

REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY AUDIT
COMMITTEE

DATE: 4 MARCH 2024

**REPORT
TITLE:** TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

**RESPONSIBLE
OFFICER:** DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY

<u>Key Decision</u>	No
<u>Purpose of Report</u>	
To update Committee on progress across the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Transformation Programme.	
<u>Recommendation</u>	
That Audit Committee note progress across the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Transformation Programme.	
<u>Reasons for recommendation</u>	
This report sets out a further update to Audit Committee on progress across the Transformation Programme. Audit Committee is receiving regular updates while the Programme is in place.	
<u>Voting arrangements</u>	
The paper is to note and no vote is required.	
<u>Publication Requirements</u>	
For publication.	

Background

1. The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Transformation Programme was established in Spring 2023 following an external audit report and Independent Peer Review that highlighted actions that the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority should take to strengthen its operations.
2. As highlighted at previous meetings of the Audit Committee, a clear structure for the programme has been established with members of the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Corporate Leadership Team leading each workstream. Figure 1 provides a reminder of the structure of the Transformation Programme. Regular updates on the programme are provided to the regional CEO group, ensuring collective oversight for the programme.
3. This report details progress across the Transformation Programme since the Committee was last updated in January 2024.

Key Considerations

4. As noted above, a West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Transformation Programme has been in place since Spring 2023. In line with updates to previous Committee meetings, this paper provides an update on action that has been taken across the programme since Committee last reviewed progress.
5. Figure 1 reminds Committee of the structure in place for the Transformation Programme and the headline aim of each workstream.

Figure 1: Transformation Programme structure and aims overview

	1	2	3	4
	Purpose & Strategy	Workforce & Culture	Governance & Structures	Effectiveness, Efficiencies & Delivery
	Programme Level Actions (actions 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	<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 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

6. The January 2024 update to Audit Committee on the Transformation Programme noted that a number of actions no longer required transformation activity and would either be closed (where no further action required) or transferred to business-as-usual delivery arrangements (where activity is ongoing, but stable arrangements are now in place for future delivery). Actions that are now closed across the Transformation Programme are attached as Annex 1 (including the last update provided to Combined Authority Committee on each of these actions).
7. Across remaining transformation actions, work has progressed since January. Updates on each action that remains within the programme are set out in Table 1 below. Key points to note include:
 - Work around the role and purpose of the Combined Authority is progressing with a joint discussion between Mayors and Leaders planned for 19th March.
 - Regional engagement on the refresh of the regional strategy is underway, ensuring the perspectives of partners across the region is being captured as work continues towards a final strategy.
 - The process is underway to recruit to the final two posts currently filled by interims in the senior officer structure of the Combined Authority.
 - In line with agreement at January Combined Authority Committee, an effectiveness and efficiency programme is in the process of being scoped that will further strengthen the information and support provided to Committee to underpin its decision making.
 - Work is underway to consider routes to developing the approach to investment across the Combined Authority, ensuing funds available to Committee are being worked as hard as possible to deliver for the region.
8. When they established the Transformation Programme, Committee approved the proposal that SOLACE should conduct a further independent review of the Combined Authority after one year to consider progress against the issues highlighted in their original report. The findings from the 'one year on' report will be presented to Committee in June. As with the original SOLACE report, the intention is for the Chair of Audit to feed into this process.
9. While progress has been made across the Programme, the most recent value for money report from the Combined Authority's external auditors and the conclusions of the Extraordinary Committee held in December highlighted areas where further work is needed to continue strengthening controls within Combined Authority. Action is underway to deliver on these requirements.
10. In their regular reviews of the Programme, both Audit Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have also highlighted areas where they would like to see greater progress in delivering on the ambitions of the Programme. The feedback from these Committees will be factored into the priorities for the next phase of the Programme.

11. Since Committee last met, the Government deadline for completion of the LEP integration process passed without local partners finding a route forward to conclude this process. Officers have sought guidance from Government on next steps in the absence of an agreed position.
12. A full update on actions open across the Transformation Programme is provided in the table below.

Action No	Action	Activity Planned	Nature of Action	Timeline
TP2	Independent progress reviews to be carried out, monitoring progress of the Transformation Programme and should be reported to Committee	As noted in this report, 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.	Task and finish	Progress report: work to commence March 2024 Report will be delivered Summer 2024.
TP5	A forward plan of decisions and activities will be developed to help with planning / resourcing / engagement for CEOs meeting.	Improved processes are in place to capture committee and key officer decisions for a more complete forward plan, which is now published monthly. Currently in development is activity to extend the horizon of this forward look to a 12 month forward plan of key decisions.	Ongoing, will transfer to business-as-usual once complete	By March 2024 Committee
PS1	The West of England Mayoral 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	As noted in this report, a role and purpose discussion has been scheduled for Mayors and Leaders in March. Next steps will be agreed following this discussion	Task and finish	Discussion March 2024, next steps TBC
PS2	The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority, in dialogue with partners, will co-produce a Regional Economic Strategy, providing a	As noted in this report, this work is underway with a target of bringing a draft to June Committee	Task and finish	Target of June Committee for a draft strategy

	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.			
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 Mayoral Combined Authority. Through this work, delivering a LEP integration plan	Discussion with Government is underway to determine next steps in the LEP integration process. We are currently awaiting feedback from Government.	task and finish	
WC1	Through 'Step Change' programme, develop revised leadership structure for the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority organisation including review of senior pay and grading structures and titles and creation of consistent 'job families' across the authority	The body of this report, the bulk of this action is complete. 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 financial year.		Creation of consistent job families: target date end of March 2024
WC2	Through 'Step Change' programme, establish working behaviours and principles for the West of England Mayoral 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 has been completed and were brought to CLT for approval in January 2023. This action is now complete and any ongoing activity will be managed through business-as-usual arrangements	Task and finish	Transformation action now complete and will be closed as part of the Transformation Programme
WC4	Complete management restructure to fill interim posts permanently in consultation with the LAs, with	As noted in this report, the final roles in the Corporate Leadership Team that are currently held by interims are now in	Task and finish	Target date for recruitment to final senior

	external support, and in line with the constitution of the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority. Ensure Monitoring Officer role is at Director level	active recruitment		management roles – April 2024
WC5	Ensure performance reviews are formally recorded	The bulk of activity against this action has been completed. A new performance management system to support staff management will be in place during 2024, at which point this action will be closed and ongoing activity managed via business-as-usual arrangements	Task and finish	New performance management system in place: target date March 2024
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	As noted at January Committee, much of the activity against this action has been completed. A new careers website is in development, improving the information we are able to provide to job applicants. New site due to be in place by Spring 2024	Task and finish	New careers site to be in place by Spring 2024
GS1	Following discussions on the role and purpose of the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority, develop revised West of England Mayoral Combined Authority operating principles as part of revisions to the Constitution of the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority. Have regard to the Constitutions of other CAs as revisions are made. In reviewing the Constitution, revise the scheme of delegations.	This activity will take place following discussions on the role and purpose of the Combined Authority	Task and finish	At the conclusion of role and purpose discussions (PS1)
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	Task and finish	To be taken forward through role and purpose discussions

		and when appropriate		(PS1)
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.	This work is underway with improvement to information available to be implemented early in 2024/25	Task and finish	Initial actions to be delivered in early 2024/25
DE2	Use the Portfolio Review Board to review progress on agreed projects, providing challenge and support to ensure more timely delivery of all projects.	As noted at the January Committee, the Portfolio Review Board has revised its terms of reference and is providing support and challenge to projects and programmes across the region. With robust arrangements now in place, this action will be closed as a transformation activity and transferred to business-as-usual management arrangements. PRB will escalate issues to CEOs as appropriate.	Ongoing, transferred to business-as-usual management arrangements	Transformation action now complete and will be closed as part of the Transformation Programme
DE4	Review approach to existing investment funds providing CEOs with up-to-date position on commitments, headroom, delivery timeframes.	Aspects of this work are being taken via action DE5 (maturing our approach to investment). The review and sharing of information around investment commitments, headroom and delivery timeframes is managed via PRB, CEOs and other officer forums. Issues will be escalated as required. This action will not be closed as a standalone transformation action.	Ongoing, transferred to business-as-usual management arrangements	Transformation action now complete and will be closed as part of the Transformation Programme
DE6	Through a programme of effectiveness and efficiency reviews: a. consider the appropriate routes to allocating the with held budget of £800k as agreed at Jan '23 Committee b. Consider areas for	As highlighted in this report, a programme of effectiveness and efficiencies will need to be approved by CEOs, in line with the agreement reached at January Committee. This programme will report progress to	Task and finish	Update to June Committee

	'shared services'	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.	<p>Monitoring and evaluation of programmes across the Investment Fund progresses with submission of the midterm report to Government by March 2024.</p> <p>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</p>	Ongoing	<p>Gateway Review: next submission by March 2024</p> <p>M&E framework update: by June 2024</p>

Alternative Options Considered

13. This report ensures Committee continues to have ongoing oversight of progress across the Transformation Programme, which officers have been asked to report on in a transparent manner.

Consultation and Engagement

14. West of England Mayoral Combined Authority and Unitary Authority officers have been consulted on issues within this report as required.

Key Risks

15. Failure to address the issues highlighted in the Grant Thornton Audit report and Independent Peer Review will hamper the ability of the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority 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.
16. The Transformation Programme has been structured to ensure the risks identified in external reviews of the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority are dealt with in a clear and structured way. Progress in closing a range of actions across the programme demonstrates that many of the issues identified via external reviews have been clearly addressed and, where appropriate, ongoing action is now embedded in business-as-usual activity across the Authority.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

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

Climate Change Implications

18. The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's Climate & Nature Strategy and Action Plan has been considered in the production of this report and there are no specific implications at this stage. Of particular relevance is the ongoing Regional Strategy work which rightly places action to tackle both the Climate and Nature emergencies at its core.

Financial Implications

19. 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. There is a potential risk to ongoing funding if we fail to deliver on the overall programme.

Legal Implications

20. Whilst there are no specific legal implications arising from this report, a number of the transformation objectives referred to do engage with statutory compliance requirements. Due regard is being had to these requirements are part of delivery against each workstream.

Human Resources Implications

21. While there are no direct HR implications arising from this report, workstream two in particular highlights a programme of HR-related activity, some of which as noted in the report has already been delivered. Any further HR implications arising from the completion of this work will be highlighted to Committee as appropriate.

Commercial and Procurement

22. There are no specific Commercial and Procurement implications set out in the Report.

West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Contact:

Report Author: Rachel Pykett

Contact Details: Rachel.pykett@westofengland.ca.gov.uk

Annex: Overview of actions where further transformation activity is not currently planned

Action No	Action	Activity Planned	Nature of Action	Timeline
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.	Task and finish	April – May 2023 ACTION COMPLETE
TP3	Senior Officers will continue to meet collectively and on a 1:1 basis going forward	<p>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 discussions between the West of England CEO and the Unitary Authority CEOs take place regularly.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	Business as usual	Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in place for ongoing delivery

TP4	<p>Senior Leaders and officers will:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>B) Commit to promoting a culture of respect and understanding at all times.</p> <p>C) Seek mediation at an early stage if required to ensure working practice continue and solutions can be developed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 As noted below (PS1), a programme of work to consider the role and purpose of the West of England 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. <p>With strong arrangements in place to support collaboration or further action planned elsewhere in the Transformation Programme, action TP4 will be closed.</p>	Business as usual	Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in place for ongoing delivery
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.	Business as usual	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;	Task and finish	Transformation action complete - workshop in

		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.		Feb 2023. Ongoing work flowing from the Feb 23 workshop embedded across the Transformation Programme.
PS6	Board members to be involved at an earlier stage in setting strategic regional direction	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a clearer forward plan of key decisions and Committee lead-in process (enabling Board 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. <p>With stronger arrangements in place, this action will be closed within the Transformation Programme and</p>	Business as usual	Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in place for ongoing delivery

		supported via business as usual.		
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 delivery in the West of England 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.	Business as usual	Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in place for ongoing delivery
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.	Task and finish	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.	Business as usual	Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in

				place for ongoing delivery
GS2	<p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>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</p>	Business as usual	Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in place for ongoing delivery
GS4	<p>West of England Combined Authority officers will ensure Cabinet Members from UAs can request briefings from senior CA officers as required</p>	<p>The West of England 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 agenda item at CEO meetings where requests for briefings can be made and</p>	Business as usual	Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in place for ongoing

		discussed/actioned. This action will be closed within the Transformation Programme and managed via business-as-usual arrangements.		delivery
GS5	Regional Monitoring Officers will meet regularly to discuss matters regarding the constitution that need addressing	The MCA's Interim 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.	Business as usual	Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in place for ongoing delivery
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.	Task and finish	ACTION COMPLETE
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.	Business as usual	Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in place for ongoing delivery