providing challenge and support to ensure more timely delivery of projects.
 - The establishment of a new Governance Board within the West of England Combined Authority organisation to strengthen processes within the organisation.
- 2.12 Regional CEOs have signed off the transformation programme action plan and have guided the delivery of actions set out above. CEOs will continue to receive regular updates on progress across the programme, ensuring delivery is informed by all partners within the West of England Combined Authority.
- 2.13 The following sections of the report provide updates across the transformation programme. Actions across the programme reflect the conclusions of the Grant Thornton Audit report, the Independent Peer Review, and the Committee approved action plan. Across these reports there has been a degree of duplication and overlap in conclusions and recommendations. The transformation programme streamlines actions into a clear set of activity. Annex 1 provides an overview of all source recommendations and actions that have informed the programme, providing clarity and transparency on how actions have been mapped.

Programme level workstream

2.14 Figure 4 provides an update on programme level actions, including progress in the development of a forward plan of decisions that Committee is due to discuss during their meeting on 16th June.

Figure 4: programme level workstream

Action No.	Action	Activity Planned	Key dates
TP1	Bring together recommendations and actions from independent reviews and West of England Combined Authority Committee agreed action plan into a single transformation programme plan	Creation of a single transformation programme has taken place with workstreams approved by CEOs. This document brings the approved programme into a single programme plan.	April – May 2023
TP2	Independent progress reviews to be carried out , monitoring progress of the transformation programme and should be reported to Committee	The LGA and Solace are involved in the work and Solace will be invited to undertake a high-level independent progress report at the half year with a fuller more detailed 1 year on report.	Progress report: Sept 2023, 1 year on report: Mar 2024
TP3	Senior Officers will continue to meet collectively and on a 1:1 basis going forward	A range of senior officer groups are in place, including fortnightly meetings of CEOs. Attendance and regularity of meetings will be monitored via independent progress reports. 1 to 1's between the West of England CEO and the Unitary Authority CEO's have been set up and are being set up.	Progress to be reported via reports noted in action TP2
TP4	Senior Leaders and officers will: a. Work collaboratively and engage in meaningful consultation when developing solutions and proposals to help leaders to mitigate points of contention where possible ahead of West of England Combined Authority Committee meetings. Where possible, flagging matters of contention in good time to allow for solutions to be developed ahead of West of England Combined Authority Committee meetings. b. Commit to promoting a culture of respect and understanding at all times. c. Seek mediation at an early stage if required to ensure working practice continue and solutions can be developed.	TP4a. To be managed through CEO meetings or 121 discussions, as appropriate. TP4b. Progress to be considered via reports noted in action 2. TP4c. Progress to be considered via reports noted in action 2. Access to mediation to be considered as part of workstream 2. A programme of external engagement (including with Government) will be developed to ensure stakeholders are aware of progress and able to provide constructive feedback.	Progress to be reported via reports noted in action TP2
TP5	A forward plan of decisions and activities will be developed to help with planning / resourcing / engagement for CEOs meeting.	An indicative 12 month forward plan for West of England Combined Authority Committee will be presented to the June meeting. As the forward plan is refined, this will contribute to forward planning of CEO meetings.	Progress to be reported via reports noted in action TP2

Workstream 1: Purpose and strategy

2.15 Figure 5 provides an overview of workstream 1. A more detailed update on this workstream is set out below.

Figure 5: purpose and strategy workstream

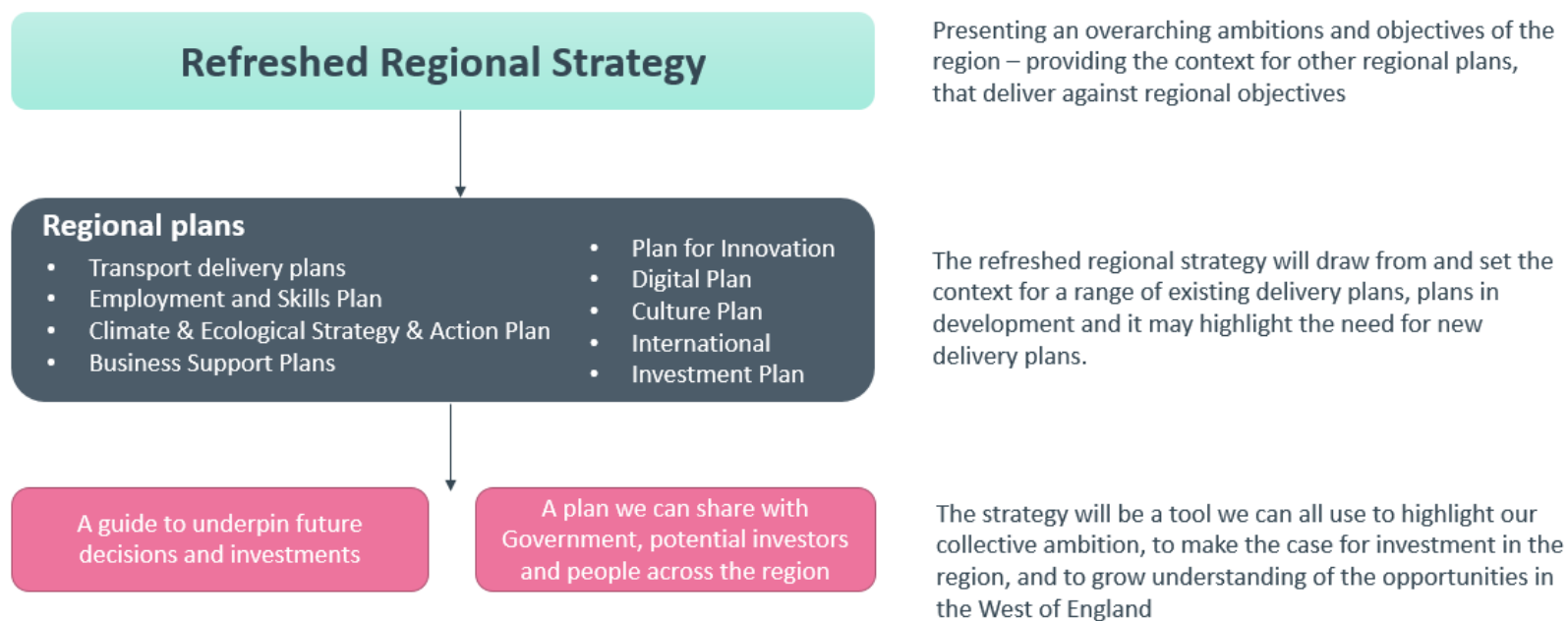
Action No.	Action	Activity Planned	Key dates
PS1	The West of England Combined Authority will engage in a facilitated structured conversation to revisit and clarify its core role and purpose including the policy areas where we agree working together regionally to develop strategies and plans is beneficial. Discussions on role and purpose will also consider when and how to engage with partners outside the combined authority, potentially including deepening partnership arrangements where appropriate.	CEO discussion (with external facilitators) currently anticipated in late June, which will set scope for Mayors and Leaders discussions (timing TBC ensuring that new members of the committees are given appropriate time to understand the issues within the transformation plan).	June CEO discussion Mayors and Leaders timing TBC
PS2	The West of England Combined Authority, in dialogue with partners, will co-produce a Regional Economic Strategy , providing a common narrative for all regional stakeholders to be able to promote the economic vision of the region to external audiences. Through this work, highlighting investment opportunities across the region.	A series of workstreams are progressing, including reviewing investment opportunities, considering future devolution opportunities, reviewing existing strategies, etc.	Updates to future Committee meetings to ensure Mayors and Leaders continue to set strategic direction
PS3	Using independent facilitation, work with the business and partner community to refine a Terms of Reference for a Business Board to advise, support and challenge the West of England Combined Authority. Through this work, delivering a LEP integration plan	This action will be progressed as part of and ahead of the October committee report dealing with both the future of the Local Enterprise Partnership and the creation and significance of a business board.	TBC – following role and purpose discussions
PS4	Align the West of England Combined Authority and the Joint Committee into the same business meeting.	We will set these up to deliver the business as required.	Action Complete
PS5	Activity to agree regional priorities including allocation of resources.	A regional priorities workshop took place in February 2023. Out of this, Mayors and Leaders agreed work to progress a revised regional strategy; work to support refinement of regional investment opportunities; work to strengthen our investment in the region; and a strengthened focus on working together to deliver. The regional strategy will be refreshed on a regular	Workshop in Feb 2023. Actions now embedded across the transformation programme.

		basis as required. The conclusions of this workshop are being taken forward across the transformation programme.	
PS6	Board members to be involved at an earlier stage in setting strategic regional direction	Feb 2023 workshop set initial direction. CEOs are acting as a steering group for this work.	Mayors and Leaders will continue to set strategic direction

Revised regional strategy update on activity

- 2.16 There are clear interdependencies between the transformation programme workstreams. Delivering a revised strategy for the region will help deliver the wider programme, this work is therefore being progressed at pace and a more detailed update on this workstream is set out below.
- 2.17 The current overarching regional strategy is the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), which was published in 2019. This document needs refreshing, reflecting the changed priorities of the region and reflecting the impact and continued response to the Covid pandemic and economic downturn.
- 2.18 As figure 6 shows, a revised regional strategy, developed in dialogue with partners, will give the region a common narrative for all regional stakeholders to be able to promote the vision of the region to external audiences. It will provide the context for other regional delivery plans.
- 2.19 The revised regional strategy will also provide an agreed vision and set of priorities to support Committee in its decisions over the coming period. It will also be a document we can share with a wide range of potential investors in the region, helping articulate the investment opportunity that exists in the West of England.

Figure 6: The role of the refreshed regional strategy



2.20 The workstreams underway to help deliver the regional strategy are:

- **A refresh of the regional evidence base**

The refreshed evidence base was discussed by Mayors and Leaders during their regional priorities workshop on 20th February. It highlights the strengths and challenges of the regional economy. Mayors and Leaders agreed a range of issues that should be considered in more detail based on the evidence presented in February 2023.

- **Deep Dive questions**

The issues Mayors and Leaders agreed should be considered in further detail are being taken forward through the deep dive workstream. For each question, work is underway to understand the scale of the challenge faced, activity already taking place within the region to address the challenge, and examples of national and international best practice we may

want to draw on. The conclusions of this work will set out a series of potential actions we may want to take. CEOs are guiding this work, and officers from across UAs and the authority are inputting.

- **Reviewing our existing strategies**

To ensure the refreshed regional strategy reflects both new priorities and those Committee has agreed over recent years, we are reviewing existing regional delivery plans and strategies to ensure actions and ambition are drawn through as appropriate.

- **Assessing the impact of our work**

Work is underway to assess the impact of our work. While this work will highlight areas for potential improvement, it is being scoped in such a way as to also draw out the positive impact of our work. This work will help us understand where we have good practice to build on and where the West of England Combined Authority can achieve positive impact. As well as informing our future strategy, this work will be a useful resource to inform discussions between Mayors and Leaders on the role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority.

- **Potential areas for devolution**

Since the West of England agreed its devolution deal in 2016 there have been developments in English devolution that we should reflect on as we revise our strategy. Work is underway to articulate devolution priorities for the region, reflecting both on our own regional ambitions and the developments that have taken place in other MCA areas since the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper.

- **Regional investment opportunities**

Following the Mayors and Leaders regional priorities meeting in February, CEOs were tasked with revising and updating the list of investment opportunities that have been identified across the region. Officers are progressing this work with the aim of providing Mayors and Leaders with a refreshed range of investment opportunities to consider as part of the strategy refresh process.

- **External engagement**

Across our regional partners, there is a wealth of knowledge, experience and thinking on how we can help our region thrive. To ensure the refreshed regional strategy is something that all partners can get behind, a programme of external engagement will take place during the summer, asking our partners to highlight evidence we should consider and ideas for delivery priorities that we may want to factor into the regional strategy. The views we gather through this external

engagement exercise will help inform the regional strategy and the conclusions Mayors and Leaders reach on the positioning of the strategy.

- 2.21 At the regional priorities workshop in Feb 2023, Mayors and Leaders also requested work to consider how we **broaden our approach to investment**, working existing funds as hard as possible and considering opportunities to bring new investment into the region. The refreshed regional strategy will also be informed by this work, which is being led from workstream 4 of the transformation programme.
- 2.22 A regional strategy working group has been established bringing together officers from the authority and UAs. This group, guided by CEOs, will collaborate in drafting the revised regional strategy over the summer with the aim of bringing a draft strategy for Committee approval in October 2023.
- 2.23 As part of the transformation programme, discussions between Mayors and Leaders will be taking place on the role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority. The conclusions of these discussions will help shape the positioning of the refreshed regional strategy and will also inform the direction of the broader transformation programme.

Workstream 2: workforce and culture

- 2.24 This workstream is primarily focused on ensuring that the West of England Combined Authority has the right resources, people management processes and culture to enable successful delivery, both through directly addressing the recommendations raised in the Grant Thornton and Solace reports, and through the implementation of themes of work as identified in the West of England Combined Authority's agreed HR strategy.
- 2.25 Figure 7 provides an overview of actions under workstream 2 of the transformation programme. The update notes the progress underway in recruiting permanent members of staff to the West of England Combined Authority Corporate Leadership Team.

Figure 7: workforce and culture workstream

Action No.	Action	Activity Planned	Key dates
WC1	Through ‘Step Change’ programme, develop revised leadership structure for the West of England Combined Authority organisation including review of senior pay and grading structures and titles and creation of consistent ‘job families’ across the authority	Develop revised leadership structure for the Combined Authority which provides appropriate senior capacity and capability to ensure successful delivery. This work will engage the LGA for benchmarking and the CEOs will be consulted in advance of Committee approval.	Target date: July 2023
WC2	Through ‘Step Change’ programme, establish working behaviours and principles for the West of England Combined Authority and revised values for the organisation, using established LA networks as appropriate	Proposal for revised values work agreed by leadership team on 30 th May 2023. Work to take place over the summer, with a view to launching agreed values in Autumn 2023. Benchmarking / external engagement to take place as needed.	Target date: September 2023
WC3	Through ‘Step Change’ programme, strengthen the function of the ‘corporate core’ of the West of England Combined Authority organisation	Further review capacity within Infrastructure and Corporate services, to finalise the ‘step change’ work and ensure that sufficient resource in both direct delivery and corporate enabling services	Target date: ongoing, but progress to be made by June 2023
WC4	Complete management restructure to fill interim posts permanently in consultation with the LAs, with external support, and in line with the constitution of the West of England Combined Authority. Ensure Monitoring Officer role is at Director level	Permanent Strategic Director of Infrastructure now in place. Solace have been appointed as Executive Search partner to support recruitment of Strategic Director of Resources (s.73 Officer) and Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer). Kick off meeting held on 25 th May 2023, and a planned schedule of recruitment activity is in place over the coming months. Once complete, all reports to the CEO will be permanent employees.	Target: Autumn 2023 for Legal Director, Winter 2023 for Resources
WC5	Ensure performance reviews are formally recorded	The CEO has had year end performance reviews and target setting with all of the Corporate Leadership Team in April and early May 2023. Cascade to all areas of the organisation by early August 2023. Revised approach and new system to continuous Performance Management across the Combined Authority has been agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team.	All performance reviews by August 2023. New performance approach implemented by Sept 2023
WC6	Consideration of the GT Auditing Culture report made by the Head of HR in consultation with UA HR leads (and others as relevant), and	Regular meeting between the HR leads of the authorities are already in place. Next meeting will specifically pick up	Ongoing

	recommendations for improvement made for consideration by the constituent member CEO group	collaboration and benchmarking. Values work will consider GT culture report and other best practice.	
WC7	Agree process for sharing performance indicators and information with member organisation relating to organisational culture and health	HR dashboard has been in place for a number of years. This was brought for review to the leadership team in March 2023 and revised metrics agreed. Roll out of revised metrics over the coming months, to be shared as appropriate with HR network.	Regular reporting of agreed revised metrics. Target date: July 2023
WC8	Review of recruitment and attraction strategy to ensure that the Authority can bring in the right people with the right skills and reduce interim usage	Through organisational workforce strategy, external benchmarking will take place to support delivery of this action.	Target date: July 2023

Workstream 2 – other related work

- 2.26 In addition to addressing the recommendations highlighted by Grant Thornton and Solace, it is important that delivery of this workstream is seen in the context of wider work covered in the HR strategy, to ensure that a holistic approach is taken to addressing workforce and culture considerations within the West of England Combined Authority. The activities highlighted below all form component parts of the wider HR strategy.
- 2.27 **Refreshing our organisational values** – an approach to this work was considered by the Corporate Leadership Team on 30th May 2023. This included a plan to engage the wider organisation to deliver a revised set of values and behaviours, to be rolled out late summer / early autumn 2023. This work is fundamental to ensuring we get the right culture within the authority and that staff feel a sense of belonging and purpose.
- 2.28 **Revised learning and development offer** – we are in the process of undertaking a learning needs analysis, which will be further informed by the development needs identified in the performance review process, to ensure that staff can access the right opportunities to develop the skills they need to excel in their role.
- 2.29 **Review approach to recruitment and attraction** – this work will review our recruitment, benefits and attraction strategies, to ensure that we are able to attract the best people to help us deliver for the region.
- 2.30 **Development of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group** – this will be rolled out in the coming months. The group will be chaired by a member of the Corporate Leadership Team, with the remit of ensuring that both internal policies

and external interventions are critically evaluated to understand their impact on a range of diverse groups.

2.31 As with other areas of the transformation programme, external support will be sought – including the Local Authority HR leads groups, the Combined Authorities HR leads group, the Local Government Association, and other appropriate bodies as necessary (e.g. the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development). This external support will help to ensure that any proposals are properly benchmarked and represent best practice.

Workstream 3: governance and structures

2.32 Figure 8 provides an overview of actions in the governance and structures workstream. As noted in the update, a number of the actions that fit within this workstream were completed before the transformation programme was established (details on these can be found in annex 1). The more substantial actions around reviewing the West of England Combined Authority constitution and meeting structures will be progressed through discussions on the role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority. Planning for these sessions is underway, as noted in the update on workstream 1.

Figure 8: governance and structures workstream

Action No.	Action	Activity Planned	Key dates
GS1	Following discussions on the role and purpose of the CA, develop revised West of England Combined Authority operating principles as part of revisions to the Constitution of the West of England Combined Authority. Have regard to the Constitutions of other CAs as revisions are made. In reviewing the Constitution, revise the scheme of delegations.	A programme of potential constitutional changes will emerge, any change will require unanimous agreement of the constituent authorities and the Metro Mayor. This will be in addition to the recommended scheme of delegation changes on this agenda.	TBC - Following role and purpose discussions
GS2	Establish a set of meetings with the purpose of enhancing ownership and collaboration of the agenda and the West of England Combined Authority. Committees to have clear ToR, forward timetable and training programme to support implementation. This work should be independently supported	Through discussions on role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority and by looking at other combined authorities, consideration can be given to the range of meetings / Committees in place and potential constitutional changes required, ensuring that any options take account of, and work effectively in the West of England.	TBC - Following role and purpose discussions

GS3	Consider assigning Leader portfolios and CEO portfolios to support Leaders.	Through discussions on role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority, the question of Leader portfolios can be considered as and when appropriate.	TBC - Following role and purpose discussions
GS4	West of England Combined Authority officers will ensure Cabinet Members from UAs can request briefings from senior CA officers as required	The Combined Authority Chief Executive has offered briefings to all Local Authority member portfolio holders in advance of committee meetings.	To start from lead-in to June 2023 Committee
GS5	Regional Monitoring Officers will meet regularly to discuss matters regarding the constitution that need addressing	Regional Monitoring Officers meet as necessary, this meeting can be called by any of the Monitoring Officers in the region. Monitoring Officers will meet at least quarterly.	Ongoing
GS6	Following the 2023 local elections, highlight the opportunity of joining the Audit and Scrutiny Committees to UA members.	Material will be provided to new members as part of their induction process and all members will be offered the opportunity to meet with CA officers to discuss the role of Audit and Scrutiny Committees	June 2023

- 2.33 The West of England Combined Authority Action Plan, following the Grant Thornton external audit report, agreed a range of specific actions associated with agreement of a new protocol covering when legal advice can be sought. These actions have all been completed (as noted in annex 1) and a constitutional amendment was approved by Committee in March 2023.
- 2.34 As noted above, other actions associated with this workstream which are about improving working practices (i.e. briefing cabinet members, regular meetings of the regional Monitoring Officers group) have been taken forward and will become part of our ongoing approach to working across the West of England Combined Authority partnership.
- 2.35 As the steering group for the transformation programme, the CEOs have agreed that a number of the actions set out in Figure 7 will be taken forward following discussions on the role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority.
- 2.36 **Workstream 4: effectiveness, efficiencies and delivery**
- 2.37 Figure 9 provides an update on workstream 4 of the transformation programme, including strengthened arrangements in place to review progress in project delivery.

Figure 9: effectiveness, efficiencies and delivery workstream

Action No.	Action	Activity Planned/Completed	Key dates
DE1	<p>Review the process for project evaluation of Business Cases, having regard to the models used in other Combined Authorities – ensuring business case assessment and decision-making is transparent and streamlined, and that criteria are clear.</p>	<p>We will review the Business Case process to ensure robust testing of proposals, involvement by decision-makers at the right time, and linkage to the strategic prioritisation exercise. This will include increasing external transparency on when funding is available for non-government delivery partners.</p> <p>A review of the business case process was recently undertaken including seeking feedback from scheme promoters on how this could be streamlined and made more efficient, whilst continuing to meet the requirements of the National Local Growth Assurance Framework guidelines. One outcome of this process was the rollout of a streamlined approach for smaller scale, less complex transport schemes in April.</p>	Ongoing
DE2	<p>Use the Programme Review Board to review progress on agreed projects, providing challenge and support to ensure more timely delivery of all projects.</p>	<p>The Programme Review Board meets once a month and has scrutinised delivery on a wide range of projects involving senior officers from both the West of England Combined Authority and the Unitary Authorities.</p> <p>The work of PRB informed the profiling of spend, a review took place of the profile of spend in the Capital Programme. This change of profiling was reported to the West of England Combined Authority Committee on 17th March 2023.</p> <p>The last meeting of the programme review board considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to Key Projects • Metro West Scheme • City Region Sustainable Transport • Line by line review of projects 	Ongoing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term work program. <p>The Infrastructure Directorate of the Combined Authority is implementing a change programme, ensuring it is positioned effectively to oversee the delivery of the significant infrastructure programme over the coming years.</p> <p>It is essential that the work of the PRB maximises the focus on delivery including consideration of all appropriate options to improve delivery across the region.</p>	
DE3	Use the West of England Combined Authority Corporate Governance Board to strengthen governance throughout the organisation.	The Corporate Governance Board has been established to lead on all aspects of Governance across the organisation in support of the statutory officers. This includes organisational processes and standards, financial management, employment practice, audit and risk, and health and safety. The board has undertaken a gap analysis of where Governance needs to be improved and this is being developed into a work program. It will deliver improved oversight for day-to-day delivery of the work of the organisation. The last meeting of the board took place on 26 May.	Ongoing
DE4	Review approach to existing investment funds providing CEOs with up-to-date position on commitments, headroom, delivery timeframes.	The West of England Combined Authority has initiated a detailed line by line review of projects both in infrastructure and across the totality of the West of England Combined Authority's operations. This line-by-line review was initiated by the Combine Authority Committee on 17 March. This work is now underway.	11 May
DE5	Bring forward proposals for revisions on how we invest current funds and proposals for new investment approaches to help money go further	The intelligence gained from the line-by-line review and the detailed work of the Program Review Board will provide revisions to how of how current funds are invested. Additionally, the West of England Combined Authority is preparing a concept paper on how it develops its role as an investment organising to complement of its existing grant giving responsibilities the results of this initial work will be reported to the West of England Combined Authority Committee in October.	6 October

DE6	<p>Through a programme of effectiveness and efficiency reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. consider the appropriate routes to allocating the final 10% of the staffing budget increase agreed at Jan '23 Committee b. Consider areas for 'shared services' 	<p>Then West of England Combined Authority is establishing a programme of efficiency reviews. These will be applied vertically across the organisation with each Directorate of the Combined Authority being reviewed in turn. These reviews will involve a detailed scrutiny of each directorate's operations to determine fitness for purpose and value to money. They will involve challenge sessions leading to the development of transformational change. An update on progress of the reviews will be provided at the West of England Combined Authority Committee on 6 October.</p> <p>The West of England Combined Authority is working to secure an external partner to provide support and independent input to the reviews. Discussions are currently ongoing with the Local Government Association about how this additional support will be delivered.</p> <p>The West of England Combined Authority is currently monitoring the spend of the allocation for additional staffing provided at 27 January Committee to determine at what point in the year the "final 10%" will be required.</p> <p>The West of England Combined Authority will actively work with the Unitary Authorities to explore the opportunity for the delivery of operations through shared service arrangements both within the West of England and beyond.</p>	6 October
DE7	<p>Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of all projects to meet requirements of the Investment Fund Gateway Review and the CRSTS national evaluation. This will include updating the monitoring and evaluation framework and providing clearer guidance to project managers on proportionate requirements.</p>	<p>Preparation for the Gateway Review is underway. The Local Evaluation Framework for the second Investment Fund Gateway Review is to be submitted to Government in June 2023, including setting out those projects in scope for impact or progress evaluation, together with proposals for complementary workstreams as set out in the National Evaluation Framework. This process has included a review of the evaluation plans of schemes selected for impact evaluation and there will be regular dialogue with project leads moving forward, through to conclusion of this second Gateway process in 2026.</p>	30 June

		<p>The West of England Combined Authority has recruited a Monitoring & Evaluation manager, starting in July, who will lead work to update our M&E framework for all funding streams. This will bring more consistency to the evaluation of projects to ensure that a proportionate approach is taken to identify lessons for future delivery and to meet the needs of funders.</p> <p>We are awaiting guidance from DfT on the framework for M&E for CRSTS. We will develop a comprehensive approach that collects relevant data across the region and provides a framework for all projects to follow.</p>	<p>December</p> <p>October</p>
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- 2.38 As noted above, a range of activity is underway to deliver this workstream. To continue strengthening our focus on delivery, the Programme Review Board is continuing to meet regularly, providing support and challenge to ensure delivery remains on track. Action has also been taken to put new arrangements in place to strengthen processes within the West of England Combined Authority organisation with the establishment of a new internal governance board. This board is led by the Interim Director of Investment and Corporate Services and has senior representation from across the organisation. While the board is at an early stage in development, it will ensure there is appropriate rigour to internal processes.
- 2.39 A programme of effectiveness and efficiency reviews is currently being scoped. This programme will focus on ensuring each part of the West of England Combined Authority organisation is delivering value for money and supporting the delivery of our regional priorities. This will include ensuring the organisation is fit for purpose.
- 2.40 As part of this workstream, we will also be progressing work to consider how the West of England Combined Authority can evolve its approach to investment – ensuring each pound of investment is working as hard as possible and identifying new ways we might want to invest and new approaches to bringing further funding into the region. As part of this process, we will continue to ensure CEOs have regular sight of the current position of funding streams across the West of England Combined Authority.
- 2.41 Underpinning this workstream, we will also be taking forward actions to strengthen and streamline our Business Case process and strengthening our monitoring and evaluation process, ensuring Committee has the best possible information available to support future decision making.

External support

- 2.42 Across the programme, CEOs have considered where it is appropriate to draw on external support to deliver actions, having regard to the recommendations of our external auditors and independent peer reviewer. The question of external support will be considered further following the externally facilitated discussions on the role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority that are due to take place in the coming months.
- 2.43 A further update on progress across all workstreams will be provided to the October Committee.

Consultation

- 3 UAs have been partners in the development of this report. A regional strategy working group is in place to collaborate in delivering the revised regional strategy and the CEO group is acting as the steering group for both the strategy and the wider transformation programme.
- 3.1 All content in this report has been discussed by CEOs.

Risk Management/Assessment

- 5 Failure to address the issues highlighted in the Grant Thornton Audit report and Independent Peer Review will hamper the West of England Combined Authority failing to deliver for the residents of the West of England. It may also impact on the highly successful track record of attracting additional funding from Government for the region.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 6 There are no specific equality implications arising directly from this report at this stage.

Climate Change Implications

- 7 The West of England Combined Authority's Climate Emergency Action Plan has been considered in the production of this report and there are no specific implications at this stage.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by:

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate:

- 8 The financial implications both in terms of supporting expenditure and potential savings are currently under consideration. As work across the transformation programme progresses, financial implications will be discussed with the CEO steering group and will be brought to Committee as appropriate for decision.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Stephen Fitzgerald, Section 73 Officer.

Legal Implications:

- 9 There are no direct legal implications contained in this report. The transformation programme will include work to consider revisions to the West

of England Combined Authority constitution. Legal implications will be set out as this work progresses.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Stephen Gerrard, Monitoring Officer.

Human Resources Implications:

- 10 While there are no direct HR implications arising from this report, workstream two in particular highlights a programme of HR-related activity. Specific HR implications arising from the development and completion of this work will be highlighted to Committee as required as the programme progresses.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by: Alex Holly, Head of People and Assets.

Land/property Implications

- 11 There are no land or property implications contained in this report. Any land or property issues arising from the transformation programme as it progresses will be highlighted to Committee.

Report and advice reviewed and signed off by:

Appendices:

List any appendices to the report:

Appendix 1 – overview of all recommendation and actions that have informed the development of the West of England Combined Authority transformation programme

West of England Combined Authority Contact:

Report Author	Contact Details
Rachel Pykett	Rachel.Pykett@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

Annex 1: All recommendations and actions informing the West of England Combined Authority transformation programme plan

Actions have been identified through a range of pieces of work. A full list of actions is set out below, noting their original source, to ensure we do not lose sight of any action that has been agreed. Action sources are:

- The Grant Thornton external audit report
- The Independent Peer Review conducted by SOLACE
- The West of England Combined Authority Action Plan agreed by Committee in March 2023

There is a degree of overlap between actions. To keep the transformation programme coherent and manageable, a streamlined set of actions has been established. All actions below are incorporated into workstream actions – the tables on the following slides show where actions can be found in the programme plan and are included in this pack to ensure there is visibility on how actions recommendations have been incorporated into the transformation programme.

Grant Thornton audit recommendations

Recommendation	Source Code	Where this can be found in the transformation programme	Action status
The Mayor and members of the West of England Combined Authority represented by the Council Leaders, must commit to improving their working relationship and demonstrate that significant progress has been made within a reasonable timeframe to be determined by the Mayor and the West of England Combined Authority. This should include a role for independent mediation and the constructive consideration of advice arising from this process.	SR1	Workstream 1, action PS1	Open
A formal protocol should be agreed between member organisations within the West of England Combined Authority to commit to consultation on key proposals, that they should define, at an earlier stage. The West of England Combined Authority members should engage effectively in this process, to help mitigate points of contention before they are published and debated in public. This should include a commitment to deliver proposals on a reasonable timetable.	SR2	Workstream 3, action GS1 and GS2	Open

In future, in all circumstances, including where there is a potential conflict of interest affecting individual statutory officers, adequate steps must be taken to ensure the statutory duties of these officers is effectively discharged	SR3	Action complete. Provision for a deputy to act now in the Constitution	Complete
The future management structure of the West of England Combined Authority should be reviewed in order to ensure it is fit for purpose in the context of new funding awards and strategic priorities and this must include appropriate consultation and agreement by the West of England Combined Authority Committee.	KR1	Workstream 2, action WC1	Open
The Constitution of the West of England Combined Authority should be revised to define the conditions under which it is acceptable for other officers and members to seek independent legal advice, without reference to the Monitoring Officer and/or Head of Legal Services.	KR2	Action Complete. Constitutional amendment made.	Complete
We recommend that consideration of relationships within the Chief Executive Group should be incorporated into any relationship development and mediation work undertaken.	IR1	Programme level workstream, action TP3, TP4	Open
We recommend that the Constitution be reviewed, as previously considered by the West of England Combined Authority members. This should incorporate the new Monitoring Officer protocol but also focus on the specific ambiguities raised in recent legal advice including the definition of statutory roles, delegated powers, managing conflicts of interest, decisions on all senior staffing matters including restructure and severance. The results should be reported to Committee and used alongside the points we have raised as a basis for revision. There may be value in reviewing other combined a authority constitutions to optimise the opportunity to improve the document in these areas.	IR2	Workstream 3, action GS1, GS2 (refer to constitutional review) – the new MO protocol on accessing legal advise is in place.	Open
We recommend that the annual performance reviews of senior officers be formally recorded, including reasonable steps taken to manage issues and provide access to resources to enable skills development as appropriate.	IR3	Workstream 2, action WC5	Open
We recommend that the Monitoring Officer role retains its current seniority at Director level in any future restructure or that sufficient safeguards are implemented to protect the authority and influence of the role.	IR4	Workstream 2, action WC4	Open

Independent Peer Review recommendations

Recommendation	Source Code	Where this can be found in the transformation programme	Action status
The West of England Combined Authority to engage in a facilitated structured conversation to revisit and clarify its core purpose taking on views from strategic partners, business and other regional bodies.	S1	Workstream 1, action PS1	Open
The West of England Combined Authority to co-produce a Regional Strategic Economic Strategy which is accessible and provides a common narrative for all regional stakeholders to be able to promote the economic vision of the region to external audiences.	S2	Workstream 1, action PS2	Open
To explore whether the process of developing a Spatial Development Strategy could be revisited.	S3	Workstream 1, action PS1	Open
To consider expanding the membership of The West of England Combined Authority	S4	Workstream 1, action PS1	Open
Roll out the 'Step Change' programme with external support and facilitation. Establish working behaviours and principles for The West of England Combined Authority.	S5	Workstream 2, action WC2	Open
Strengthen the function of the 'corporate core' to be fit for the new West of England Combined Authority delivery function.	S6	Workstream 2, action WC3	Open
Continue to build on enhanced relationships with the LAs based on agreed principles.	S7	Programme level action TP3, TP4	Open
Complete a management restructure to fill interim posts permanently in consultation with the LAs	S8	Workstream 2, action WC1 and WC4	Open
Use independent facilitation to work with the business and partner community to redefine the role and Terms of Reference of a Business Board to advise, support and challenge The West of England Combined Authority. Ensure that the Board fits into policy/decision at an early stage in The West of England Combined Authority processes. Consider the collaboration of other regional bodies such as Western gateway, Universities and other Local Authorities in this work.	S9	Workstream 1, action PS3	Open

As part of the work in redefining the core purpose of the West of England Combined Authority , with independent support, develop fundamental the West of England Combined Authority operating principles.	S10	Workstream 3, action GS1	Open
With independent support, establish a set of meetings as above with the purpose of enhancing ownership and collaboration of the agenda and the West of England Combined Authority itself. Develop clear ToRs for these meetings and move in a phased way with a defined timetable and training programme to full implementation.	S11	Workstream 3, action GS2	Open
Consider assigning Leader portfolios to help with the work of The West of England Combined Authority as above. Consider assigning Chief Executive portfolios to support the Leaders with their work and co-design a working protocol for operation of the portfolios.	S12	Workstream 3, action GS3	Open
Revisit the process for Project Evaluation with regard to models adopted in other Combined Authorities.	S13	Workstream 4, action DE1	Open
Identify the issues with the constitution which would help The West of England Combined Authority to work in a more effective and agile way. Have regard to constitutions in other Combined Authority areas. This process would have regard to activity in other recommendations listed above and would need to be sequenced as such.	S14	Workstream 3, action GS1, GS2	Open
Hence, review the constitution making representations to government on proposed changes, if necessary.	S15	Workstream 3, action GS1, GS2	Open
As trust begins to become stronger, it will become necessary to align the West of England Combined Authority and the Joint Committee into the same business meeting. This will serve as an indicator as to the maturity of the West of England Combined Authority.	S16	Workstream 1, action TP5	Open
With independent support, the West of England Combined Authority should rework the action plan to include recommendations in this review and of any other external feedback, for example, any potential monitoring report from External Auditors Grant Thornton.	S17	Programme level action TP2	Open
Progress on the action plan should be subject to external independent review every four months and reported to Audit and Scrutiny Boards and through to the West of England Combined Authority Board for consideration.	S18	Programme level action TP2	Open

West of England Combined Authority Action Plan agreed March 2023

Recommendation	Source Code	Where this can be found in the transformation programme	Action status
Leaders will continue to regularly meet with the West of England Combined Authority Metro Mayor as required to both address any concerns early and to identify opportunities.	AP1	Programme level action TP3, TP4	Open
A programme of activities to agree regional priorities will take place in 2023. This will involve free and frank discussion regarding the allocation of existing resources in the context of new and emerging challenges, such as inflationary pressures, to primarily focus on the delivery of projects. A Regional Priorities workshop which leaders have all agreed to attend is scheduled for January.	AP2	Workstream 1, action PS5	Complete
Board members will be involved at an earlier stage in setting a strategic regional direction	AP3	Workstream 1, action PS6	Open
Consideration of appropriate attendees (wider than Mayors, Leaders and CEOs) to attend the regional prioritisation workshop will be made (including regional finance officers (S.151) officers, Directors for Infrastructure, and independent voice(s)), to ensure the workshops results in meaningful outcomes	AP4	This workshop took place in Feb 2023. Mayors, Leaders and CEOs were in attendance	Complete
Senior Officers will meet collectively and individually with their counterparts as policies and projects progress, from conception to delivery and evaluation.	AP5	Programme level action TP3	Ongoing
The West of England Combined Authority will ensure that Cabinet Members from the Unitary Authorities can request briefings with senior CA officers as required. Any existing regular meetings will continue in line with agreed arrangements.	AP6	Workstream 3, action GS4	Ongoing
An officer delivery board has been established and meets twice a month to review progress on agreed projects and to provide challenge and support to ensure more timely delivery on all projects where relevant. These boards will continue and will report directly to regular joint CEO meetings. This process will be reviewed to further	AP7	Workstream 4, action DE2	Open

strengthen the board if necessary			
To help support driving delivery of key projects, proposals will include a commitment to deliver on a reasonable timetable (agreed by the Committee), which will be included in relevant papers going forward	AP8	Workstream 4, action DE2	Ongoing
The protocol will be shared with UA Leaders, Chairs of Audit and Scrutiny for comment before being adopted and published.	AP9	Action complete prior to transformation programme plan.	Complete
The protocol will be published on the West of England Combined Authority's website and shared with West of England Combined Authority officers.	AP10	Action complete prior to transformation programme plan.	Complete
The West of England Combined Authority Monitoring Officer will brief senior officers regarding the implications of the protocol.	AP11	Action complete prior to transformation programme plan.	Complete
A new Senior Leadership Structure of the West of England Combined Authority will be developed in 2023.	AP12	Workstream 2, action WC1	Open
The West of England Combined Authority will use expert support to determine necessary skills and appropriate structures are in place so as to recruit suitably skilled permanent staff at pace.	AP13	Workstream 2, action WC8	Open
It will be agreed in line with the Constitution by the West of England Combined Authority Committee	AP14	Workstream 2, action WC4	Open
Process regarding Senior Officer appointments to be guided by external expert support	AP15	Workstream 2, action WC4	Open
The West of England Combined Authority Monitoring Officer will provide wording for the constitution at the next suitable meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Committee (no later than March) in consultation with the Monitoring Officers of the Unitary Authorities.	AP16	Action complete prior to transformation programme plan.	Complete
Such a change would require unanimous support of the Mayor and Leaders at a West of England Combined Authority Committee meeting.	AP17	Action complete prior to transformation programme plan.	Complete
Senior Officers will continue to meet collectively and on a 1:1 basis going forward.	AP18	Programme level action TP3	Ongoing
All Senior officers will work collaboratively and engage in meaningful consultation when developing solutions and proposals to help leaders to mitigate points of contention where possible ahead of the West of England Combined Authority Committee meetings.	AP19	Programme level action TP4	Ongoing

Where possible, matters of contention will be flagged with all senior officers in good time to allow for solutions to be developed ahead of the West of England Combined Authority meetings.	AP20	Programme level action TP3, TP4	Ongoing
All Senior Leaders will commit to promote a culture of respect and understanding at all times.	AP21	Programme level action TP4	Ongoing
Where relationships require support, Senior Leaders will seek mediation at an early stage to ensure good working practice continue and solutions can be developed.	AP22	Programme level action TP4	Ongoing
A forward plan of decisions and activities to help with planning / resourcing / engagement for CEOs meeting will be developed.	AP23	Programme level action TP5	Open
The Constitution will be revised to include the new Monitoring Officer protocol.	AP24	Workstream 3, action GS1, GS2. However, the new MO protocol is agreed.	Complete
Regional MOs to meet regularly to discuss any matters regarding the constitution that need addressing.	AP25	Workstream 3, action GS5	Open
Internal actions put in place to ensure Performance reviews are formally recorded.	AP26	Workstream 2, action WC5	Open
Consideration of the GT Auditing Culture report made by the Head of HR in consultation with UA HR leads (and others as relevant), and recommendations for improvement made for consideration by the constituent member CEO group	AP27	Workstream 2, action WC6	Open
Process agreed by March 2023 for the recording and sharing of key organisation performance indicators and information with member organisations relating to organisational culture and health	AP28	Workstream 2, action WC7	Open
Monitoring Officer to be confirmed at Director Level in any future leadership structure. Any change would require a vote of the West of England Combined Authority Committee.	AP29	Workstream 2, action WC4	Open