

**West of England Combined Authority
WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Wednesday, 23 January 2019, 10:30am
Committee Room 1, Kingswood Civic Centre

Present:

Cllr Stephen Clarke, Bristol City Council
Cllr Steve Pearce, Bristol City Council
Cllr Tim Ball, Bath & North East Somerset
Council
Cllr Liz Richardson, Bath & North East Somerset
Council

Cllr Geoff Gollop, Bristol City Council
Cllr Mark Weston, Bristol City Council
Cllr Brenda Massey, Bristol City Council
Cllr Pat Hockey, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Carole Johnson, Bristol City Council (from
item 8)

North Somerset Members in attendance:

Cllr Charles Cave and Cllr Don Davies

Officers in attendance:

Malcolm Coe, Director of Investment and
Corporate Services
Helen Edelstyn, Strategy and Governance
Shahzia Daya, Director of Legal and Democratic
Services

Ian Hird, Democratic & Scrutiny Manager
Tim Milgate, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies:

Cllr Carole Johnson, Bristol City Council
(who would be arriving later at the meeting)
Cllr Chris Blades, North Somerset Council

Cllr Brian Allinson, South Gloucestershire Council

Minutes

1	EVACUATION PROCEDURE The evacuation procedure was set out.
2	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Carole Johnson (Bristol City Council, who would be arriving later at the meeting) and Cllr Brian Allinson (South Gloucestershire Council). An apology for absence was also received on behalf of Cllr Chris Blades from North Somerset Council.
3	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011 Cllr Pearce declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Item 9 as a Non-Executive Director at Bristol Energy.
4	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the correction of adding Cllr Chris Blades to the list of attendees from North Somerset Council.

5	<p>ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (PETITIONS, STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS)</p> <p>The following statements had been received prior to the submission deadline and those members of the public present were asked to address the meeting for a maximum of three minutes per statement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dave Redgewell, Greater Bristol area light rail issues 2. Dave Redgewell, Public Funding for Bus Services 3. Christina Biggs, Infrastructure and Investment Delivery Plan. <p>The full text of the statements were published on the Authority's website following the meeting.</p>
6	<p>CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no announcements from the Chair.</p>
7	<p>REVIEW OF WECA COMMITTEE AND JOINT COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the latest Forward Plans for the WECA Committee and the Joint Committee and were invited to comment thereon.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Manager reported that the latest forward plans had been published shortly before Christmas 2018 and listed items coming through until May 2019, although the longer-term plan would be that potential items be published on the Forward Plan up to a year in advance. A report detailing proposed changes to WECA's Constitution would be brought forward at the May 2019 meeting.</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would receive a detailed briefing on the Business Plan and an informal briefing on the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) at future meetings.</p> <p>The Committee also requested that a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny meeting be scheduled prior to the WECA Committee and Joint Committee in May 2019. It was noted that the WECA Committee and Joint Committee would still be holding their meetings on 5 April 2019 although the usual rules around holding meetings in the pre-election period would apply. An informal meeting that was scheduled for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee prior to this could be changed into a formal meeting if needed in order to pre-Scrutinise items that may come forward to that meeting.</p> <p>Committee members asked that a briefing or an item be brought to a future meeting on the Cultural Strategy.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) That following consideration of the Forward Plan, the Committee's identification of forward agenda plan items be included as future agenda items for more detailed consideration, including progress against the 2018-19 Combined Authority Business Plan and the 2019-20 Business Plan at the next meeting; (2) That the Forward Plan continue to be considered as a standing item on each WECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda with a view to assisting the Committee in developing their own forward agenda plan on an ongoing basis.

INVESTMENT PRIORITISATION UPDATE

Malcolm Coe, Director of Investment and Corporate Services gave a presentation on the Investment Priorities and Budget. The presentation covered the following issues:

- Funding streams available across the region;
- Recommended approach to prioritisation & financial planning;
- Considerations for 2019/20 revenue budget;

It was explained that although the headline figure for the WECA Investment Fund was £30m per year for the next thirty years, there were a number of other different funding streams that had different constraints and conditions on how they could be used. Therefore it was important to optimise a joined-up approach.

It was also explained that the first government 'gateway' funding point for the investment fund was in 2020 when the Authority would have to show how this fund would be used otherwise there could be a danger of the fund not continuing beyond the first five years. The Authority would need to provide a narrative for:

- (a) What outcomes the Authority was aiming to achieve;
- (b) What schemes the Authority was planning to deliver;
- (c) How funding would be aligned to meet the Authority's objectives.

Although the narrative was important, it was also vital that the Authority showed that the money was committed to priority schemes. The Investment Fund was half revenue and half capital but could not be used for the support of day-to-day operations. The pace of commitment and spend is also crucial as the amounts would not increase with inflation so would lose value over a period of time.

The Local Growth Fund had to be spent by March 2021 although there had been slippage (a similar trend was happening throughout the UK).

The long term financial planning approach would be applied to the Investment Fund (30 years) and the Transforming Cities Fund (5 years). There were a number of key regional and national strategies and policies that would influence the financial programming, including:

- Joint Spatial Plan;
- Joint Local Transport Plan;
- Local Industrial Strategy;
- Skills Strategy.

It was noted that the Energy Strategy was not included in this list.

An investment programme would be published by the Authority in May 2019 where greater detail showing the region's main priorities would be available.

The presentation slides were made available on the Authority's website following the meeting.

Resolved:

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to raise any issues at the meeting of the 1 February 2019 WECA Committee.

WEST OF ENGLAND ENERGY STRATEGY

Cllr Pearce declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to this item as a Non-Executive Director at Bristol Energy.

Helen Edelstyn, Strategy and Policy, gave a presentation updating the Committee on the draft Energy Strategy for the West of England. The Energy Strategy would be submitted to the Joint Committee on 1 February 2019. The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be in attendance at that meeting.

The Climate Change Act 2008 committed the United Kingdom to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 as compared to 1990 levels. Clean growth was at the heart of the Authority's operating framework and emerging Local Industrial Strategy. The Government had committed £50,000 to the Local Enterprise Partnership in order to facilitate the development of a local Energy Strategy. The aims were as follows:

To provide local leadership and influence:

- towards an integrated, smart, resilient and secure energy system;
- towards greater affordability (to alleviate fuel poverty and increase business productivity);
- to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (meeting legally binding national targets)

Success would mean cleaner air, lower energy bills, lower emissions and greater economic security. The current position in the West of England was very similar to the national situation, with 85% of energy provided from fossil fuel sources, and 15% from clean sources (including nuclear). However, 70% of energy was used for transport and heat and many local buildings could be more energy efficient. Although cars were becoming more efficient and producing fewer emissions individually the growth of car use meant that emissions from cars was on the rise.

The Low Carbon sector in the West of England currently employed over 19,000 people, generating £2.4 billion, more than any other English region.

It was explained that the Energy Strategy set out a direction of travel for energy use in the West of England. The Joint Committee would be asked to approve the proposed basis of a West of England Energy Strategy at its meeting on 1 February 2019.

The following comments were made by Members of the Committee:

- There were a number of comments made about the substance of the strategy, as some members felt it was difficult to scrutinise in its current form, although the work to date had been positive. As presented, the document was more of a high-level "strategic framework" document and it was felt that this should be recognised Bristol City Council had signed off its targets and these needed to be integrated. It was noted that the work that had been done to date was a direction of travel that other strategies could work from;
- Three incinerators had recently been built in the Avonmouth area and the plan was that the energy provided would serve 50,000 new homes. In terms of transport a modal shift would be needed to cut down commuting. The South West was a windy place but the Bristol Airport did not like new wind turbines being built as these could interfere with its radar systems. However, the airport, which itself had growth plans, did not count towards emissions as aviation is measured internationally. However, were the expansion plans approved it would generate more journeys to and from the

airport by car. Helen Edelstyn stated that as the incinerators weren't functional yet they had not been captured in the figures but would be when they were online. The wind power was something for the individual local authorities to consider as part of their local plans.

- It was unclear as to what Bristol City Council's ongoing work on the City Leap prospectus had been factored in. The region should be seeking the highest possible standards in relation to carbon emissions in line with the ambitious targets that have already been set by authorities locally. It was confirmed this had been included in the evidence gathering and would help with the conclusions;
- In response to a question it was confirmed that in order to meet any requirements it would be necessary to close any skills gaps, such as in the construction field;
- It would be important to support businesses to be more energy efficient and provide a link to the Industrial Strategy;
- A comment was made about the planned petrol/diesel vehicle ban in 2040 (2035 in Scotland). It was confirmed that this would be taken into account in the projections. As the document would be covering a long period of time ambitions would likely change over the period. Local and national ambitions were included;
- It was also noted that 150,000 homes were not on the gas network so renewable heat opportunities could be explored but another challenge would be to get the homes on the gas network off of that network;
- It was questioned how improving our homes would fit into the overall objectives;
- It was asked whether the item could be a regular item on this Committee's agenda;

The slides were made available on the Authority's website following the meeting.

It was explained that the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy had asked that a framework be in place by the end of 2018 but had granted an extension to February. A more detailed action plan document would be developed.

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INFORMATION ITEM - METROBUS PROGRAMME UPDATE

The WECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report providing an update on the progress of the Metrobus programme, provided by the Metrobus Integration Manager, Bristol City Council. The Committee were asked to note the update.

The report stated that the Metrobus programme had been delivered as three separate, jointly-promoted projects with a different local authority taking the lead for the delivery of each. South Gloucestershire Council was the lead authority for the North Fringe to Hengrove (NFH) project, Bristol City Council was the lead for the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads (AVTM) project and North Somerset the lead for the South Bristol Link (SBL) project.

Latest updates on the progress of the services was provided in the report.

The following comments were received:

- There was disappointment that there was no service performance data provided in the report;
- There was disagreement that no service provider could be found for the South Bristol Link Road service. However, while the situation remained a ticketing system that meant a passenger could travel the same route on different services should be explored;
- Members also asked how comments could be fed back to the Board, so that buses needn't get held up in congested traffic. There would be no rapid transport system possible otherwise unless priority was given to these services;

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INFORMATION ITEM - METROWEST UPDATE

The WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee received a report on the progress of Metrowest Phase 1 and Phase 2. The GRIP 4 cost estimate for Phase 2 was now due at the end of February 2019.

The following comments were received:

- A question was raised as to whether a Park & Ride scheme around the preferred location for Henbury Station would resolve the drainage issues;
- It was also queried whether a decision on the Yate turnback would have a bearing on the viability of Phase 2. It was noted that a decision on this would be needed by summer 2019;
- An important element was the decision on Filton Arena and whether the Park & Ride would cope with the trains bringing people back from events. If they could leave in both directions it would reduce congestion. A request to challenge the docks on the need for coal conveyors was raised although it was noted that a small amount was still brought into the docks.

The Chair agreed to amalgamate the comments made and as well as an update on the Metrowest line and update Committee members as appropriate.