

ITEM: 13

REPORT TO: WECA COMMITTEE

DATE: 28th JUNE 2017

**REPORT TITLE: TO NOTE DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR
DEVELOPMENT OF A BUS STRATEGY AND KEY
ROUTE NETWORK**

AUTHOR: BASIL JACKSON, INTERIM HEAD OF TRANSPORT

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To set out terms of reference for the preparation of a Bus Strategy and a Key Route Network (KRN). These documents will become important components of the emerging Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP).
- 1.2 Board members should note that a paper detailing terms of reference for the preparation of the third Joint Local Transport Plan, covering the WECA area and North Somerset Council, is being considered by Joint Committee. Funding options related to the Bus Strategy and the KRN will apply to the Combined Authority administrative area only. However, Bus Strategy and KRN policies will be relevant to the region as whole and, as such, will be contained within the JLTP.

2 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Background

- 2.1 The formation of the Combined Authority confirmed WECA as the Local Transport Authority for its area with a number of powers pertaining to the provision of local bus services. These include powers and duties contained within parts 3 and 4 of the Transport Act 1985, and Part 2 of the Transport Act 2000 (as amended), which can be summarised as:
 - duty to produce a Local Transport Plan;
 - production of a Bus Strategy;
 - rights to franchise local bus services within its area, subject to the completion of the process set out in the Bus Services Act 2017;
 - powers to enter into quality bus partnerships (QBP) and enhanced partnerships;

- responsibility for the provision of bus information and the production of a bus information strategy;
- role of Travel Concession Authority;
- financial powers to enable the funding of community transport; and
- powers to support bus services (this power is held jointly with constituent councils).

2.2 Powers associated with the Combined Authority are in two parts; namely, Mayoral powers and Combined Authority powers:

Mayoral powers

The directly elected Mayor of the West of England will:

- a. Take responsibility for a devolved and consolidated local transport budget, with a multi-year settlement. Functions are devolved to the Combined Authority accordingly, to be exercised by the Mayor.
- b. Have the ability to franchise bus services in the city region, This will support the Combined Authority's ambitions in delivering a high quality bus network and in enhancing the local bus offer. This includes the delivery of smart and integrated ticketing, local branding and provision of minimum standards across the network.
- c. Take responsibility for a Key Route Network of local roads, which will be defined and agreed by the constituent local authorities and will be managed and maintained at a city region level. The management, maintenance and improvement of the Key Route Network will be supported by devolving all relevant local roads maintenance funding as part of the Mayor's consolidated, multi-year local transport budget. This will also support the delivery of a single asset management plan for the local authority network across the Combined Authority area, and streamlined contractual and delivery arrangements.

Combined Authority powers

In addition and as part of the Devolution deal:

- a. Appropriate local transport functions has been conferred to the Combined Authority (to be exercised by the Mayor). The Combined Authority has become a new single policy body to determine the Mayor's transport plans and the delivery of an integrated public transport network for the city region.
- b. To support better integration between local and national networks, the government and the West of England Combined Authority will enter into joint working arrangements with Highways England and Network Rail on operations, maintenance and local investment through a new Memorandum of Understanding.
- c. The Combined Authority will bring forward proposals that would enable the Mayor and Combined Authority to implement Clean Air Zones in the Combined Authority area. This will help achieve Air Quality Plan objectives at both the national and local level.

2.3 A meeting of the West of England Combined Authority on 15th March considered a report on Transport Delivery and agreed the WECA transport functions as summarised above and set out in Appendix A.

2.4 It is important to note that, whilst the Combined Authority takes on the role of Transport Authority for the WECA region, Constituent Authorities remain the highway authority. Thus a fully collaborative approach is required between constituent councils and WECA in order

to maximise benefits and build on the success of the previous transport related strategies. It is envisaged that the KRN will invariably cover policies for which the Combined Authority is not responsible (e.g. parking, bus lane enforcement and road maintenance); therefore, it will also be necessary to consider the role of sign-off within the unitary councils as part of the programme of work.

Bus Strategy Terms of Reference

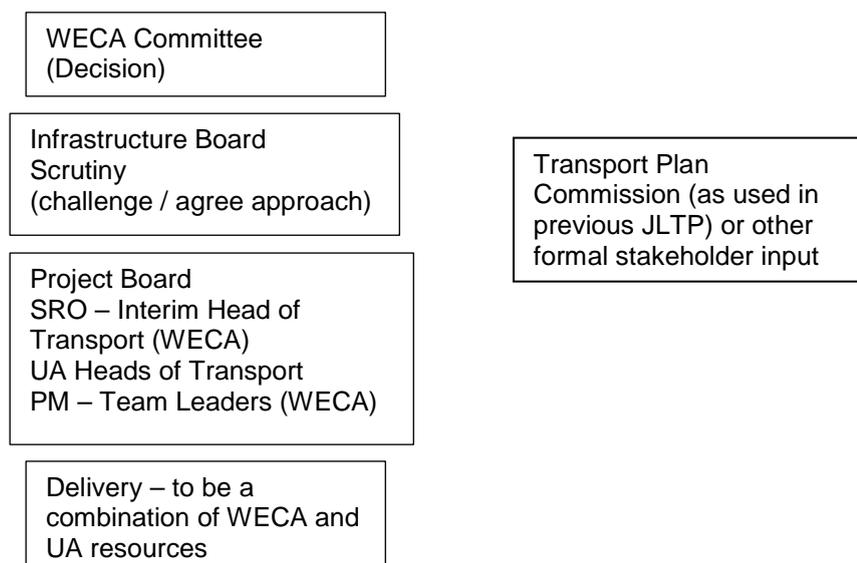
- 2.5 Funding related to the Bus Strategy will apply to the Combined Authority administrative area only. However, Bus Strategy policies will be relevant to the region as whole and, as such, will be contained within the JLTP.
- 2.6 Working with Constituent Authorities, advice will be sought from the Infrastructure Advisory Board on the scope of the Bus Strategy, which will include:
1. a summary of current issues on local bus services, their form and function, where performance is satisfactory and what needs to change (Phase 1 work);
 2. a network-wide review of the local bus network, its core corridors and destinations, and recommendations on where this should be changed (if at all) to deliver a better network for the passenger and meet the transport and economic objectives of the West of England (Phase 2 work or later);
 3. a transparent assessment of options to improve the quality and provision of local bus services, including status quo, enhanced partnerships and franchising options; (Phase 2 work or later)
 4. a framework for the consistent appraisal of subsidised bus routes and how spend should be prioritised (Phase 2 work or later).
- 2.7 A phased approach to the development of a Bus Strategy is envisaged, which takes into account available resources within WECA and the unitary authorities. Bullet point 1 above will form phase 1. Bullets 2, 3 and 4 will be undertaken in later phases. To date, resource has yet to be identified for these later phases.
- 2.8 Timescales set out in paragraph 2.14 are based on resources required for developing an overview Bus Strategy document (i.e. bullet point 1 above).

Key Route Network Terms of Reference

- 2.9 Funding related to the KRN will apply to the Combined Authority administrative area only. However, Bus Strategy and KRN policies will be relevant to the region as whole and, as such, will be contained within the JLTP. For example, it is recognised that infrastructure (such as motorways) despite being located outside the WECA area, are a key assets for the region. Their importance would therefore be recognised in policy terms, but any funding from WECA resources connected to improvements would be restricted to the Combined Authority area.
- 2.10 Working with Constituent Authorities, advice will be sought from the Infrastructure Advisory Board on the scope of a KRN and its objectives. An indicative map of the draft network will also be drawn up. Development work for the KRN will take into account:
1. summary of current issues and the scope of work required to undertake the development of the full KRN (Phase 1 work);

2. a high level review of potential options and impacts of the KRN to understand the potential budget implications for 18/19 (Phase 1 work);
 3. improvements needed to unlock economic growth and housing delivery and tackle important pinch-points (Phase 2 work or later);
 4. the resilience of the KRN in supporting the Joint Spatial Plan (Phase 2 work or later);
 5. routes identified in the emerging JLTP that are vital to connecting people to jobs (e.g. proposed new routes to enable better movement around the region including freight movement) (Phase 2 work or later).
- 2.11 Timescales set out in paragraph 2.14 below are based on resources required to develop an overview KRN document. Bullet points 1 and 2 above will form phase 1. Bullets 3, 4 and 5 will be undertaken in later phases. To date, resource is yet to be identified for these later phases. Therefore, as suggested for the Bus Strategy, a phased approach to the development of a KRN document is envisaged, which takes into account available resources within WECA and the unitary authorities. The overview document will include the summary of current issues and the scope of work required to undertake the development of the full KRN document to be completed from Summer 2018.

GOVERNANCE



- 2.12 In developing the Bus Strategy and KRN for sign-off, Committee will be supported by the Infrastructure Advisory Board and Scrutiny Committee. Officers will form a project board (as detailed in the diagram above) to oversee all aspects of this work and ensure its timely delivery.

DRAFT TIMESCALES

- 2.14 It is anticipated that the delivery of all documents detailed above will be undertaken in tandem. Draft timescales for key milestones are as follows:
- May to June 2017 - Scope/Terms of Reference drawn up for Bus Strategy and Key Route Network (KRN)
 - January to March 2018 - Consultation on outline Bus Strategy.

- July 2018 onwards – delivery of work packages set out in the Bus Strategy and KRN, including the undertaking of a bus network review and assessment of operating framework options as included in the powers provided to the combined authority.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 No formal consultation has been undertaken at this stage. Timescales for a future statutory consultation process is provided in the report.

4 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 N/A. The production of a Local Transport Plan (and a number of its daughter documents) is a statutory requirement.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT/ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Responsibilities in relation to the Bus Strategy fall to the West of England Combined Authority. To not deliver Bus Strategy is thus likely to be frowned upon by Government. Failure to deliver a KRN would be a lost opportunity to use Mayoral powers in collaboration with highway authorities and maximise the efficiency with which key corridors in the region might operate.

6 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTIES

- 6.1 Feedback will be sought from affected communities and statutory consultees to meet the Combined Authority's duties under the Equality Act 2010 as the JLTP and its daughter documents are developed. This includes a 3 month consultation period; the results of which will be used in an equality impact assessment.

7 ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 All economic impacts resulting from this work will be considered during the JLTP's development and EIAs developed as appropriate.

8 FINANCE IMPLICATION

- 8.1 Work is currently underway to identify the amount of resource and type of skills required for timely delivery of the Bus Strategy and KRN work-streams.

Advice given by: Tim Richens, Interim Section 151 Officer, WECA

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 *None arising from this report.*

10 LAND/PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 *None arising from this report.*

11 HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Work is currently underway to identify the amount of resource and type of skills required for timely delivery of the Bus Strategy and KRN work-streams.

Advice given by: William Harding, Interim HR Director, WECA

12 RECOMMENDATION

- 12.1 Committee is asked to note the terms of reference, including proposed governance arrangements, as detailed in this paper.

Report Author: Basil Jackson (Interim Head of Transport, WECA)

West of England Combined Authority Contact: Basil Jackson

Background Documents

15th March 2017 West of England Combined Authority, Agenda Item 8, Transport Delivery

APPENDIX A – SUMMARY OF WECA’s TRANSPORT POWERS

Duty to produce a Local Transport Plan

The Local Transport Act 2008 places a statutory duty on WECA as the Local Transport Authority, to produce a Local Transport Plan for its area. This should contain a long term transport strategy and a short term implementation plan with proposals for delivery.

The West of England already has a history of colligate working on such policies. The current LTP is the second such joint plan and was approved in 2011 by the four West of England authorities, including North Somerset Council. The current JLTP covers the years 2011 to 2026. The West of England Mayor has powers to commence the update of a joint LTP for the WECA, but can agree an updated JLTP with North Somerset Council. Board members should note that a paper covering terms of reference for the preparation of the third Joint Local Transport Plan (including its links with the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) policies) covering the WECA area and North Somerset Council is being considered by Joint Committee

Bus Strategy

The Transport Act 2000 requires the Combined Authority to consult on and produce a Bus Strategy, setting out the requirements for bus provision in the region. The West of England Combined Authority has a number of powers pertaining to the provision of local bus services. These include powers and duties contained within parts 3 and 4 of the Transport Act 1985, and Part 2 of the Transport Act 2000 (as amended), which can be summarised as:

- duty to produce a bus strategy;
- rights to franchise local bus services within its area, subject to the completion of the process set out in the Bus Services Act 2017;
- role of Travel Concession Authority;
- financial powers to enable the funding of community transport; and
- powers to support bus services (this power is held jointly with constituent councils).

Provision of bus services

WECA has joint powers with Constituent Authorities to support bus services, including formulating policies for the provision of socially necessary services. This means that both West of England Combined Authority and the Constituent Councils can use the relevant powers in the Transport Act 1985, with the approval of the other organisation, but cannot use the powers unilaterally. Nevertheless, the nature and role of these services will need to be considered through the development of the Bus Strategy which is a West of England Combined Authority responsibility to progress. For the current financial year, funding is being passported back to the three constituent councils in the West of England Combined Authority area. A decision on any change to this situation from 2018/19 has yet to be made.

Bus Partnerships

Upon its creation, West of England Combined Authority has the powers available in Part 2 of the Transport Act 2000 to enter into bus partnership arrangements within the West of England Combined Authority area. Prior to the West of England Mayor taking up office, Members of the West of England Joint Transport Board (JTB) agreed to the making of a Quality Partnership Scheme for the network of MetroBus services across the three authorities delivering the MetroBus schemes. Going forward, the West of England Combined Authority has the responsibility for finalising this under the new legislation as an Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme and for developing future bus partnerships for services within its area (where necessary in combination with North Somerset Council).

Bus information

West of England Combined Authority is now responsible for the production of a Bus Information Strategy and the provision of bus information. Real Time Information (RTI) and the TravelWest website are currently managed by Bristol City Council (BCC) on behalf of 4 councils (including North Somerset). To date, Bristol City Council has led on the procurement of a new RTI contract on behalf of the 4 councils. Production and updating of roadside timetable displays, data verification, local management of Traveline (SWPTI) and publicity leaflets for contracted bus services are functions currently being carried out by the constituent councils.

Key Route Network

Among the transport powers devolved to the Mayor of West of England Combined Authority is the identification and maintenance of a Key Route Network (KRN). Subject to agreement, the KRN will serve the main strategic demand flows of people and freight across the region and provide connections to the national strategic road network. It may also serve large local flows which use main roads to provide good access for local businesses reliant on road based transport.

Closely linked to the KRN will be the new Joint Transport Asset Management Plan. The asset management plan will help authorities in the region to understand the condition of its asset (roads, footways, bridges etc) in detail. This will mean that service improvements can be accurately targeted and the timing of maintenance planned such that further deterioration is minimised. As such, funding requests can be supported with hard facts.