

ITEM 11

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

DATE: 18 SEPTEMBER 2023

REPORT TITLE: TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

DIRECTOR: JESS LEE, HEAD OF STRATEGY & INNOVATION

AUTHOR: RACHEL PYKETT, HEAD OF POLICY

Purpose of Report

- 1 To update Audit Committee on progress across the West of England Combined Authority transformation programme, which was established following the Grant Thornton external audit vfm report and the SOLACE Independent Peer Review of the Combined Authority.

Recommendation

- Audit Committee is recommended to:
 1. Note and provide feedback on progress across the programme and issues that are due to be considered by the West of England Combined Authority Committee in October.

Reasons for recommendation

- Audit Committee is receiving regular updates on the transformation programme, in line with agreed transformation programme oversight arrangements set out in the June 2023 Committee Paper on this programme.

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 West of England 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.

1.1 At the June 2023 Committee meeting, members welcomed the progress being made across the transformation programme and requested a further update at their October meeting.

1.2 Audit Committee received an update on progress across the programme at their meeting on 3rd July. This paper updates on progress since then.

1.3 In line with the update provided to previous Audit and West of England Combined Authority Committee meetings, this paper provides an overview of action underway across the four workstreams that have been established to deliver the transformation programme:

- Purpose and strategy
- Workforce and culture
- Governance and structures
- Effectiveness, efficiencies and delivery

1.4 Since July Audit Committee, CEOs have continued to work together to oversee the West of England Combined Authority transformation programme. Figure 1 provides a reminder of the structure and focus of the programme workstreams.

Figure 1: Transformation programme overview

	1	2	3	4
	Purpose & Strategy	Workforce & Culture	Governance & Structures	Effectiveness, efficiencies & delivery
	Programme Level Actions (actions that cut across all workstreams)			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	Daniel Dickinson Interim Director of Legal Services	Rachel Musson Interim Director of Investment & Corporate Services

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

Action to date

2.4 Since Audit Committee last reviewed progress across the transformation programme, a range of action has continued to progress this work. Figure 2 provides a snapshot of key action to date and work that is ongoing in the lead into October Committee.

Figure 2: Progress to date in delivering the West of England Combined Authority transformation programme



Workstream updates

2.5 The following sections of the report provide an update on each workstream across the transformation programme. Key progress to note since the July 2023 Audit Committee discussion includes:

- Progress in shaping the approach to independently facilitated discussions between Mayors and Leaders on the role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority.
- Collaboration between West of England Combined Authority and Unitary Authority officers to consider the issues that should form a basis of the refreshed regional strategy.
- Broader engagement with a range of regional stakeholders to ensure the refreshed regional strategy is informed by a wide range of partners.
- The recruitment process to appoint permanent members of the West of England Combined Authority Corporate Management Team is progressing. The S73 and Monitoring Officer roles were advertised over the summer and the shortlisting and interview process is underway.
- The LGA is providing support to the delivery of aspects of the workforce and culture workstream, providing benchmarking support around organisational design and structures.
- Audit and Scrutiny Committees met over the summer and both committees have received updates on the transformation programme. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny will be working with us to ensure appropriate support is in place for Committees.
- Preliminary work to consider areas where the West of England Combined Authority constitution can be strengthened is underway, and potential areas for constitutional change are under discussion. A substantial refresh can only progress in earnest following planned discussions on the role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority.
- Work is underway to develop a range of options that could be considered to support work to mature our approach to investment. This work is intended to provide options to consider for how we could make existing funds work harder and bring additional investment into the region.

2.6 The following sections of the report provide updates across the transformation programme action plan that has been agreed.

2.7 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 recommendations and actions that have informed the programme, providing clarity and transparency on how actions have been mapped

Programme level workstream

2.8 Figure 3 provides an update on programme level actions within the transformation programme.

Figure 3: programme level workstream

Action No.	Action	Progress since June and next steps	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 ACTION COMPLETE
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 an independent progress report will be commissioned.	Progress report: 1 year on 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.	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. A programme of external engagement to support the regional strategy refresh has been taking place since Committee last reviewed progress in delivering the transformation programme.	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.	Progress continues to be made in establishing a longer-term forward plan with CEO engagement built in at an early stage of the Committee cycle to support collaboration in development of papers.	Progress to be reported via reports noted in action TP2

Workstream 1: Purpose and strategy

2.9 Figure 4 provides an overview of workstream 1. A more detailed update on this workstream is set out below.

Figure 4: purpose and strategy workstream

Action No.	Action	Progress since June and next steps	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.	Officer discussions with an agreed external facilitator have taken place to help inform preparation for Mayors and Leaders discussions on the role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority. Mayors and Leaders have held 121 discussions with the external facilitator and a programme of joint discussions is in progress.	Discussions anticipated over Autumn
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.	Research and analysis to inform the refreshed regional strategy has progressed since June. Unitary Authority and West of England Combined Authority officers have identified a range of actions we could seek to take to address regional challenges and build on regional strengths. Engagement with a range of regional partners has taken place to ensure a wide range of perspectives informs the strategy. Discussions with Mayors and Leaders on the action they wish to take will inform the final strategy.	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	Government announced in August that funding to LEPs would cease and functions would transfer to MCAs (or groups of LAs where MCAs do not exist). Work is underway to develop a range of options for how we could respond to this announcement.	TBC
PS4	Align the West of England Combined Authority and the Joint Committee into the same business meeting.	These meetings will be set up as required to deliver the business of each Committee.	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 basis as required. The conclusions of this workshop are being taken forward across the transformation programme.	Workshop in Feb 2023. Actions now embedded across the transformation programme. ACTION COMPLETE
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

Workstream 2: workforce and culture

2.10 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. Figure 5 provides an overview of actions under workstream 2 of the transformation programme.

Figure 5: workforce and culture workstream

Action No.	Action	Progress since June and next steps	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	Leadership structure has been reviewed and is currently being benchmarked with support from the LGA to support ongoing discussions on this matter. Senior pay and grading work complete and formed part of the agreed Pay Policy in June 2023. Work is currently underway to create a consistent set of job families across the Authority at all levels. It is expected that this	Ongoing

		work will be complete by the end of the calendar year.	
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	Corporate values have been agreed following full staff engagement and were shared with all staff in September 2023 at an all staff awayday. Further work on expected core behaviours to underpin the values expected to be complete by October 2023.	Values agreed by the West of England Combined Authority staff in September 2023. Underpinning work on culture and behaviours underway
WC3	Through 'Step Change' programme, strengthen the function of the 'corporate core' of the West of England Combined Authority organisation	Infrastructure Directorate "Target Operating Model" work is complete, with expected implementation over the next six months. Review of corporate functions has identified some gaps on the West of England Combined Authority's "road to normality" – and the recruitment of key roles to fill these gaps has already started.	Ongoing
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 in place since April 2023. Conclusion of recruitment process for Strategic Director of Resources (s.73 Officer) and Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer) expected in Autumn. It is anticipated that the successful candidates will commence in post in early 2024.	Recruitment to be complete by Autumn 2023, ratification October 2023, new incumbents start early 2024
WC5	Ensure performance reviews are formally recorded	Performance reviews completed across the organisation at all levels in August 2023. Revised approach and new system to continuous Performance Management across the West of England Combined Authority has been agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team and will be implemented by the end of the calendar year.	All performance reviews by August 2023. New performance approach implemented by December 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 recommendations for improvement made for consideration by the constituent member CEO group	Action to be closed. Regular meeting between the HR leads of the authorities are already in place. GT culture report has been considered as part of wider culture work covered in action WC2 above.	ACTION COMPLETE

WC7	Agree process for sharing performance indicators and information with member organisation relating to organisational culture and health	HR dashboard is in place and metrics agreed. Revised metrics will be fully implemented by the end of the calendar year.	Ongoing reporting on a quarterly basis.
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. Planned activity over the next 6 months.	Ongoing

Workstream 3: governance and structures

2.11 Figure 6 provides an overview of actions in the governance and structures workstream. A number of the actions that fit within this workstream were completed before the transformation programme was established (details on these actions 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 to workstream 1. However, a number of required changes to the constitution have been identified and are under discussion.

Figure 6: governance and structures workstream

Action No.	Action	Progress since June and next steps	Key dates
GS1	Following discussions on the role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority , 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.	Whilst a more substantive overhaul of the Constitution will take place following the outcome of the role and purpose discussions, a number of initial constitutional changes are under discussion. An update will be provided to Audit Committee once this work has progressed.	Ongoing
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	On a macro scale, the programme of role and purpose meetings is intended to reach outcomes which will enhance ownership and collaboration of the agenda of the West of England Combined Authority in the widest sense.	Scrutiny and Audit Workshops through the autumn with any necessary

		<p>In a more focused sense, regular meetings of CEOs are taking place to provide much earlier sight of, and input to, committee paper preparation.</p> <p>Commencing for the June 2023 AGM, draft reports have been circulated to UA CEOs 3-4 weeks in advance of the committee meeting, with a formal CEOs meeting with those authors to inform further drafting. In addition, the high level purpose and indicative recommendations are shared and discussed at a prior CEOs meeting.</p> <p>In terms of committee terms of reference, forward-planning committee work and a programme of training and support, this piece of work is well underway. Three additional meetings have been agreed for the Scrutiny Committee to provide time in the programme for “deep dive” sessions. The first of these will have occurred by the time the Combined Authority Committee meets on 6 October.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Committee Chairman is working closely with the Monitoring Officer and the newly appointed Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager to re-set Scrutiny working practices and work-planning arrangements. An informal meeting of Scrutiny Members took place on 7 July to begin that process.</p> <p>Officers are in discussion with the Local Government Association, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy with a view to arranging externally facilitated workshops with Officers and Members to help identify and adopt best practice across Scrutiny and Audit, which will include a review of Committee Terms of Reference, appropriate delineation between the two committees, work-planning and member/officer training & development. Scrutiny Committee received a paper and presentation on this at its meeting on 8 September. Changes to</p>	<p>constitutional changes anticipated to be taken to January Committee</p>
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		committee terms of reference require a unanimous resolution of the Combined Authority Committee.	
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 Unitary Authorities can request briefings from senior West of England Combined Authority officers as required	The Combined Authority Chief Executive has offered briefings to all Local Authority member portfolio holders in advance of committee meetings. There will now be a standing agenda item at CEO meetings where requests for briefings can be made and discussed/actioned.	ACTION COMPLETE
GS5	Regional Monitoring Officers will meet regularly to discuss matters regarding the constitution that need addressing	The CA's Monitoring Officer has established a programme of meetings with the Monitoring Officers from its four partner UAs. These are intended to take place at least monthly and a series of 121 introductory meetings took place in July. These meetings are not restricted to discussions on constitutional matters but provide an opportunity to identify and resolve emerging issues across the board. In addition, contacts have been established with other senior legal managers and similar relevant personnel on an inter-authority basis for the same purposes, and to explore opportunities for collaborative working on legal matters across joint projects. In addition, the CA's Monitoring Officer meets regularly with the other M10 Monitoring Officers to share knowledge and best practice on matters affecting Combined Authorities generally.	Implemented and 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 West of England Combined Authority officers to discuss the role of Audit and Scrutiny Committees	Complete. Also, see GS2 above.

2.12 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.

- 2.13 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 are now part of our ongoing approach to working across the West of England Combined Authority partnership, and across the wider M10 network.
- 2.14 At the steering group for the transformation programme, the CEOs have agreed that a number of the actions set out in Figure 6 will be taken forward following discussions on the role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority.

Workstream 4: effectiveness, efficiencies and delivery

- 2.15 Figure 7 provides an update on workstream 4 of the transformation programme, including strengthened arrangements in place to review progress in project delivery.

Figure 7: effectiveness, efficiencies and delivery workstream

Action No.	Action	Progress since June and next steps	Key dates
DE1	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>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>The business case process continues to be reviewed and streamlined where appropriate, whilst continuing to meet the requirements of the National Local Growth Assurance Framework guidelines. As an example, the streamlined approach for smaller scale, less complex transport schemes</p>	Ongoing

		launched in April has already been adopted by six schemes allowing business cases to be produced more efficiently.	
DE2	Use the Programme Review Board to review progress on agreed projects , providing challenge and support to ensure more timely delivery of all projects.	<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 Programme Review Board has recently considered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to Key Projects • Line by line review of projects • UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme • The Rebasing of City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme • Projects funded through the Green Recovery Fund <p>To support more timely delivery of all projects, the Infrastructure Directorate of the West of England 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>	Ongoing
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. A particular workstream is the undertaking of work in respect to the legal aspects of delegations to support the delivery of programmes.	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 work is underway and challenge sessions are taking place with all West of England Combined Authority directors and relevant officers in unitary authorities.	Ongoing

DE5	<p>Bring forward proposals for revisions on how we invest current funds and proposals for new investment approaches to help money go further</p>	<p>The West of England Combined Authority is preparing a concept paper on how it develops its role as an investment organisation to complement its existing grant giving responsibilities. The expert input of an external partner has been procured and they are supporting the West of England Combined Authority on the production of a concept paper to inform future options for maturing our approach to investment. This work will be progressed with the input of UA colleagues.</p>	Ongoing
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>As noted in updates on workstream 2 (workforce and culture) work is underway to review the West of England Combined Authority organisational leadership structure. Work is also progressing to consider the future role and purpose of the West of England Combined Authority. Effectiveness and efficiency reviews will take place at the appropriate point following completion of these actions.</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>	Ongoing
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 second Gateway Review is underway. The Local Evaluation Framework has now been submitted to Government, 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, including briefing sessions held in August, through to conclusion of this second Gateway process in 2026.</p> <p>The West of England Combined Authority has recruited a Monitoring & Evaluation manager, 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</p>	<p>30 June</p> <p>December</p>

		<p>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>	October
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2.16 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.

Consultation

- 3 This report draws on updates that have been provided to the regional CEO group, who are acting as the steering group for both the transformation programme.

Risk Management/Assessment

- 4 Failure to address the issues highlighted in the Grant Thornton Audit report and Independent Peer Review will hamper the West of England Combined Authority's ability 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

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

Climate Change Implications

- 6 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: Roger Hoare, Head of Environment

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate:

- 7 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: Selonge Russell, Deputy Section 73 Officer.

Legal Implications:

- 8 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: Daniel Dickinson, Monitoring Officer.

Human Resources Implications:

- 9 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

- 10 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: Selonge Russell, Deputy Section 73 Officer.

Appendices:

List any appendices to the report:

Appendix 1 – overview of all recommendations 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
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Appendix 1: All recommendations and actions informing the West of England Combined Authority transformation programme plan

Actions set out in the transformation programme have been identified through a range of sources. 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 and recommendations from these sources. To keep the transformation programme coherent and manageable, a streamlined set of actions has been established. All actions below are incorporated into the transformation programme – the tables below show where actions can be found in the programme plan.

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	SR3	Action complete. Provision for a deputy to act now in the Constitution	Complete

statutory duties of these officers is effectively discharged			
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 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 advice 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	S10	Workstream 3, action GS1	Open

Combined Authority operating principles.			
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 strengthen the board if necessary	AP7	Workstream 4, action DE2	Open
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	AP8	Workstream 4, action DE2	Ongoing

included in relevant papers going forward			
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