

## West of England Joint Committee meeting on 16 June 2023

Questions received from the public with the Metro Mayor's responses:

### **1. Question received from Cllr Joanna Wright, Bath & NE Somerset Council**

Presently it is very challenging for anyone to navigate the many supposed offerings for reductions on train travel, particularly with regard to young people accessing education. I have looked online at the GWR website and searched for information on the Scholars Scheme. I could not find any reference to it. It is quite clear that many young people are unable to use the Scholars Scheme as neither the train operator or school have informed the student of this reduction, nor is there any information on the GWR website, so how is anyone to know?

This is not fair, and fares should be fair for young people attending education.

As the Metro Mayor for the West of England Combined Authority what actions will you be undertaking to make sure all schools across the WECA region offer students the Scholars Scheme so that all young people in education can travel by train at these reduced prices?

#### **The Metro Mayor's response:**

Encouraging sustainable travel to school is important for the region, both in terms of helping to reduce our impact on the environment, through fewer car trips, and to encourage life-long sustainable travel habits. A key part of this is ensuring that public transport services, including rail, are affordable to students to make this an attractive and easy way to travel around.

I know we have spoken before about the Scholars Scheme and I contacted GWR on your behalf about this issue.

Whilst the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority is not responsible for directly setting rail fares, we do work closely with GWR on a range of issues and are in regular contact with them. I have asked my officers to specifically raise this with GWR as a point of discussion to explore possible options in this area. I note that similar reduced travel schemes, whilst not specifically called the Scholars Scheme, are offered by other operators, such as South West Trains and Greater Anglia, which offer a range of discounted tickets or travel cards for students and young people.

### **2. Question received from David Redgewell, Gordon Richardson Bristol Disability Equalities Forum**

What progress is being made? In setting up a cabinet system for the west of England mayoral combined Authority. and in view of the need for a reset of the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority. Will the Authority make sure that the Authority

meeting are held in public Like the west Midlands combined Authority and Greater Manchester combined Authority. Liverpool city region.

With the combined Authority meeting be held in public and allow hybrid link into meeting like South Gloucestershire county council Somerset council And Gloucestershire county council.For public participation. The joint committee meeting be held in public. Between the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council.

The scrutiny commission meeting being held in public.

The Audit commission. The Transport planning and Housing Board .Public transport forums Bus service improvement plan public forums with passenger and bus and coach and public transport operators.

**The Metro Mayor's response:**

The West of England Combined Authority operates in accordance with the terms of the West of England Combined Authority Order 2017. All meetings of the West of England Combined Authority Committee, Scrutiny and Audit Committee are open to the public.

**3. Question received from David Redgewell, Gordon Richardson Bristol Disability Equalities Forum**

What progress is being made on North Somerset council and the local Enterprise partnership joining the west of England mayoral combined Authority apart of the Government leveling up bill.

And a second Devolution deal for west of England mayoral combined Authority with North Somerset council as a member.

**The Metro Mayor's response:**

This is a matter for the West of England Combined Authority.