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Minutes of the West of England Combined Authority Committee , Friday, 6 October 2023

Members:

Metro Mayor Dan Norris, West of England Combined Authority
Cllr Kevin Guy, Bath & North East Somerset Council
Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol City Council
Cllr Claire Young, South Gloucestershire Council

1	**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** Metro Mayor Dan Norris welcomed everybody to the meeting. The following additional persons were present: Cllr Kevin Guy, Leader, Bath & North East Somerset Council Mayor Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol City Council Cllr Claire Young, Leader, South Gloucestershire Council Richard Bonner, Chair, West of England Local Enterprise Partnership Board (non-voting member of the Committee). Also present: Cllr Ed Plowden, Chair, West of England Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee Cllr Geoff Gollop, Chair, West of England Combined Authority Audit Committee Cllr Mike Bell, Leader, North Somerset Council was invited to address the meeting in relation to Agenda Item 14 “Transport Infrastructure Projects”.
2	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** There were no apologies for absence.
3	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011** There were no declarations of interest declared under the Localism Act 2011. Richard Bonner stated that his company did provide some activities in the West of England and confirmed that his register of interest form was up-to-date.
4	**MINUTES** The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Committee held on 16 June 2023 were agreed as a correct record. The minutes of the meeting of the West of England Combined Authority held on 16 June 2023 were agreed as correct record.
5	**CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS** There were no Chair’s announcements.
6	**ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS)** 36 questions had been received from 22 individuals. The Metro Mayor’s responses to these questions had been published online and circulated prior to the meeting. In addition one petition and 33 statements had been received. The following persons attended the meeting and were invited to address the Committee on the topic of their statement or petition for up to three minutes each: • Cllr Tim Rippington, Bristol City Council (petition); • Bernice McKendrick, on behalf of Lin Hunt (Statement 1); • Jane Caines (Statement 2);

	• Rosa Kell (Statement 3); • David Redgewell (Statement 7); • Tina Willshire (Statement 4a); • Robbie Bentley (Statement 6); • Robert Dixon, on behalf of Tim Weeks (Statement 18); • Jackie Head (Statement 19); • Adam Reynolds (Statement 32); • Cllr David Wilcox Bristol City Council, on behalf of Cllr Emma Edwards (Statement 24); • Gavin Smith (Statement 11);
7	**COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD** Richard Bonner, Chair of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership Board, was invited to address the meeting. He made the following points: • He stated that the Local Enterprise Partnership Board had welcomed the update on the Mass Transit proposals at its last meeting; • Richard stated that the cost of congestion in the region was a major cost to businesses in the West of England and these costs would escalate without a Mass Transit programme; • He highlighted the section in the report around the impact to local businesses stating that congestion was a major issue especially to the high SMEs in the area therefore it was especially important to get the mass transit proposals moving; • It was also a major factor in meeting the Authority's climate emergency obligations (32% of emissions in the area came from transport, one of the highest of any UK city). In his opinion, a net-zero carbon emission region could not be achieved without a mass transit proposal; • Richard stated that the opinions did have some trade-offs, for example, the routes through to the Science Park and Filton where an underground solution would deliver significant benefits, including significantly higher passenger numbers and more rapid journey times, together with significantly fewer cars on the roads, compared with an overground option; • Richard urged that all the benefits and impacts be properly analysed; • He worried that the likely impact of building works on an overground system would disrupt existing businesses, potentially making them unsustainable, therefore it was imperative a proper analysis of the options was essential, otherwise there could be the potential of legal challenges which would lead to further delays and costs; • Richard urged the Committee to support officer's recommendation of Option A to carry on with the detailed analysis. He had spoken to a number of people who would be able to provide experience in delivering these types of projects.
8	**COMMENTS FROM THE WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** The West of England Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee had met on 2 October 2023 to discuss the items to be considered on this agenda. The comments made thereon had been circulated to the Committee and published prior to the meeting.
9	**COMMENTS FROM THE WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY AUDIT COMMITTEE**

	The Chair of the West of England Combined Authority's Audit Committee, Cllr Gollop, addressed the meeting. His comments had been circulated to the Committee and published prior to the meeting.
10	**INVESTMENT FUND PROGRAMME** The Committee received a report which provided an update on the overall programme and headroom in relation to the Investment Fund Programme. The recommendations were moved by the Metro Mayor and seconded by Cllr Kevin Guy. Cllr Guy asked that in general delegations should be worded to ask for the decision to be escalated to the Committee for decision if no consensus was reached amongst CEOs. A form of words to this effect had been shared with the Authority's Interim Chief Executive and Interim Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting although there was a recognition that this would form part of the overall constitutional review being carried out as part of the transformation programme (Item 16 on the agenda). It was noted that the UA leaders did not want to disrupt the delivery of this important proposal or programmes moving forward and he stated that he was content to agree the existing wording of the recommendations on this item. He did wish, however, to place on record the general principle that decisions be referred back to this Committee if no consensus was reached between Directors/CEOs. In response the Authority's Interim Chief Executive stated that the key point was around accountability which sat with the key individuals and statutory officers of the Combined Authority. The discretion of the Combined Authority's statutory officers as to whether and how they exercise their delegations could not be fettered by requiring the consent of officers who were not employed by or accountable to the Combined Authority. However, it was a well established principle that officers are not obliged to exercise their delegations and could refer matters back to Committee at any point for decision in appropriate cases. Cllr Guy believed that some formal wording should be included in the constitution on this basis. Cllr Young agreed that this issue should be picked up as part of the governance review. She specifically welcomed the £50k to undertake further consultation and development for the Grovesend Road/Gillingstool Corridor. Mayor Rees stated that it was important for a proper balance of accountability to be reached to be reached between officers' delegations and the Committee's responsibilities. He wished to ensure that sufficient work was done at an early stage to avoid potential disagreements later. Cllr Young raised a query on recommendation (3) and asked that governance arrangements for the regional evidence portal pilot be overseen by CEOs and brought back at appropriate convenient gateway intervals for the Committee's assessment of progress. The Authority's Interim Chief Executive assented to this. [Voting arrangements: In order to be carried, a decision on this matter required a majority of the members present and voting, such majority to include the Metro Mayor. Each member present could cast one vote. If the vote was tied the decision would not be carried. There was no casting vote.] It was unanimously

Resolved:

(1) That it be agreed that provision be made within the programme based upon repayment of awards through the Land Acquisition and Development Infrastructure Fund in line with the contractual long stop dates as set out in paragraph 2.10 – 2.13 for Bath Riverside, plus the Thornbury Hospital site and the Hawkfield Business Park – Bottle Yard Studios;

(2) That the submission of the Grovesend Road/Gillingstool Corridor Outline Business Case be noted and it be agreed to award an additional £50k to undertake further consultation and development, with the approval of the final Outline Business Case by September 2024, and to agree to the release of a further £700k to develop the Full Business Case delegated to the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Directors of Infrastructure of the relevant Unitary Authorities. In the event of a consensus not being reached at Director level, decision making to be escalated to the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in consultation with the Unitary Authority CEOs;

(3) That the Feasibility and Development Funding Application for the Regional Evidence Portal Pilot and the award of £50k to produce a Full Business Case by August 2025 as set out in paragraph 2.15 be agreed.

11 DELIVERY ASSURANCE

The Committee was requested to consider proposed changes to schemes within the Investment Fund and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programmes against the agreed delivery assurance principles.

The recommendations were moved by the Metro Mayor and seconded by Cllr Kevin Guy.

[Voting arrangements: In order to be carried, a decision on this matter required a majority of the members present and voting, such majority to include the Metro Mayor.
Each member present could cast one vote. If a vote was tied the decision would not be carried. There was no casting vote.]

It was unanimously

Resolved:

That the change requests for schemes within the current programmes as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed;

12 CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Committee received a report which provided a 6-monthly progress update on actions for the current year contained within the Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan (CESAP), following on from March 2023 Committee's adoption of a revised CESAP.

The recommendations were moved by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and seconded by Cllr Kevin Guy.

Cllr Guy was disappointed that national government was seemingly rowing back on its climate ambitions and called for the West of England to show leadership and push ahead with its

ambitions as fast as possible. He welcomed the intention for the plan to embed climate and nature recovery considerations throughout the Authority's current and future decision-making. He asked that information on the carbon impact of the loss of rural bus services be brought forward and taken into consideration as this was not part of the KPMG's report on the Bus Services Improvement Plan (Item 14). He also noted the extreme difficulty highlighted in achieving net zero by 2030 at a local level without the appropriate funding or powers to act. He called for the West of England Combined Authority to adopt a "doughnut economics" socially just plan going forward in this area. He especially welcomed the initiatives at Chew Valley Lake and Bath Riverline.

Cllr Young also mentioned that the recent government announcements would hinder the West of England's ability to meet its targets and asked that future updates consider the implications of these recent announcements and the Net Zero Review conclusions compiled by Chris Skidmore MP. On recommendation (2) it was noted that the University of West of England (UWE) had been commissioned to provide a report into the likely emissions gap by 2030 based on several scenarios and showed a likely reduction with mitigation works. Therefore it was important to recognise the 'soft power' that the West of England had to influence the area-wide emissions. In respect of recommendation (3) South Gloucestershire had recently adopted a new decision-making tool the Climate and Nature Decision Wheel based on the economic theory of "doughnut" economics, to help ensure better social and environmental outcomes were always considered when making decisions about projects and asked the Combined Authority to consider adopting a similar approach for all key decisions. Cllr Young also noted the absence of a Climate or Environment Committee and asked whether there were plans to establish one.

Cllr Young also proposed an amendment for Recommendation (4) as follows:

That the following wording be added to recommendation (4) "in the event of a consensus not being reached at CEO's level decision-making will be escalated to the West of England Combined Authority".

Mayor Rees also shared his frustration on recent government announcements as the pace of change locally was dependent on support from central government, including the scale of infrastructure changes. Core Cities had recently been asked to identify a pipeline of decarbonisation investment opportunities worth over £300bn. He welcomed the ambitious plans set out for the region which also drew on and coordinated work done at a more regional level by the UAs as well as ample cross-border opportunities. There was also work being shared through the Local Government Association on urban heat risks which can be picked up by other authorities to assess their resilience in this area. He also called for a 'just transition', a fair and collaborative approach to ensure that the poorest and most disadvantaged were not impacted most by any climate change and its measures and policies.

In respect to recommendation (2) Mayor Rees noted that the ambitions were challenging but it was important to work collaboratively with other institutions such as the universities and health services to pressure national government policies when necessary and unite around a shared goal.

Mayor Rees also highlighted areas of key risk and opportunity such as housing (e.g. the types of houses built and where to build them) which were being considered as part of the local plans, transport (Bristol was a rapidly growing city in terms of population, with more than 1m people in the city during work hours) and finance (the challenge of getting investable opportunities ready). He stated that a recently commissioned study estimated that £1tr (£1,000bn) of investment in UK cities would be needed to meet social and economic and environmental needs. He also asked that the delegations in the report be reconsidered.

The Authority's Interim Chief Executive stated that there was a considerable amount of work happening around capturing the carbon zero targets and taking the numbers into account when decision-making. In respect of housing it was noted that the Bristol Temple Quarter (BTQ) project was progressing well in providing around 10,000 new homes whilst taking net zero targets into account in the design and development stages. He also confirmed that the Authority was working with organisations on attracting additional investment into the region, this work would include all the regional partners and formed part of the transformation plan.

In respect of the proposed amendment, the Interim Chief Executive stated that the Authority had worked effectively so far within the delegations that had been granted. Within this report there were already tolerances set out in table 1 around the approvals and stated that the delegations could be looked at as a wider piece around the constitutional changes work.

Cllr Young withdrew her proposed amendment. She stated that there was a difference between specific projects and wider funds of money and therefore this was a different scenario to that raised in the previous item. She stated that the proposed style of delegation should exist for all relevant decisions and in most cases there would not be sufficient disagreement to necessitate a referral back to the Committee and would return to the point on a later item. In this case, however, given the table of tolerances, she withdrew the proposed amendment.

In respect of recommendation (4) Mayor Rees stated agreement on this item, due to the sum of money involved needed a commitment that the constitutional work would be carried out as planned. Cllr Guy stated that there needed to be a mechanism when fundamental differences of opinion on the allocation of the funds existed to debate the matter at Committee and it was important this formed part of the constitutional work.

The Interim Chief Executive agreed that the constitutional work was vital on a number of levels, including the delegations. He stated that Section 10 of the report broke down the sums of money into smaller allocations.

[voting arrangements: In order to be carried, a decision on this matter required a majority of the members present and voting, such majority to include the Metro Mayor. Each member present could cast one vote. If a vote was tied the decision would not be carried. There is no casting vote].

It was unanimously

Resolved:

(1) That the Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan progress report provided as part of the Authority's commitment in its Climate Emergency declaration in 2019 be noted;

(2) That it be noted that the increasing likelihood that the West of England's ambitions for achieving carbon neutrality and nature in recovery by 2030 would be unachievable without substantial national and international changes in approach;

(3) That the development of a West of England Mayoral Combined Authority framework for embedding climate and nature recovery considerations throughout its current and future decision making be endorsed.

(4) That authority to approve business cases and funding applications within the Green Recovery Fund (approved by Committee in March 2023) be delegated to the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's Head of Environment in consultation with

Unitary Authority Environment Directors. In the event of a consensus not being reached at Director level, decision making to be escalated to the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in consultation with the Unitary Authority CEOs.

(5) That authority to approve change requests within the tolerances set out in Table 1 (as recommended by the Programme Review Board) be delegated to the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's Head of Environment in consultation with Unitary Authority Environment Directors. In the event of a consensus not being reached at Director level, decision making to be escalated to the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in consultation with the Unitary Authority CEOs.

At this point of the meeting there was a short break.

13 **ADULT EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

A report was received which updated the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) Committee on the Adult Education Budget (AEB), Adult Skills Fund (ASF), Multiply, and Skills Bootcamps initiatives and which requested a variety of decisions to be made to effectively administer public funding. To ensure timeliness and transparency, it was requested that these decisions be delegated to Director level. The report also requested delegation of decision-making powers for all three funding streams to Director level remain in place for as long as the funds were administered by the Mayoral Combined Authority.

The recommendations were moved by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and seconded by Cllr Kevin Guy.

Cllr Young asked that CEOs retained strategic overview of the programmes and their cumulative impact by receiving regular updates on the programme delivery including geographical mapping so that areas where further intervention was needed could be identified.

Mayor Rees agreed that the collaboration was working well on this initiative. He also stated that the work was linked to the work on climate and carbon reduction and to plan for the skills needed in this workforce area in the future.

Cllr Guy highlighted this as a great area of cooperation and combined work between the different authorities.

[Voting Arrangements: In order to be carried, a decision on this matter required a majority of the members present and voting, such majority to include the Metro Mayor. Each member present could cast one vote. If a vote was tied the decision would not be carried. There was no casting vote.]

It was unanimously

Resolved:

That authority be delegated to the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's Director of Business and Skills, in consultation with equivalent Directors from the Unitary Authorities, to administer funds and deliver initiatives under pursuant to the Adult Education Budget / Adult Skills Fund, Skills Bootcamps and Multiply as detailed in paragraphs 24 and 25. In the event of a consensus not being reached at Director level, decision making to be escalated to the West of England Mayoral Combined

	Authority's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in consultation with the Unitary Authority CEOs.
14	**TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS** The Committee received a report which provided an update to West of England Combined Authority Committee on key transport schemes and to secure approval from Committee on key decisions and associated funding (where applicable) related to projects within the West of England Combined Authority's Transport Infrastructure programme. Metro Mayor Dan Norris confirmed that he was in favour of a mass transit overground option (such as buses or trams) and that the Strategic Outline Business Case tested the viability of the various options and did not feel any further analysis was necessary. He stated that he believed honesty was the best option as there would be no solution that was agreed unanimously by all parties and wanted to deliver a viable option which would improve residents' lives. He stated that the benefit cost ratio for an underground option was around 0.1, e.g. 10pence of benefit for every pound spent and thus failed value for money analysis. The recommendations were moved by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and seconded by Cllr Kevin Guy. Cllr Mike Bell, Leader of North Somerset Council, was asked to address the meeting and made the following points in respect to recommendation 4 (Future4West): • In respect to the priority route which affected North Somerset directly between Bristol Airport and Bristol City Centre he welcomed the proposal for improvement in this area and hoped to be part of the continuing conversation in this area when it moved to business case development; • He also welcomed the other initiatives running parallel with Future4West such as funding to improve the A38 route and would continue to hold the airport to account to deliver their proposed infrastructure improvements also as part of their growth plan; • He urged the Committee to continue with Future4West and not avoid the difficult decisions as some proposals would take a long time to come to fruition. He asked members to move forward in that spirit and avoid any further unnecessary delays; In respect to recommendation 3 Mayor Rees stated that there was an issue with the escalation process but it was important that the decision was not delayed. In respect to recommendation 4 the Committee were asked to approve the Future4WEST Strategic Outline Case (SOC) and to instruct officers to progress an option (releasing the requisite funding) in accordance with section 22 of the report. Three options had been set out, Options A, B or C. Mayor Rees stated that he felt Option A was the best option based on the available evidence, the officers' recommendation and the other speakers that had spoken in support. He stated that all the reports that had been cited should be released so all the evidence was in the public domain and the issue be brought back to the Committee in November 2023. He stated that the modal shift needed to be 100% segregated, otherwise the transit option would be mixing with normal traffic in the most densely congested part of the city. Any option would also have to touch on the areas of highest density (for both living and working). Any transit system would have to be affordable and inclusive. If a 100% segregated transit system was chosen and it was 100% overground then major routes would need to be closed permanently. This would impact businesses and the necessary diversions would impact on the local economy and disrupt the utilities, leading to a negative cost benefit analysis. He

believed this made the overground option unviable and leaves an underground option available. Option A would mean further work could be carried out to identify the potential risks of each of the options. Mayor Rees also believed that the cost of the underground could be up to 40-50% cheaper than reported due to economies of scale. He clarified that an underground option would not involve a 100% underground solution (for instance London Underground was actually less than 50% underground) but would be underground in the most densely populated parts of the region. He asked that the various associated and accompanying reports be released so all evidence could be considered. He urged that Option A be agreed but asked that none of the options be discarded so that detailed analysis could be done. He asked that the ambition of other Combined Authorities be matched by providing the best option available. Option A had been recommended by the Authority's officers, by the Local Enterprise Partnership Board and Business West. He heeded the warning that ruling out any options may go against the *Wednesbury* principles before all options had been fully evidenced.

Cllr Young agreed with the need for a transport system to move people around the region sustainably and supported Option A with the important links to the science park, Filton etc. Those living in more deprived areas needed the ability to travel to where jobs were based in the economic hotspots. It was important for both the climate change ambitions and tackling inequalities across the region. Option A was recommended by officers as well as supported by the business community who supported leaving all the options on the table. It would also future proof against potential legal challenges in the future.

Cllr Guy fully supported Option A and urged support for this option to rule out legal delays. He welcomed the support for this option from the Local Enterprise Partnership Board.

An amendment to Option A was proposed by Mayor Rees and seconded by Cllr Guy as follows:

> "Option A: To authorise the drawdown of not more than £650,000 of the allocated project budget and delegate all necessary powers to the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's Strategic Director of Infrastructure, in consultation and agreement with the relevant Unitary Authority Directors to enable the progression of all of the proposed route options examined in the Strategic Outline Case and listed in Table 4a of this report, to an OBC assessment process, further described in section 20 of this document, with officers reporting back to no later than March 2024 committee to recommend which of those routes should then progress to full OBC stage. In the event of a consensus not being reached at Director level, decision making will be escalated to the Mayoral Combined Authority's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in consultation and agreement with the Unitary Authority CEOs.
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> In advance of the Committee no later than March 2024, officers to publish all relevant reports referenced in Item 14, including the Strategic Outline Case Addendum: Early-Stage Value Engineering report; Alternative Costings; and the review and investigations into the Alternative Costings, for consideration at that Committee."

Mayor Rees in support of the amendment stated that he was keen for an adequate amount of resource be put into this option as soon as possible and return to the Committee with more detail by February 2024.

The amendment was voted upon by three votes in favour and one against. As Metro Mayor Dan Norris voted against, the proposal was not agreed. Metro Mayor Dan Norris stated that he did not agree that the public wanted more money spent looking at the various options. He believed that the underground option would lead to escalating costs. He reminded the Committee that Manchester found that the only viable option was an overground option. The

Metro Mayor stated that he was content for all the accompanying documentation to be released.

Mayor Rees in reply stated that if an overground mass transit options included going across or along major routes the consequences for those roads needed to be fully explored.

Richard Bonner, Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership Board was asked to address the meeting. He stated that the cost difference for Option A and B was minimal and for the opportunity for the Authority to protect itself against future challenges it was an investment worth making.

Cllr Young asked that for the sake of a small amount of money as responsible decision-makers agreeing Option A would rule out future delays later. This was about protecting the Authority from future legal claims.

Cllr Plowden, Chair of the Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee, stated that the marginality between the extra cost and time with agreeing to Option A was small and given the legal advice he urged this option be supported.

Recommendation (4), Option A was moved by Cllr Young and seconded by Cllr Guy. The recommendation was voted upon by three votes in favour and one against. As Metro Mayor Dan Norris voted against, the recommendation was not agreed.

Recommendation 4 Option B was proposed by Metro Mayor Dan Norris. There was no seconder so this recommendation was not agreed.

Recommendation 4 Option C was proposed by Metro Mayor Dan Norris. There was no seconder so this recommendation was not agreed.

[voting arrangements: To be carried, these decisions required a majority of the members present and voting, such majority to include the Metro Mayor. Each member present could cast one vote. If a vote was tied the decision would not be carried. There was no casting vote].

Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 were unanimously agreed.

Resolved:

(1) That the CRSTS programme scope amendment re-baseline proposal, as set out in sections 4.8 – 4.10 and Table 1 of the report be approved;

(2) That the allocation of funding to projects in the CRSTS programme be endorsed as set out in Table 2 column 'Proposed CRSTS Budget Allocation' of this report, forming the CRSTS revised baseline required by the Department for Transport (DfT);

(3) That authority be delegated to the Mayoral Combined Authority's Strategic Director of Infrastructure and S73 Officer, in consultation with their counterpart Unitary Authority Infrastructure Directors and Section 151 Officers, to decide how the Programme Contingency be used, in conjunction with the CRSTS over-programme project list, and to determine change requests for further draw-down of funds within existing budget allocations up to £1m, so that all projects be delivered and funds spent before 31st March 2027. In the event of a consensus not being reached at Director level, decision making to be escalated to the Mayoral Combined Authority's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in consultation with the

	Unitary Authority CEOs; (4) That delegated authority be granted to the Mayoral Combined Authority's Strategic Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Unitary Authority Infrastructure Directors to spend the £686,089 of Active Travel Capability and Ambition Funding secured in January 2023 and any future funding which is secured under the scheme as outlined in sections 33 and 39 of this report. In the event of a consensus not being reached at Director level decision making to be escalated to the Mayoral Combined Authority's CEO in consultation with the Unitary Authority CEOs. (5) That authority be delegated to the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's Strategic Director of Infrastructure in consultation with the Unitary Authority Infrastructure Directors to approve the MetroWest 2 stage 2 Full Business Case. In the event of a consensus not being reached at Director level, decision making will be escalated to the Mayoral Combined Authority's CEO in consultation with the Unitary Authority CEOs.
15	**BSIP PRIORITISING** The Committee received a report which members were asked note, along with an intention to use the reported Prioritisation Framework and associated qualitative assessment in delivering the BSIP. The report also updated the current financial position of funding within BSIP and showed the impact of schemes delivered to date. The report further proposed a methodology for spending funding provided to support local bus services through the Local Transport Fund (LTF). The recommendations were moved by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and seconded by Cllr Guy. Cllr Guy stated that it was important that the authorities worked together so that the region could move forward. He further stated that a solution was needed to provide an alternative to the loss of supported services. Residents had been working on solutions to provide solutions to any inadequacies provided by the WestLink service. He estimated that around 40,000 residents had been affected by the loss of supported rural services and he had provided a report to the Authority in July 2023 urging use of funds in this area. The following amendment to recommendation 1 was moved by Cllr Guy as follows: "The Committee notes that the current spend trajectory of the bus service improvement plan forecasts an underspend; and that the £0.5m-£1m likely to be available to support bus services through the local transport fund, the Committee resolves that the underspend of BSIP and LTF should be transparently allocated to provide best service to residents of the West of England, including fare reductions for priority vulnerable groups, including carers and apprentices, more funding for enhanced services in the urban area that are likely to become commercially viable; new bus services to provide vital connections to communities in the West of England who cannot now access essential services such as healthcare, employment and education. The Committee resolves that the decision on how to allocate available funds in BSIP and LTF should be taken at the next available meeting and asks the Interim Chief Executive of the Combined Authority to ensure proposals are co-produced with officers from all the unitary authorities including North Somerset Council and the Combined Authority". The meeting was then adjourned for consideration of the amendment.

	On resumption the amendment was seconded by Mayor Rees. Cllr Young stated that advice had been received from the Unitary Authority Monitoring Officers that the existing committee delegation did not cover the changes proposed and asked that the decision be delayed so that clarification in this matter could be sought. The Authority's Interim Monitoring Officer, Daniel Dickinson confirmed that he had received the Unitary Authority Monitoring Officers' views on the delegation and had not been persuaded by the arguments put forward. He made clear that he was happy to continue to discuss the matter with them He pointed out that as the Combined Authority's Monitoring Officer, it was his role to advise the members of the Combined Authority Committee on such matters. Cllr Young supported the proposed amendment and stated that South Gloucestershire had some of the most deprived areas in the region, and access to vital services for these groups was essential. She stated that she wished a report to come forward on bus franchising options to the next available committee meeting. In response the Metro Mayor stated that he would endeavour to bring a report forward if possible but reminded the meeting that the issue was extremely complex. Mayor Rees emphasised the importance of transparency and to have good working relationships. He stated that Citizens Panels had been run as tools of engagement and asked that the Authorities' forums channels be utilised to draw on local expertise. He recognised the challenge for communities in respect to connectivity. Cllr Guy clarified that proposed bus routes had been formulated over time that could eventually become commercially viable if managed correctly, rather than loss making. The amendment to recommendation 1 was voted with 3 in favour with 1 against. As the Metro Mayor voted against the amendment the amendment was not carried. [voting arrangements: In order to be carried, a decision on this matter required a majority of the members present and voting, such majority to include the Metro Mayor. Each member present could cast one vote. If a vote was tied the decision would not be carried. There was no casting vote]. The recommendations were unanimously agreed. The wording to recommendation (2) was slightly amended to read 'that it be noted that'. **Resolved**: (1) To note the contents of the report and the associated independent Prioritisation Framework, and the associated qualitative assessment, to use for delivery of the BSIP; (2) That it be noted that a Citizens' panel be set up to help to shape a formula to be applied to bus services that may not become commercially viable but are socially necessary to assess and prioritise current funding (LTF) and for similar future funding streams; (3) To note that BSIP is a joint fund with North Somerset Council so decisions on allocations are subject to negotiations with them and the Department for Transport; and agree in such negotiations officers will endeavour to allocate an additional £0.5m of the BSIP budget on new, innovative bus services where these services are likely to become commercially viable in the course of the BSIP period using an agreed transparent formula.
16	**TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE**

	The Committee received an update on the Transformation Programme. It had been agreed at the Committee in June 2023 that a further update on the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) Transformation Programme and progress towards a refresh of the Authority's regional strategy would be taken to this Committee. The report set out progress and next steps on the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's route to improvement. The report provided the Committee with an update on the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority transformation programme that was underway to respond to and take forward recommendations from the Grant Thornton external audit report, the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority commissioned Independent Peer Review, and the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Committee approved action plan. Cllr Young stated that she was keen to know what the strategy would say in relation to climate resilience as this was one of the biggest challenges the region would face, especially considering the length of the region's coastline. The recommendations were moved by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and seconded by Cllr Kevin Guy. The paper was to note and no voting was required. **Resolved**: (1) That the progress across the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority transformation programme be noted; (2) That the areas of the Constitution where the Monitoring Officer has identified improvement opportunities and intends to work with the Unitary Authority Monitoring Officers to bring improvement proposals to a future meeting of the Mayoral Combined Authority Committee be noted;
17	**SENIOR/STATUTORY APPOINTMENTS** This report sought the Committee's formal endorsement of the appointment of an Interim Director of Investment and Corporate Services (Section 73 Officer). Cllr Guy asked that the length of time of employment for interims be limited as far as possible and welcomed that the Employment & Appointments Committee was seeking a permanent appointment as soon as possible. Mayor Rees stated that the stability of permanent appointments was paramount to the ability of the region to attract inward investment. The recommendations were moved by Metro Mayor Dan Norris and seconded by Cllr Claire Young. **Resolved**: That the Committee endorses the appointment of Rachel Musson as Interim Director of Investment and Corporate Services (Section 73 Officer).
18	**WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY AND MAYORAL BUDGET FORECAST 2023/24 REPORT**

	This Committee received a report which presented the revenue and capital budget financial forecast information for the West of England Combined Authority and the Mayoral budget for the financial year 2023/24 based on data from the period April to July 2023 for both the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority and Mayoral budgets. The recommendations were moved by the Metro Mayor and seconded by Cllr Claire Young. No voting was required as the recommendations were for noting purposes. Resolved: (1) That the Committee notes the forecast position for the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Revenue Budget as set out in Figure 1; The forecast position for the Mayoral Revenue budget as set out in Figure 6; (2) That the Committee notes the changes to the Capital Forecast as set out in Appendix 2.
19	**WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT** The Committee received the Audit Committee's Annual Report 2022/23 which brought together in one document a summary of the work undertaken by the Audit Committee. The production of the report complied with current best practice for audit committees and allowed the Audit Committee to demonstrate it had fulfilled its terms of reference and to share its achievements with the main West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Committee and was useful as a reminder to the organisation of the role of the committee in providing assurance about its governance, risk management, financial and business controls. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) had issued guidance to local authorities to help ensure that Audit Committees operated effectively. The guidance recommended that Audit Committees should report annually on how they had discharged their responsibilities. A copy of the annual report of the Audit Committee had been attached. The comments made by the Chair of the Authority's Audit Committee in relation to the report had been noted. The Metro Mayor moved the recommendations which were seconded by Cllr Guy. No voting was required as the recommendations were for noting purposes. **Resolved**: That the Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23 be noted.
	Signed: **Date:**