

REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND MAYORAL COMBINED

AUTHORITY AUDIT COMMITTEE

DATE: 11 DECEMBER 2023

REPORT TITLE: TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

DIRECTOR: JESS LEE, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY

AUTHOR: RACHEL PYKETT, HEAD OF POLICY

Purpose of Report

 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

2. Audit Committee is recommended to note and provide feedback on progress across the programme.

Reasons for recommendation

3. 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

- 4. The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority transformation programme was established in Spring 2023. As highlighted at previous meetings of the Audit Committee, a clear structure for the programme has been established with members of the Combined Authority Corporate Leadership Team leading each workstream. Figure 1 provides a reminder of the structure of the transformation programme.
- 5. Regular updates are provided to the regional CEO group (who meet fortnightly), ensuring collective oversight for the programme.

Figure 1: Transformation programme overview

| (| Purpose & Strategy | Workforce & Culture | Governance & Structures | Effectiveness, Efficiencies & Delivery |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| | Programme Level Actions (actions | s 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 | 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 | Roll out 'step change' programme that will: Establish working behaviours and principles for the CA Strengthen the corporate core Build enhanced relationships with UAs Complete a management restructure | 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 | Revisit the business case/project evaluation process Build use of the Programme Delivery Board to ensure delivery remains on track and delivers vfm 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 Director of Strategy | Alex Holly Director of People & Assets | Daniel Dickinson Interim Director of Law | Rachel Musson Strategic Director of Resources |

Action to date

2.4 Since Audit Committee last reviewed progress across the transformation programme, further progress has been made. Figure 2 provides a summary of key areas of progress to date.

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

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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 September 2023 Audit Committee discussion includes:
 - 14 actions across the programme now having been completed and clear arrangements in place for ongoing activity to be managed via business-asusual arrangements. Having robust business-as-usual arrangements has been an area of focus for the Mayoral Combined Authority Corporate Leadership Team. The closing of a large number of actions within the Transformation Programme demonstrates the progress that has been made in strengthening organisational processes.
 - Significant steps to strengthen the corporate core of the organisation with the recruitment to a number of new roles that have been assessed as required to manage the delivery of the range of work the Mayoral Combined Authority is now responsible for.
 - The Terms of Reference for the Programme Review Board have been refreshed, subject to Committee approval, ensuring it has a clear assurance role across the portfolio of MCA delivery.
 - The 2024/25 Budget setting process has been conducted with effectiveness and efficiencies as a core principle for all Budget planning. The Budget is going through rigorous review to ensure it places the MCA on a strong footing to deliver.
- 2.6 The following sections of the report provide updates across the transformation programme action plan that has been agreed. At the last meeting of the Audit Committee, members requested a greater level of detail in anticipated dates when action will be taken. Dates for delivery have been included below.
- 2.7 A number of actions across the programme are now complete. The updates below note if actions are:
 - closed because action was standalone activity that has now been undertaken; or
 - whether steps taken means activity associated with the action are now manged as part of business as usual.

For ease of tracking, we do not propose to keep reporting on these actions and they will not appear in future updates on the Transformation Programme.

2.8 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. The detail of this mapping was included in the last report to Audit Committee.

Programme level workstream actions

| Action No. | Action | Progress update | 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 | A one-year on progress report following the Independent Peer Review will commence in Spring 2024. The Peer Reviewer who conducted the 2023 review will carry out this work. | Progress report: work to commence March 2024 Report will be delivered Summer 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 discussions between the West of England CEO and the Unitary Authority CEO's take place regularly. As noted in action DE2, the ToR for the Programme Review Board (PRB) have been reset to ensure it provides a clearer assurance role across the MCA portfolio of delivery. With strong senior officer collaboration forums now cemented as part of the MCA structure, this action will be closed within the transformation programme and managed as part of business-as-usual action. | ACTION COMPLETE |
| 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. | As noted above (TP3), strong officer collaboration is in place, which is helping ensure potential areas of contention are identified early and steps taken to seek to tackle potential challenges. The reduction in amendments to papers tabled at Committee and recommendations voted down is evidence of progress in this area. | ACTION COMPLETE |

| | 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. | As noted below (PS1), a programme of work to consider the role and purpose of the Mayoral Combined Authority is underway. This action will contribute further to strengthening collaboration. The MCA has arrangements in place to be able to access mediation if required. With strong arrangements in place to support collaboration or further action planned elsewhere in the Transformation Programme, action TP4 will be closed. |
|-----|--|--|
| TP5 | A forward plan of decisions and activities will be developed to help with planning / resourcing / engagement for CEOs meeting. | Work is underway to extend the forward plan to all key decisions with a 12 month horizon rather than 28 days. CEO review of Committee items has now been strengthened with initial reviews approx. 2 months before Committee meetings and papers fully reviewed by CEOs approx. one month before Committee dates. Committee briefing meetings to provide Mayors and Leaders an opportunity to raise specific questions or comments around Committee papers are in place. There arrangements have been in place since June 2023 and are scheduled in advance of all future committee meetings. Once the forward plan of key decisions is extended out to 12 months, this action will be closed in the Transformation Programme and will be managed as business as usual. |

Workstream 1: Purpose and strategy

| Action No. | Action | Progress update | 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. | All Mayors and Leaders have met with the independent facilitator supporting structured conversations around the role and purpose of the Mayoral Combined Authority. CEOs have approved proposals for the next phase of this work and a further round of discussions with each Mayor and Leader to confirm their agreement to plans will take place. A joint workshop, attended by Mayors and Leaders is proposed for late 2023 / early 2024 as diaries allow. | CEO approval of next phase of programme: Nov 2023 Mayors and Leaders 121 discussions: December 2023 / Jan 2024 Joint workshop: late 2023 / early 2024 |
| 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. | Regional engagement on priorities for a refreshed regional strategy has continued. Workshops with regional partners are planned for the early part of 2024 to test initial conclusions and inform the finalisation of a strategy. A refreshed regional strategy is anticipated to be published in Spring 2024. | Target publication: Spring 2024 |
| 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 | Work is progressing towards the establishment of a West of England Business Board. | Update to be provided to January 2024 Committee |
| PS4 | Align the West of England Combined Authority and the Joint Committee into the same business meeting. | When feasible, 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 | Workshop in Feb 2023. Actions now embedded across the transformation |

| | | 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. | programme. ACTION COMPLETE |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| PS6 | Board members to be involved at an earlier stage in setting strategic regional direction | As noted in actions above, a range of steps have been taken to ensure Board members are involved at an earlier stage in setting strategic direction, including: • Establishing a clearer forward plan of key decisions and Committee lead-in process (enabling Board | ACTION COMPLETE |
| | | members to highlight where they would like to input) Co-producing a regional strategy (ensuring the views of Board members are reflected in the development of this work) | |
| | | Strengthening senior officer collaboration to ensure the views of Board members are fed into strategic direction at an earlier stage. | |
| | | With stronger arrangements in place, this action will be closed within the Transformation Programme and supported via business as usual. | |

Workstream 2: workforce and culture

| Action No. | Action | Progress update | 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 | A revised senior officer leadership structure for the Mayoral Combined Authority has been put in place. Senior pay and grading work was completed as 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 work will be complete by the end of the calendar year. Once action is complete on the creation of consistent job families across the organisation, this action will be complete. | Revised leadership structure: completed Nov 2023 Senior pay structure: completed June 2023 Creation of consistent job families: target date end of Jan 2024 |
| 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 were agreed in September 2023 following full staff engagement and were shared with all staff in September 2023 at an all staff awayday. Further work on core behaviours to underpin the values will be completed by Dec 2023. Once core behaviours work is approved by CLT, this action will be closed within the Transformation Programme and managed via business-as-usual arrangements. | Corporate values: approved Sept 2023 Core behaviours: due for completion Dec 2023 |
| WC3 | Through 'Step Change' programme, strengthen the function of the 'corporate core' of the West of England Combined Authority organisation | Recruitment to a number of core roles to help strengthen the corporate core of the organisation has taken place. Roles now recruited to include: • Permanent Section 73 Officer • Assistant Chief Executive • Head of Performance • Health and Safety Manager Further recruitment is planned to ensure the corporate core of the organisation has the resourcing required for the scale of | ACTION COMPLETE |

| | | delivery the Mayoral Combined Authority is now responsible for. With a clear recruitment plan in place, this action will now be closed within the Transformation Programme and managed via business-as-usual arrangements. | |
|-----|---|--|---|
| 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 | A senior officer recruitment round has concluded with a new permanent Section 73 Officer now in post. The recruitment to the permanent Monitoring Officer role will be revisited in early 2024. A stable senior officer team is now in place. | Recruitment to permanent Monitoring Officer to commence 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 January 2024. Once the new performance Management system is in place, this action will be closed in the Transformation Programme and managed via business-as-usual arrangements. | All performance reviews by August 2023 New performance approach implemented by Jan 2024 (action will be complete at that stage) |
| 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. Action to be closed as part of the Transformation Programme and will be managed via business-as-usual arrangements. | ACTION COMPLETE |
| 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 | A resourcing strategy for Infrastructure recruitment has been and is being delivered – recognising this is an area of specific need for the Authority. A review of Learning and Development has been completed, with an action plan for delivering L&D interventions now being managed under business as usual | L&D review: COMPLETE New careers website: target completion date Spring 2024 |

| | • | A new careers website is in development, improving the | |
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| | | information we are able to provide to job applicants. New | |
| | | site due to be in place by Spring 2024 | |

Workstream 3: governance and structures

| Action No. | Action | Progress update | 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. | A review of the Constitution will take place following the outcome of the role and purpose discussions. The timing and scope of this work is dependent on the outcome of these discussions. | At conclusion of 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 | Clear arrangements for Audit and Scrutiny Committee have been put in place with additional meetings scheduled to ensure effective oversight. Clear arrangements in place to work with the Chairs of each Committee on forward planning. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny are continuing to support oversight committees. The scale of the Legal and Governance Team has been increased to support effective delivery. As noted under TP5, arrangements to support CA Committee meetings have been strengthened. The action taken to strengthen arrangements around meetings is now embedded. This action will be closed within the Transformation Programme and managed via business-as-usual arrangements | ACTION COMPLETE |
| 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 Mayoral 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 | ACTION COMPLETE |

| | | agenda item at CEO meetings where requests for briefings can be made and discussed/actioned. This action will be closed within the Transformation Programme and managed via business-as-usual arrangements. | |
|-----|--|---|-----------------|
| GS5 | Regional Monitoring Officers will meet regularly to discuss matters regarding the constitution that need addressing | The MCA'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. As strong arrangements are now in place to support MO collaboration, this action will be closed within the Transformation Programme and managed via business-as-usual arrangements. | ACTION COMPLETE |
| GS6 | Following the 2023 local elections, highlight the opportunity of joining the Audit and Scrutiny Committees to UA members. | New Committees are now in place and information was shared with members about the opportunity to join Audit and Scrutiny. | ACTION COMPLETE |

Workstream 4: effectiveness, efficiencies and delivery

| Action No. | Action | Progress update | 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. | 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. A streamlined approach for smaller scale, less complex transport schemes was launched in April 2023 and has been used by 10 schemes to date allowing business cases to be produced more efficiently. A review of grant application information and processes is underway, ensuring the requirements of this process are proportionate and that information available to potential applicants is clear and transparent. An update on this work will be brought to January Committee. | Update on grant application process: Jan 2024 Committee |
| DE2 | Use the Programme Review Board to review progress on agreed projects, providing challenge and support to ensure more timely delivery of all projects. | A revised Terms of Reference for the Programme Review Board (PRB) was presented to itsBoard in November. The ToR revisions seek to clarify the role and purpose of the Board, ensuring a distinct role in providing assurance for delivery across the MCA's portfolio. It is planned that the revised Terms of Reference will be presented to the January Committee as part of the Investment Fund paper for approval. The revised ToR ensures PRB works effectively alongside other meetings of senior officers, which have a broader focus on supporting collaboration in setting strategic direction. PRB is a standing part of the officer governance structure, but once the revised PRB ToR are agreed this action will be closed in the Transformation Programme and managed via business-as-usual arrangements. | Revised PRB ToR to be approved at January 2024 Committee. |

| DE3 | Use the West of England Combined Authority Corporate Governance Board to strengthen governance throughout the organisation. | The Corporate Governance Board now has a clear remit within the organisation to support statutory officers in oversight of organisational processes and standards, financial management, employment practice, audit and risk, and health and safety. The Board is now embedded and will remain part of business-as-usual arrangements. This action will therefore be closed within the Transformation Programme. | ACTION COMPLETE |
|-----|---|--|--|
| 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. | Key work has been shared with UAs for information and action, work continues to progress and will be reviewed by PRB and an update provided to the January meeting of the Mayoral Combined Authority Committee |
| DE5 | Bring forward proposals for revisions on how we invest current funds and proposals for new investment approaches to help money go further | The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority is finalising a concept paper on how it could develop its role as an investment organisation to complement its existing grant giving responsibilities. This work has been progressed with input from UA colleagues. Opportunities to mature our approach to investment will be considered via the finalisation of the refreshed regional strategy. | The approach for Maturing our Investments will be brought to March 2024 Committee along with any specific areas for action to be included in refreshed regional strategy |

| DE6 | Through a programme of effectiveness and efficiency reviews: 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' | The 2024/2025 Budget setting process has been carried out over recent months. This exercise has been approached with effectiveness and efficiencies robustly in mind, ensuring the organisation is allocating resources in ways that support timely and efficient delivery. The Budget setting process includes review by CEOs (during December 2023) and Committee (January 2024). Effectiveness and efficiency across the Mayoral Combined Authority has been strengthened by the action taken across the Transformation Programme that is detailed in this paper. Regular discussions on this matter take place with the MCAs external auditors, which provides external assurance of the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation. The Audit Committee will be receiving an update from the external auditors at their December meeting. Consideration of potential areas for shared services will be discussed with partners as opportunities arise. With robust arrangements in place to manage effectiveness and efficiencies as part of the Budget setting process, this action will now be closed as a Transformation Programme action and managed via business-as-usual arrangements. | 2024/25 budget setting process will be subject to approval at Jan 2024 Committee |
|-----|---|--|---|
| DE7 | 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. | Monitoring and evaluation of programmes across the Investment Fund progresses with submission of the midterm report to Government by March 2024. A revised framework to oversee Monitoring and Evaluation activity is anticipated in Q1 2024. Once the revised framework is in place, this action will be closed within the Transformation Programme and managed via business-as-usual arrangements | Gateway Review: next submission by March 2024 M&E framework update: by June 2024 |

Consultation

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

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

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

Climate Change Implications

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:

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: Rachel Musson, Section 73 Officer.

Legal Implications:

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:

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, Director of People and Assets

Land/property Implications

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: Rachel Musson, Section 73 Officer.

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