

REPORT TO: WECA OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 28 NOVEMBER 2018

REPORT TITLE: REVIEW OF WECA COMMITTEE AND JOINT COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

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Purpose of Report

- 1 To review the current WECA Committee and Joint Committee forward plans (as published) and to identify items to be included in the WECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee's forward agenda plan.

Background / Issues for Consideration

- 2 The latest published update of the WECA Committee and Joint Committee Forward Plan is attached as appendix 1.
- 3 This latest update provides as much information as was available at the date of publication about decisions to be taken at WECA Committee meetings and Joint Committee meetings.
- 4 The minimum legal requirement for advance public notice of decisions included in the Forward Plan is 28 calendar days. The current plan, most recently published on 22 October 2018 goes as far as 31 May 2019. As well as being a vehicle for giving advance public notice of decisions, the forward plan is also a key business planning tool for the Combined Authority. The CA is committed to being as open and transparent as possible about forthcoming decisions and intends to move as quickly as possible to the plan giving as much information as possible about decisions anticipated to be taken in the next 12 months. The Plan will be updated regularly, published and shared with scrutiny members at each publication date.
5. It is suggested that the latest update of the Forward Plan is included as a standing item for information on each WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Given that the Forward Plan will aim to give as much information as possible about the next 12 months' decisions, this should enable scrutiny members to identify, at an early stage, if there are any particular items that they would like brought as more detailed briefings or reports, to enable input to be made well in advance of actual decisions

being taken. It is suggested that the requests for such briefings/reports should be as targeted and focused as possible, i.e. so that the scrutiny input will add value to the decision-making process. Such detailed briefings/reports will usually be discussed at a public meeting of the scrutiny committee, although, depending, on the issue, there may be circumstances where an informal/non-public briefing may be considered more appropriate.

Further update since the most recent publication of the Forward Plan

6. The committee is asked to note the following updates since the 22 October publication of the Forward Plan:
 - a. Budget:

The 2019/20 budget is due to be agreed at the 1 February 2019 WECA Committee. Under Part 3 of the Combined Authorities (Finance) Order 2017, the CA Mayor is required *“before 1st February in any financial year to notify the CA of the Mayor’s draft budget in relation to the following financial year.....The combined authority must review the Mayor’s draft budget...”*

Following discussions involving the Mayors and Leaders of the respective authorities, it has now been confirmed that a public meeting of the WECA Committee meeting will be scheduled for 18 January 2019 to enable the Mayor’s budget proposal to be presented to the committee (note: this is to enable the WECA committee to give initial consideration to the budget; the budget decision, as per the Forward Plan is still scheduled to be taken at the 1 February meeting).
 - b. Meeting during pre-election period: Following discussions involving the Mayors and Leaders of the respective authorities, it has been agreed that a meeting of the WECA Committee should be scheduled on 5 April 2019 on the basis that any non-contentious business that requires a decision during the pre-election period can be dealt with at this meeting as necessary.
 - c. Specific update: The item on the Energy Strategy identified in the Joint Committee forward plan will now be submitted to the 1 February 2019 Joint Committee rather than the 30 November meeting.
7. The above changes will be reflected in the next update of the Forward Plan, to be published in early December.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the latest Forward Plan update and identifies any particular items to be included as part of the committee’s forward agenda plan for more detailed consideration.**
2. **That the Forward Plan be considered as a standing item on each WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee agenda, with a view to assisting the committee in developing their own forward agenda plan on an ongoing basis.**

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 / Tim Milgate on 0117 332 1486; or by writing to West of England Combined Authority, 3 Rivergate, Temple Way, Bristol BS1 6ER; email: democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk