

WEST OF ENGLAND

Combined Authority

BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET
BRISTOL
SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

**Minutes of the first meeting of the
West of England Combined Authority
1st March 2017**

1	<p>EVACUATION PROCEDURE</p> <p>Cllr Matthew Riddle, Leader of South Gloucestershire Council, welcomed all attendees to the first meeting of the West of England Combined Authority and made a safety announcement in relation to the fire/emergency evacuation procedure.</p> <p>Introductions were made to the other committee members, Cllr Tim Warren, Leader of Bath & North East Somerset Council, and Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol.</p> <p>Stephen Robertson, Chair of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership was welcomed to the meeting.</p>
2	<p>ELECTION OF CHAIR</p> <p>John McCormack, Monitoring Officer at South Gloucestershire Council, requested nominations to the interim chair of the West of England Combined Authority Committee</p> <p>Mayor Rees nominated Cllr Riddle</p> <p>Cllr Warren seconded the nomination</p> <p>The motion was carried</p>
2A	<p>ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR</p> <p>Cllr Riddle took the Chair and nominated Mayor Rees for interim vice chair of the West of England Combined Authority Committee</p> <p>Cllr Warren seconded the nomination</p> <p>The motion was carried</p>
3	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence</p>
4	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest</p>
5	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>As this was the first meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Committee there were no minutes.</p>
6	<p>CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the West of England Combined Authority and confirmed that the meeting was being webcast live, with a recording to be made available on the website after the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair made the following comments before inviting each member to speak:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This first meeting of the West of England Combined Authority marks a key stage in implementing our Devolution Deal with Government. It builds on many years of good partnership working in the West of England and brings decision-making powers on issues previously held in Westminster closer to our local communities. He assured

the meeting that there is no desire to re-create the old County of Avon, but instead a willingness to work together on important issues that cross council boundaries, while at the same time keeping our own identities.

- Whilst North Somerset Council decided not to proceed with the Deal at this time the constitution we will be considering today includes formal arrangements to support continued and effective partnership with them to realise the best outcomes for the whole of the West of England. The Chair extended thanks to the Leader of North Somerset Council, Cllr Nigel Ashton, for his continued support as we have progressed to implement our deal.
- The Chair also formally noted thanks to Members from Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire Councils, many in attendance, who continue to support and challenge to ensure we realise the best outcomes for the West of England.

Cllr Tim Warren made the following comments:

- The West of England Combined is the only place outside the South East that generates money for the UK. All residents and businesses should be proud. However, growth has stalled due to lack of infrastructure. This is an opportunity to unblock some of this.
- This deal is one of the best in the country, unlocks a billion pounds of funding for the area and provides the opportunity to address the lack of affordable and available housing in the region. We are privileged to be here at this time and are working well together to pursue shared aspirations for the region without party divides.
- Thanks to all involved in setting this up, including the former Mayor of Bristol, previous Local Authority Chief Executives and former Chairs of the LEP. We look forward to being joined by the new West of England Mayor.

Mayor Rees made the following comments:

- We welcome good working relationships that allow us to genuinely deliver. We have many things that pull us together locally - congestion, home building, a strong national and international voice.
- We need to focus on delivery and a key priority will be homes for people, and transport, ensuring that economic growth is inclusive and no-one left behind. There is lots of work to do.
- Thanks to the team working on this. Whilst we may not all have unqualified love with the model we recognise the reality that the government needed this structure and that this gives us a national voice. Our job is to make this structure work.

Stephen Robertson made the following comments:

- These are exciting times for the West of England. Leaders are keen to hear voice of business, a central part of creating inclusive growth.
- The LEP recognises the quality of the deal negotiated, one of the best in the country, bringing new money and powers to unlock infrastructure, connectivity, skills and opportunities for people in our region and their children.
- It is great to see the inward investment already attracted by Invest in Bristol & Bath, and the support available for small businesses through growth hub and the further opportunities that this deal will bring. This is a big step forward for the region.

7	<p>ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC (Including questions that have been submitted)</p> <p>Two questions were submitted by members of the public which were circulated to the Members in advance of the meeting. The Chair directed that a written response be provided on the website and the questions and answers be attached to the minutes of the meeting.</p>
	<p>Public Speakers</p> <p>There were two public speakers.</p> <p>1. Cllr Lin Patterson</p> <p>Cllr Lin Patterson made a statement regarding the reinstatement of the cut 6/7 bus route in Bath in a future bus franchise package.</p> <p>She explained to the meeting she was there to represent a campaign called save our 6/7 bus. 2400 people had signed a petition and 120 attended a public meeting in Bath in September. This service connected people from Fairfield Park, a densely populated area with higher than average number of elderly people to local shopping centre and community facilities in Larkhall at bottom of the hill. B&NES removed the subsidy supporting the bus route which no longer runs. The decision by B&NES was based on a survey that she finds to be faulty. She stated that only 8% of the survey was done at times people would normally use the service to get to the shops so she considers the figures to be distorted and unreliable. She requested that the devolved authority make up a franchised package for transport to subsidise less profitable routes from profitable routes. She asked the members to remember the 6/7 bus route in NE Bath and include it in a franchise package to reinstate the route and reconnect he communities.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Cllr Patterson and noted her comments.</p> <p>2. David Redgewell TSSA, Bus Users UK</p> <p>David Redgewell submitted the following statement to the meeting:</p> <p>We, following our meeting at Swindon on Saturday with Railfuture and Bus Users UK are concerned over the following issues:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Buses Bill and the Combined Authorities powers over the 1985 Act to support bus services and cross boundary issues with North Somerset Council which would require a permit system if the buses were franchised or special regulations for advanced quality partnerships. 2) With Rail powers we need to include over the Portishead line and Henbury loop and existing station improvements on the current rail network to Bristol, Bath and Weston-Super-Mare including access to the disabled schemes and DIA's through a memorandum of understanding with ORR and Network Rail. 3) Cross boundary rail services with Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. 4) Budget transfer supported bus budgets from Bristol City Council, BANES and South Gloucestershire Council and the combined authorities powers over bus services let by Bristol City Council on the 7th March 2017.

5) integrated bus, rail and ferry ticketing.

6) maintenance of bus shelters and bus stations.

In addition David Redgewell made the following comments at the meeting:

This mayoral combined authority will be judged on delivery of good transport. He said we are 20 years behind Manchester.

The busses bill is in the Commons today. He wants to set up a franchise in the combined authority area. He considers this will not happen without North Somerset, otherwise we have a challenge and decisions would go to the Secretary of State.

Busses are at the heart of what we do. There are cuts coming in Bristol, this means we need to increase usage.

He welcomes £30m a year, but he feels this does not give much (he stated this equates to 4 railway stations). He felt this was not that big in terms of what Manchester gets in terms of other money.

He stated the mayor will be judged on whether he delivers a better bus service and park and rides, Portishead railway - which he feels will require North Somerset engagement, and passenger trains on Henbury Loop. Without transport and ability to move, reduce congestion and get people to jobs we will not be able to move.

He said the biggest issue for new mayor is to look at transport and deliver on it, including electrification.

He concluded by saying this is not just about infrastructure but how we get better integrated public transport including smart ticketing.

Cllr Warren commented that there would be further opportunity to bid for additional transport funds.

The Chair thanked David Redgewell and noted his comments.

8 PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

9 BUSINESS REPORT

The Chair introduced the business report, highlighting the key recommendations which will allow for the adoption of the constitution, the appointment of constituent council members to the committees and the boards shown in the constitution, and the appointment of substitute members to act in our absence.

He highlighted the requirement to appoint the 3 statutory officers on an interim basis and delegation to the Head of Paid Service to appoint a statutory Scrutiny Officer.

He also referred to the request in the report to give delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to enter into any agreements required to ensure the continued provision of the

services that are subject to the West of England Combined Authority statutory order, and delegated authority to the Chief Financial Officer to make reasonable arrangements for the proper administration of our financial affairs.

He concluded by confirming that the meetings will be held in public on a 8 weekly cycle and calendar of meetings will be agreed in due course.

The Chair moved the recommendations in the report.
Cllr Tim Warren seconded the recommendations and noted that in relation to the Joint Strategic Plan that all four authorities (including North Somerset) work together on this and there will need to be transitional arrangements made.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried unanimously.

Resolved:

The West of England Combined Authority will:-

1. Adopt the Constitution set out in Appendix A and request that the constituent councils provide nominations from within its membership for two substitute members as required by the WECA Order
2.
 - (i) Agree to the appointment of the statutory officers referred to in paragraph 4.1 on an interim basis,
 - (ii) Agree to give delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to appoint an interim Deputy Monitoring Officer
 - (iii) Agree that the WECA adopts the Standards Procedures of South Gloucestershire Council for an interim period, and
 - (iv) Agree to give delegated authority to the Interim Chief Executive to appoint a Scrutiny Officer.
 - (v) Agree to provide appropriate indemnities to the officers referred to in this recommendation
3.
 - (i) Agree to give effect to the Overview and Scrutiny and Audit Order 2017 and to request that the constituent councils provide nominations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee from within their membership on a politically balanced basis as set out in paragraph 6.3 and 6.4.
 - (ii) Agree to the establishment of 3 Advisory Boards for Skills, Infrastructure and Business and request that the constituent councils agree to the participation of their relevant portfolio holders/members in the boards.
 - (iii) Agree to the establishment of a joint committee between the constituent councils of the WECA and North Somerset Council to comprise the Mayor of the WECA, the Mayor of Bristol and the Leaders of Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils and to request that the constituent councils agree to participation in the joint committee.
 - (iv) Agree to the establishment of a voluntary joint scrutiny arrangement between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee established under the Order mentioned in recommendation 2(ii) above and North Somerset Council and to request that North Somerset Council provides nominations from within its membership as set out in

	<p>paragraph 6.9.</p> <p>(v) Agree that the Monitoring Officer writes to the councils (as appropriate) in relation to Recommendations 1 (nomination of two substitute members), 3(i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) to formally seek the nominations</p> <p>4. Instruct the Monitoring Officer to prepare a Calendar of Meetings for 2017 / 18 for approval at a future meeting of the WECA</p> <p>5. Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Head of Paid Service to make minor amendments and any changes to the constitution that come about by operation of law</p> <p>6. Agree to delegate to the Monitoring Officer the authority to enter in to any agreements, including any inter-authority agreements as are required to ensure all services which become the responsibility of the WECA can continue to operate on behalf of the WECA in accordance with current arrangements until the end of the 2017/18 financial year</p> <p>7. Agree to delegate to the Chief Financial Officer authority to make all reasonable appointments and arrangements to ensure the proper administration of the WECA's financial affairs including (but not limited to) the approval of the WECA Banker, insurance arrangements, approval of B&NES as financial services provider including the provision of internal audit and such other appointments and arrangement as are required to ensure proper financial administration</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2017</p> <p>The Chair introduced this report which provides the details of the lending limits and authorised lending institutions which the West of England Combined Authority will be able to invest any cash it may hold for cash flow purposes including cash not immediately required to meet expenditure commitments.</p> <p>He noted that this Strategy is based on advice from our professional Treasury Advisers (Arlingclose) and our interim Chief Financial Officer. In the current sustained low interest rate environment cash flow investment provides very little opportunity to generate financial returns for West of England Combined Authority. The overriding objective of the Strategy is the protection of the West of England Combined Authority's cash by restricting investment to highly rated institutions.</p> <p>The Chair moved the recommendations</p> <p>Mayor Rees seconded.</p> <p>On being put to the vote the motion was carried unanimously</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>The West of England Combined Authority will:-</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement at Appendix 1. 2. Approve the Investment Strategy as detailed in Appendix 2. 3. Agree that for transitional purposes, the Treasury Management Strategy and the Investment Strategy may be applied with immediate effect to support any investment of cash balances which may be required in the current financial year (2016/17) 4. Note that the relevant Budget proposals for 2017/18 will be based upon the assumptions and indicators set out in these strategies.
11	<p>PROCUREMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS</p> <p>The Chair introduced this report which sets out the background and statutory procedure to the procurement route for the appointment of our external auditors.</p> <p>He noted that using the PSAA is a proven approach to deliver value for money procurement of our external auditor and will be used by the majority of local authorities.</p> <p>The Chair moved the recommendations Cllr Warren seconded</p> <p>On being put to the vote the motion was carried unanimously</p> <p>Resolved: The West of England Combined Authority will:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the use of Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA Ltd) to manage the procurement process for the appointment of External Auditors to the WECA.
12	<p>ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT</p> <p>There were no other items of urgent business.</p>
	<p>The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 2pm</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Chair</p>

West of England Combined Authority Committee Meeting Wednesday 1st March 2017

Public Questions and Answers

Cllr Donald Alexander

Chair, would the committee please consider following the example of West Midlands Combined Authority by offering the TUC representation on the Board? Thanks, Cllr. Don Alexander

Answer:

The West Midlands Order is different to the West of England Order which does not allow for union representation on the West of England Combined Authority. Going forward we will be looking into ways to ensure greater participation and engagement with the West of England Combined Authority.

Paul Gould

I understand that the elected mayor will be permitted to impose an infrastructure supplement worth 2 pence in the pound on the rateable value of a property and a business rates supplement worth the same amount. Is this the full extent of sums that can be raised from council tax payers or can additional sums be raised to fund the work of the Combined Authority? It would also be interesting to know more details about the remuneration (i.e. salary and expenses) that the elected mayor and cabinet members will receive.

Answer:

The Mayor will be able to propose a Supplementary Business Rate of up to 2p per £ of rateable value in agreement with local business for infrastructure schemes. Full details of this scheme and how it will operate have yet to be set out by Government and no such proposals are permitted for this first year 2017/18. The WECA is not legally permitted at this time to raise any council tax precept. The allowance for the Mayor will be subject to an assessment of an Independent Remuneration Panel and has yet to be determined. The other members of the WECA will not receive any additional allowances.