

**West of England Partnership
Joint Scrutiny Committee**

Scrutiny Theme 1: Ensuring a high quality sustainable environment

Purpose of report

1. To outline how this objective is being addressed by the Partnership's work and seek the views of members.

Background

2. Committee members will recall that three Scrutiny Themes were agreed at their last meeting:
 - Ensuring a high quality, sustainable environment
 - Strengthening the sub-regional economy
 - Tackling disadvantage.

This report seeks to outline the issues being addressed under the first of these themes.

Adapting to climate change

3. **Adapting to climate change** is less an independent issue and more a cross-cutting consideration in various aspects of the Partnership's work. It requires the Partnership to focus on actions that have the most impact and to ensure that related actions are properly joined up to maximise their effectiveness. It is being built into our normal planning and risk management processes.
4. When considering the contribution that the Partnership can make to **the reduction of carbon emissions**, we need to focus on appropriate areas of activity. In summary the main areas are:
 - **Reducing dependence on the car** and encouraging the use of public transport, walking and cycling
 - In planning mixed and sustainable communities, encouraging the use of good design, sustainable building materials and methods and adapting local energy and waste management solutions
 - Encouraging businesses to take appropriate measures themselves and helping other businesses and individuals to support these aims.
5. More specifically in delivering the Multi-Area Agreement, the authorities have agreed to work with the government to achieve targets set out under the Climate Change Act and comprehensively to assess the risks and opportunities provided by climate change. This includes responding to priority issues such as flood risk, embedding climate change in the plans and decision making of public sector organisations and ensuring sustainable economic growth.

Improving access

6. Our existing Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP2) and our Regional Funding Advice (RFA2) major transport schemes aim to improve access and **reduce congestion** by **discouraging dependence on use of the car**; securing investment in public transport to **improve** both bus and **rail infrastructure**; securing investment in and promoting walking and cycling; and acting with bus and train operators to improve service frequencies and reliability.
7. This year will see the development of Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (JLTP3), with a strategy for the West of England based on the five key goals from the Department for Transport's "Delivering a Sustainable Transport Strategy" (DaSTS):
 - **Reduce carbon emissions**
 - Support economic growth
 - Promote equality of opportunity
 - Contribute to better safety, security and health
 - Improve quality of life and a healthy natural environment.

Building successful mixed and sustainable communities

8. **Ensuring a high quality sustainable environment** is being addressed by the Core Strategies within the Local Development Frameworks being developed by each authority.
9. The overarching aim of **building mixed and sustainable communities** includes a number of sub-themes which will be addressed when either building new communities or regenerating old ones:
 - Building enough homes to meet the needs of existing and future residents and continuing to plan to meet projected medium and long term needs
 - Accommodating the housing needs of existing and future residents in relation to size, type, price and tenure, including affordable and supported housing
 - Securing developments which provide a mix of uses to support jobs, as well as homes, and reduce the need to travel
 - Prioritising development locations which contribute to urban regeneration and intensification, whilst ensuring timely joint spatial and infrastructure planning of required urban extensions
 - Engaging stakeholders, local communities and developers in planning and delivering well designed, mixed use and sustainable new and existing communities
 - Ensuring new development is designed and constructed to the highest quality in terms of appearance and sustainability, minimising environmental impact and delivering successful neighbourhoods
 - With the aim of addressing and reducing the effects of climate change, ensuring that new buildings are: efficient in the use of energy and water; provide for waste recycling and minimisation; and can be used flexibly in their lifetimes
 - Securing the investment required for economic, social, leisure and environmental infrastructure to create successful mixed and sustainable communities with access to local services and facilities, encouraging health

and the establishment of a strong social base and contributing to the distinctiveness and vibrancy of places and communities

- Ensuring that in new developments and areas of regeneration the risk of flooding is adequately addressed
- **Maintaining and enhancing the natural and built environment** and heritage as far as possible.

10. These issues are being addressed at sub-regional level through:

- The delivery of the Multi-Area Agreement (MAA), which commits to and identifies actions on **adapting to climate change**; and
- The production of a Joint Investment and Delivery Plan underpinned by a commitment to jobs and services, as a result of the Single Conversation to deliver mixed and sustainable communities that enjoy better access.

Environmental issues are also being addressed through the Joint Core Waste Strategy.

Recommendation

That members give their views

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