

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

DATE: 15 MARCH 2024

REPORT TITLE: TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY

Key Decision No

Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on progress across the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Transformation Programme.

Recommendation

That Committee:

- 1) Note that Government issued a Best Value Notice to the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority on 5th March 2024 setting out specific action the Authority is required to take in order to continue improvement.
- 2) Note progress and planned next steps across the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Transformation Programme; and that the Programme will be reviewed and updated as required to respond to the issues set out in and required action contained in the Best Value Notice.
- 3) Note that, in line with previous Committee decisions, work will soon commence to support the SOLACE 'one year on' report to follow on from the Independent Peer Review they delivered in March 2023.

Reasons for recommendation

While there has been progress across a number of areas of the Transformation Programme, action in some areas has not been as swift as needed. The Best Value Notice sets out specific action Government requires the Authority to take. The Committee is asked to note this development and that an action plan will be developed in response to the Notice for agreement with Government.

Voting arrangements

This paper is to note. No voting is required.

Publication Requirements

For publication.

Background

1. The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority established a Transformation Programme in 2023. At each Committee meeting since, Committee has reviewed progress across the programme.
2. This report provides a further update on progress since last the last Committee meeting (in January) and next steps in areas of the programme where work is ongoing.
3. On 5th March 2024, the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority was issued with a Best Value Notice by Government highlighting concerns about the ability of the Authority to identify and implement arrangements to secure continuous improvement (in line with requirements of the Best Value Duty under the Local Government Act 1999). This notice requires the authority to take a range of action to support its ongoing improvement. This report therefore also notes that the Transformation Programme will be reviewed and amended as required to support the Authority's response to the Best Value Notice.
4. The Notice has been placed on the Authority's website and is attached as Appendix 1 of this report. It sets out four areas of concern:
 - The poor state of professional relationships between the West of England Combined Authority Mayor and the representatives of the constituent members of the Authority which is impacting partnership working and potentially limiting the Authority's ability to optimise strategic opportunities.
 - The Authority's constitution needs review and clarification to work in a more effective and agile way.
 - The function and purpose of the Authority has not been collectively understood and the roles, responsibilities and 'powers' of a combined authority are not fully grasped, resulting in confusion between strategic governance and day to day transactional activity.
 - The Authority lacks a clear, shared narrative regarding the West of England and how it will operate for the benefit of the wider region.

5. The notice requires the West of England Combined Authority to take a range of actions, namely:
 - Reset the culture and relationships between the West of England Combined Authority Mayor and representatives of the constituent members of the Authority. In doing this, take advantage of external support in facilitating coaching and development for the political leadership of the West of England Combined Authority and the Unitary Authorities.
 - Through strong partnership working, develop and agree strategic priorities for the West of England which will benefit local residents in the wider region.
 - Review and update the Authority's constitution to enable more effective decision-making and scrutiny processes, making representations to the Department on any proposed changes.
 - Engage with the Department on a range of ongoing issues with the aim to enhance the operation and structure of the West of England Combined Authority.
 - Establish an independent improvement panel to support the authority in delivering the necessary improvements detailed in this notice, engaging with the Department in determining its timing, scope, membership, and terms of reference.
6. The requirements of the notice align, in large part, with existing actions set out within the Transformation Programme. The work plan already in place for the programme will therefore be discussed with the incoming Independent Chair of the Independent Improvement Panel to consider whether this can form the basis of work to support the Panel. The existing work programme will be updated as required under the direction of the Panel.
7. In light of the Best Value Notice, steps will be taken, with the support of the Improvement Panel, to accelerate action across the Transformation Programme where progress has not been as swift as hoped.
8. A draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Independent Improvement Panel will be developed as swiftly as possible for agreement of Committee, Government and the Panel. Potential membership of the Panel will also be developed in collaboration with Committee Members and subject to the approval of Government.

9. The Combined Authority Director of Strategy will be the nominated lead officer to support the work of the Improvement Panel, building on the lead role taken in relation to the Transformation Programme. The Combined Authority Chief Executive will be the accountable officer for the overall programme. It is essential that the skills and support of both public and private sector partners we work with are used to both support and drive the programme. This will include the existing Local Enterprise Partnership and the Business Board.
10. The Authority will work proactively and constructively with Government, local partners, and the Independent Improvement Panel that we will be establishing to accelerate our improvement journey, ensuring we respond effectively to the issues that have been set out in the Best Value Notice.

Key Considerations

Areas of work where transformation action is complete

11. While the West of England Combined Authority has further steps to take in its improvement journey, the January update to Committee and the recently issued Best Value Notice noted positive steps have been taken across some aspects of the Programme.
12. At January Committee, a number of actions were transferred out of the Transformation Programme, noting that the focused action required in these areas had now been completed and that continuing activity would be carried out through business-as-usual arrangements.
13. A summary of transformation activity now complete is set out below. At January Committee, members were clear they did not want to lose sight of completed actions; updates provided to January Committee on all actions now marked as closed or transferred to business-as-usual are therefore included at Appendix 2.
14. As a result of the Transformation Programme, a clearer set of senior officer groups are now in place with all statutory officers across the Mayoral Combined Authority and Unitary Authorities meeting their counterparts on a regular basis. The forward plan of CEO meetings has been strengthened with discussion on draft committee papers now taking place at a much earlier stage to ensure there is collaboration and early discussion on issues where there may be differing perspectives between partners. The Combined Authority Chief Executive chairs the meetings on draft committee reports with the Unitary Authority Council Leaders and Mayor of Bristol and their Deputies along with the Unitary Council CEOs. As part of the strengthening of collaboration between CEOs, there is a clearer route to ensuring

Committee members are involved at an earlier stage in setting regional strategic direction with CEOs able to ensure the views of Mayors and Leaders are sought and shared at an early stage as work progresses. In addition, briefings for Unitary Authority Cabinet Members are available and from senior CA officers and there is a standing item of CEO agendas to ensure senior officers have a clear and easy route to request briefings. The recent report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group looking at decisions around the Bus Service Improvement Plan noted further opportunities to strengthen engagement across the CA partnership to support decision making. We will continue to build on these improvements.

15. Action has been taken to ensure there are stronger arrangements in place to manage feedback on draft committee papers from Unitary Authority partners.
16. Monitoring Officers now meet regularly, and the Portfolio Review Board (which brings together S73/S151 officers and other senior officers) has had a renewed Terms of Reference that were endorsed by Committee in January. The work across these officer groups is helping unblock barriers to delivery and ensure there are regular opportunities for officers to work together in developing new areas of work for Committee consideration. Officers will continue to work together across the Combined Authority and Unitary Authorities to consider whether there are further routes to strengthening officer collaboration, whilst maintaining appropriately robust and professional high support challenge sessions to enhance delivery.
17. When the Transformation Programme was established, the CA senior officer team contained a number of interims. Permanent senior officers are now in place in all roles other than the Monitoring Officer and CEO. The Employment and Appointments Committee had already started the process to recruit to these two final posts in the Combined Authority Corporate Leadership Team, ensuring a stable senior officer structure is in place to take forward the work of the Combined Authority. In addition, performance management arrangements have been strengthened right across the organisation and the performance reviews of all senior officers are now formally recorded.
18. As well as a reduction in interims within the senior officer team, a revised officer leadership structure for the Combined Authority has been put in place over the past year and organisational values have been refreshed. Across the Combined Authority organisation, Directorate restructures have taken place as required to ensure appropriate resource is in place to deliver on the ambitious programme of work the Metro Mayor and Committee has set. As the organisation evolves and

grows, internal controls and performance management continue to be strengthened.

19. In the past year, the membership of the Audit and Overview and Scrutiny Committees has been refreshed and support for these committees strengthened. Each Committee is meeting regularly and is working with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to support the ongoing development of these Committees.

Impact of Transformation

20. While the Combined Authority has been issued with a Best Value Notice, and we must respond swiftly and proactively to the issues the Notice highlights, the progress to date across the Transformation Programme gives the Authority a strong set of foundations to build on.
21. While there is further work to do across the Transformation Programme, and in response to the Best Value Notice, we should not lose sight of the positive action Committee has taken over the past year. Over the past year, decisions Committee has taken include:
 - The agreement to formally establish the Joint Delivery Vehicle (JDV) to manage the delivery of the transformational Bristol Temple Quarter regeneration programme that will ultimately deliver 10,000 new homes and 22,000 new jobs for the region.
 - Investment to support the regeneration of key development sites across the region, such as the Western Harbour scheme. Investment that will ultimately help deliver new homes, employment space, and improvements to the spaces people live, work and visit right across the West of England.
 - Investment to progress transport schemes such as: the opening of the Portway park and ride station, the 10 year rail delivery plan; the delivery of MetroWest phase 1 (the reopening of the Portishead rail line); the electrification of the Bristol Parkway to Bristol Temple Meads line; and the delivery of more regular rail services along the Severn Beach and Westbury lines - supporting the region to be able to reduce its reliance on cars and tackling congestion across the West of England.
 - Investment in cycling and walking schemes including around the South Gloucestershire Brabazon site and the 19,000 capacity proposed YTL Arena that will deliver new cycle routes and improved facilities, making cycling and walking an easier and safer choice for people traveling around the region.

- The expansion of the regional Green Recovery Fund, including support to help grow the green skills offer across the region (such as green construction skills), ensuring the West of England is progressing towards its net zero ambitions. The Fund originally established as a £50m fund has now been expanded to £60m, more than the Combined Authority has ever invested in climate and nature recovery.
 - The approval of a refreshed regional Employment and Skills Plan that will guide the training and employment support services offered across the region over the coming years, helping people progress in their careers. Committee will today be considering an investment case for £15.68m to fund two years of activity across our skills system, ensuring we continue to deliver for residents right across the region.
 - Investment to support the delivery of Culture West, supporting cultural and creative freelancers to start and grow sustainable businesses.
22. The examples above provide a snapshot of the decisions Committee has taken. The examples are included to demonstrate that while we recognise there is more to do to deliver across the Transformation Programme and therefore enhance delivery through improving the issues specifically identified in the BVN, the progress to date is supporting positive work across Combined Authority that makes a real difference to our residents lives.
23. The purpose of the Transformation Programme is not to remove all areas of disagreement between Committee members. As democratically elected leaders it is entirely appropriate for Committee to having differing perspectives and priorities. But as the Best Value Notice sets out, further steps are needed to strengthen relationships to help the Authority realise its strategic opportunities. The Transformation Programme is focused on helping ensure a strong structure is in place to manage the delivery of work that is agreed by Committee and support ongoing dialogue where there is further work to do. This will continue to be a focus in the next phase of the Programme, as the actions across the Programme are reviewed in light of the Best Value Notice.

Areas for further focus

24. As noted above there are a number of areas where progress has not been as swift as hoped. In addition, further challenges have arisen during the period the Transformation Programme has been in place. In their most recent value for money report, 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.

25. In their regular reviews of the Programme, both Audit Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have also previously highlighted areas where they would like to see greater progress in delivering on the ambitions of the Programme. The feedback from these Committees has been factored into the priorities for the next phase of the Programme, which are set out below.
26. 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.
27. As set out in the background section of this report the Best Value Notice received by the Authority sets out a range of specific actions we will need to take. Given the alignment of these actions with existing areas of work across the Transformation Programme, the Authority will manage its response to the Best Value Notice through the next phase of transformation work.

Next steps in ongoing areas of transformation

28. While the next phase of Transformation will be discussed and agreed with the Independent Improvement Panel, it is anticipated that activity will be structured around two core themes as set out below. These areas align with the areas Government has asked the Authority to focus on in responding to the Best Value Notice.

The future priorities of the Combined Authority

29. To ensure we have a clear set of priorities to guide future delivery and investment by the Combined Authority and to strengthen the capacity of the Combined Authority to act as a convening regional partner, we will:
 - a. Progress work to consider **the role and purpose of the Combined Authority**. On this, a Mayors and Leaders discussion will take place with an independent facilitator in March which will seek to confirm the approach to the next phase of this work. This is anticipated as an opening session to help frame a programme of independently facilitated discussion focused on strengthening relationships between the Metro Mayor and the representatives of the other members of the Authority on Committee. There needs to be a series of meetings with sufficient time at each meeting to enable progress.

- b. **Through strong partnership working, develop and agree strategic priorities for the West of England which will benefit local residents in the wider region.** This work will be taken forward through collaboration in agreeing a refreshed regional strategy. This work is underway with a robust regional evidence base in place and a series of workshops with regional partners to strengthen our understanding of the action that partners think will help strengthen growth in our regional economy and improve the lives of residents. A draft strategy is already well advanced and being tested with partners and is on track for the summer and a report will be brought to June Committee.
 - c. **Establish new forums to ensure regional partners and residents have clear routes to inform the priorities of the Combined Authority.** Through the work of the Independent Improvement Panel, and a review of the constitution, proposals will be developed for a revised set of decision-making and advisory forums and revised ways of working to help strengthen collaboration across the region. This work will help improve understanding of strategic governance and day to day transactional activity.
 - d. **Bring forward proposals for how we can develop our approach to investment,** ensuring we work existing funds as hard as possible, create the conditions to build additional investment in the region, and strengthen our pipeline of clear investable programmes and projects that will make a tangible difference to the lives of people across the West of England. Proposals for how we might strengthen our approach to investment, and deliver the priorities agreed in the refreshed regional strategy, are on track to bring an update to June Committee, continuing to strengthen processes to support effective decision making.
30. There is further work we can do to strengthen the processes in place to strengthen the work of the Combined Authority and support all partners to effectively contribute. In the next phase of the Transformation Programme we will:
- a. **Further strengthen the formal forward plan of Combined Authority business,** ensuring we have a published 12 month forward plan of Committee business by March 2024.
 - b. **Carry out a review of Combined Authority constitution** in line with the requirements of the Best Value Notice and to support the delivery of an agreed role and purpose for the Authority. The review of the constitution will ensure effective and clear decision-making arrangements are in place, supported by agreed delegation arrangements that will help deliver on the collective ambition of Committee members to accelerate delivery of schemes and programmes that will improve lives and strengthen the

economy of the West of England. As noted in the Best Value Notice, constitutional amendments will need to be presented to Government.

- c. **Complete a review of the approach to the Combined Authority Business Case process and approach to evaluation.** This work is underway (and builds on the simplified process that was put in place for some schemes during 2023/24). It is anticipated that the review will help ensure information for those seeking to submit business cases is clear and readily available; strengthen understanding of the potential pipeline of business cases that may be submitted for consideration; and strengthen the assessment criteria applied at a regional assessment level in delivering the regional strategy to business cases to ensure those making proposals have a clear picture of the information required to make the case for investment.
 - d. **Deliver an effectiveness and efficiency programme across the Combined Authority** (in line with the agreement reached at January Committee) that will: strengthen use of digital and data, ensuring the decisions brought to Committee are supported by a robust understanding of the data available; strengthen organisational processes to give work on route to Committee a clear pathway through each stage of development; continue to strengthen people management through the implementation of the CA Organisational Development strategy; and explore potential opportunities for efficiencies through the use of shared services particularly on a regional basis. The work noted above focused on strengthening our approach to investment will also support the future effectiveness and efficiency of the CA. The scope of this programme will be agreed with CEOs and, in line with agreement at January Committee, will report progress to June Committee.
31. These themes draw together remaining transformation actions. For completeness, the list of open transformation actions is included at Appendix 3. As noted in this report, next steps across these actions will be further reviewed and updated in light of the Best Value Notice issued to the Authority. Actions will also be discussed with the Independent Improvement Panel once this is in place.
 32. As the work of the Independent Improvement Panel is agreed, amendments will be made to this forward plan as required. It is anticipated the Independent Improvement Panel will make regular progress reports to Committee with the Audit and Overview and Scrutiny Committees also considering these reports, and that future updates on the Transformation Programme will be incorporated into these reports, bringing together the range of improvement activity the West of England Combined Authority is focused on delivering.

33. 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. Work on the one year on review will begin shortly. This will provide context to the Independent Improvement Panel around the areas highlighted in the Best Value Notice and ensure there is an independent assessment of progress across the wider Transformation Programme.

Alternative Options Considered

34. 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.
35. The Best Value improvement notice issued to the Authority on 5th March 2024 set out a range of specific requirements of the Authority. As such, alternative options for action are not open to Committee.

Consultation and Engagement

36. West of England Mayoral Combined Authority and Unitary Authority officers have been consulted on the content of this report, ensuring the updates provided set out a clear and up to date assessment of progress against each action in the Transformation Programme.
37. The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Audit Committee received an update on the Transformation Programme at their 4th March 2024 meeting. The Committee expressed concern at the pace of progress across aspects of the Transformation Programme.
38. The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed all Committee reports at their meeting on 11th March. Given this meeting fell after the report publication date, comments from O&S are not included in this report. The Chair of O&S will provide a summary of O&S comments in his remarks to Committee.

Key Risks

39. As noted in the Best Value Notice, if the Authority fails to take the action set out in the Notice, Government action could be escalated.

40. Further intervention from Government would potentially impact the ability of the Authority to attract investment in the region from Government and other sources.
41. 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. However, pace of delivery in other areas needs to be increased and now carried out in line with the requirements of the Best Value Notice.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

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

Climate Change Implications

43. 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

44. The content of this report will have ongoing financial implications for the Combined Authority, including resourcing the Independent Improvement Panel that we will now need to establish. These commitments can be met through existing resources. Any wider financial implications will be highlighted as this work progresses.

Legal Implications

45. The issuing of a Best Value Notice is a non-statutory intervention from Government. The Notice sets out action the Authority has been asked to take by Government, including a review of the constitution. There are no broader legal implications in the content of this report.

Human Resources Implications

46. 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

47. There are no commercial implications associated with this report.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Best Value Notice issued to the West of England Combined Authority on 5th March 2024
- Appendix 2 – Transformation actions now closed or transferred to business-as-usual delivery arrangements
- Appendix 3 – Transformation actions that remain open

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Appendix 1: Best Value Notice issued to the West of England Combined Authority on 5th March 2024



Department for Levelling Up,
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5 March 2024

West of England Combined Authority Best Value Notice issued on 5 March 2024.

The Department expects authorities to identify and implement arrangements to secure continuous improvement. Ministers are concerned as to the West of England Combined Authority's capacity to comply with its Best Value Duty under the Local Government Act 1999. The Minister for Local Government has therefore made the decision to issue the West of England Combined Authority with this Best Value Notice.

This Best Value Notice ("Notice") is a formal notification that the Department has concerns regarding an authority and is a request that the authority engages with the Department to provide assurance of improvement. The Department expects authorities that have been issued with Best Value Notices to continue leading their own improvement, and we recognise that the West of England Combined Authority are already taking steps to address issues in the combined authority.

This Notice is issued to the West of England Combined Authority ('the Authority') following inconsistent action against concerns highlighted by a value for money report published by Grant Thornton in November 2022, a further independent review of the West of England Combined Authority published by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) in February 2023, and subsequent engagement between the department and the Authority and relevant stakeholders. The concerns we've identified include:

- The poor state of professional relationships between the West of England Combined Authority Mayor and the representatives of the constituent members of the Authority which is impacting partnership working and potentially limiting the authority's ability to optimise strategic opportunities.

- The Authority's constitution needs review and clarification to work in a more effective and agile way.
- The function and purpose of the Authority has not been collectively understood and the roles, responsibilities and 'powers' of a combined authority are not fully grasped, resulting in confusion between strategic governance and day to day transactional activity.
- The Authority lacks a clear, shared narrative regarding the West of England and how it will operate for the benefit of the wider region.

The Authority has engaged constructively and openly with the Department and has already taken some steps to address the concerns raised in both the external audit report and the independent review. A good level of progress has been made at officer level, with a comprehensive Transformation Plan developed, some of which is already being implemented, in response to these findings. However, we expect the Authority to continue to improve and, specifically, to set out plans to address ongoing concerns and deliver all recommendations at pace with the support of strong political leadership and stability of statutory officers. In particular, the Authority should:

- Reset the culture and relationships between the West of England Combined Authority Mayor and representatives of the constituent members of the Authority. In doing this, take advantage of external support in facilitating coaching and development for the political leadership of the West of England Combined Authority and the Unitary Authorities.
- Through strong partnership working, develop and agree strategic priorities for the West of England which will benefit local residents in the wider region.
- Review and update the Authority's constitution to enable more effective decision-making and scrutiny processes, making representations to the Department on any proposed changes.
- Engage with the Department on a range of ongoing issues with the aim to enhance the operation and structure of the West of England Combined Authority.
- Establish an independent improvement panel to support the authority in delivering the necessary improvements detailed in this notice, engaging with the Department in determining its timing, scope, membership, and terms of reference.

Whilst the Authority may continue to receive and be awarded government funding whilst under this Notice, we would emphasise that receipt of funding does not indicate the Department's broader view of the performance of the Authority, nor would it indicate any change in the status of this Notice, with individual funding programmes being managed and assured independently by their respective departments.

This Notice will remain in place for 12 months, after which time, should the Department deem it necessary to continue to seek assurance through such a Notice, the Notice will be reissued. The Notice may be withdrawn or escalated at any point based on the available evidence.

This Notice is issued outside the statutory powers held by the Secretary of State under the Local Government Act 1999 to inspect or intervene in local authorities where there is evidence of Best Value failure and, separately, under section 230 of the Local Government Act 1972 to request information from local authorities. However, a failure to demonstrate continuous improvement may be judged to contribute to Best Value failure and the Secretary of State will consider using these powers as appropriate.

It is important to ensure transparency in relation to the challenges faced by local government and the Department's engagement on these. A copy of this Notice will therefore be published on gov.uk. I encourage you to make a copy of this Notice available on the Authority's website, and to share it with the Authority's Audit Committee. In line with this, we will notify your external auditor of this action.

We also expect the Authority to engage regularly with the Department during the period of the notice. A member of my team will be in touch with you to make arrangements. I look forward to receiving updates on your progress.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Max Soule", written in a cursive style.

Max Soule
Deputy Director, Local Government Stewardship

Appendix 2: Overview of actions where further transformation activity is not currently planned.

No further transformation action is planned in relation to the action below. At January Committee, members requested that activity across these actions remained visible to Committee. The update below reminds Committee of the action that had been undertaken prior to actions being closed as part of the Transformation Programme.

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 West of England Mayoral Combined Authority portfolio of delivery.</p> <p>With strong senior officer collaboration forums now cemented as part of the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority structure, this</p>	Business as usual	Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in place for ongoing delivery

		action will be closed within the Transformation Programme and managed as part of business-as-usual action.		
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; work to support refinement of regional	Task and finish	Transformation action complete - workshop in Feb

		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.		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 supported via business as usual.</p>	Business as usual	Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in place for ongoing delivery

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. • 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 	Business as usual	<p>Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in place for ongoing delivery</p>
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	<p>Transformation action complete with clear business as usual arrangements in</p>

		discussed/actioned. This action will be closed within the Transformation Programme and managed via business-as-usual arrangements.		place for ongoing delivery
GS5	Regional Monitoring Officers will meet regularly to discuss matters regarding the constitution that need addressing	The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority'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

Appendix 3: Transformation actions that remain open

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 paragraph 22 of 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.	As noted in this report, a 12 month forward plan of key decisions is in place	Ongoing, will now transfer to business-as-usual once complete	Transformation action now complete 12 month plan in place March 2024
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	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

	how to engage with partners outside the combined authority, potentially including deepening partnership arrangements where appropriate			
PS2	The West of England Mayoral 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.	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
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	As noted in 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 external support, and in line with the constitution of the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority. Ensure Monitoring Officer role is at Director level	As noted in this report, the final roles in the Corporate Leadership Team that are currently held by interims are now in active recruitment.	Task and finish	Target date for recruitment to final senior management roles end of 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 by April 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 April 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	Task and finish	New careers site to be in place by May 2024

		to job applicants. New site due to be in place by May 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.	As noted in this report, 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 and when appropriate.	Task and finish	To be taken forward through role and purpose discussions (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.	As noted in this report, 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 withheld budget of £800k as agreed at Jan '23 Committee b. Consider areas for 'shared services'	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 Committee.	Task and finish	Update to June Committee
DE7	Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of all projects to meet requirements of the Investment Fund Gateway Review and the	Monitoring and evaluation of programmes across the Investment Fund progresses with	Ongoing	Gateway Review: next

	<p>CRSTS national evaluation. This will include updating the monitoring and evaluation framework and providing clearer guidance to project managers on proportionate requirements.</p>	<p>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>		<p>submission by March 2024</p> <p>M&E framework update: by June 2024</p>
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