

West of England Partnership
14 January 2010

Partnership Conference

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Board of the outcomes from the conference held in November.

Conference programme and report

2. The Partnership Conference, Meeting the Challenges – Achieving our Ambitions, was held at @t Bristol on Friday 27 November. 96 delegates representing 45 different organisations attended, in addition to staff from the Partnership Office.
3. The main elements of the day were:
 - Keynote speech by Martin Boddy of the University of the West of England
 - Participation in two workshops, chosen from:
 - Delivering a Sustainable Transport System
 - Investing in Skills and Employment
 - Building Communities of the Future
 - Three panel discussions in which members of the panel, who were decision makers in each of the three theme areas, were asked to respond to the main issues which had arisen in the workshops.
4. The Programme for the day is attached in Appendix 1 and the Conference Report attached in Appendix 2 summarises the presentations, discussions and outcomes.

Recommendation

That the Board notes the conference outcomes which will be taken into account in the future work of the Partnership.

Appendix 1: Conference Programme

Appendix 2: Conference Report

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Meeting the Challenges - Achieving our Ambitions

Conference Programme - Friday 27 November 2009 – @t Bristol

9.00 **Registration & Coffee**

9.25 **Welcome and Introduction**

Cllr John Calway, Partnership Chair and Leader, South Gloucestershire Council

9.30 **Keynote speaker**

Martin Boddy, Associate Dean and Professor of Urban and Regional Studies, University of West of England

10.00 **Workshops 1 and 2**

Delivering a Sustainable Transport System

Challenges - Minimising the impact of transport on the environment; reducing carbon emissions

- Supporting economic growth, tackling congestion and improving journey times

- Promoting use of alternatives to the car and encouraging sustainable travel behaviour

- Improving health and access to employment and local services

- Improving safety for all road users

Presentations by:

- Barbara Davies, Head of Joint Transport, West of England Partnership
- Justin Davies, Managing Director, First Bristol, Somerset & Avon
- Sharon Daly, Transport Consultant, Steer Davies Gleave

Investing in Skills & Employment

Challenges - Supporting the economic upturn

- Tackling worklessness

- Maximising the economic participation of young people, in response to the slowdown in growth of the working age population

- Driving up higher-level skills to meet increasing employer demand

Presentations by:

- David Draycott, Director, West of England Employment and Skills Board
- Tracy Hughes, Head of Delivery Strategy, Department of Work & Pensions
- Malcolm Gillespie, Regional Director SW, Learning and Skills Council

Building Communities of the Future

- Challenges - Meeting the current shortages and rising need for more homes**
- **Maintaining and improving our natural and built environment and heritage**
 - **Planning for further growth within a framework that ensures that development is mixed and sustainable**

Presentations by:

- Paul Lavelle, Enabling Advisor, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
- David Warburton, Area Director, Homes and Communities Agency
- Terry Wagstaff, Chief Executive, West of England Partnership

12.45 **Lunch**

1.40 **Plenary** (with tea served during the afternoon)

Delivering a Sustainable Transport System

- Cllr Charles Gerrish, Chair: Joint Transport Committee, West of England Partnership
- Sonia Mills, Chief Executive, North Bristol NHS Trust
- Peter Jackson, Director of Planning, Transportation & Strategic Environment, South Gloucestershire Council

Investing in Skills & Employment

- Cllr Barbara Janke, Leader, Bristol City Council
- Stephen Harrison, Chair: West of England Skills and Employment Board, Regional Chairman, PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Amanda Deeks, Chief Executive, South Gloucestershire Council

Building Communities of the Future

- Cllr Matthew Riddle, Chair: Planning Housing & Communities Board, West of England Partnership
- Tom King, Assistant Director: Planning and Housing, Government Office of South West
- Zoe Willcox, Service Director: Planning & Sustainable Development, Bristol City Council

4.00 **Closing Remarks**

Terry Wagstaff, Chief Executive, West of England Partnership

4.10 **Close**

Meeting the Challenges - Achieving our Ambitions

Friday 27 November 2009

Conference Report



All presentations, handouts and briefing papers are available on the West of England Partnership's website: www.westofengland.org

Attendees

A total of 93 delegates attended the conference representing 45 different organisations:

African and Caribbean Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise (ACCCE)	Highways Agency
Architecture Centre, Bristol	Joint Local Access Forum
Atkins	Learning and Skills Council (LSC)
Bath & North East Somerset Council	North Bristol NHS Trust
Bristol City College	North Somerset Council
Bristol City Council	Science City
Bristol International Airport	Sevenside Community Rail Partnership
Business Link	Somer Housing Group
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)	South Gloucestershire Council
Campaign for Better Transport	South West Trade Union Council
Care Forum	South West Transport Network
Chair, Employment & Skills Board	Sovereign Housing Group
City of Bath College	Steer Davies Gleave
Campaign to Protect Rural England - Avonside	Sustrans (sustainable transport charity)
Destination Bristol	South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)	Travelwatch South West
Environment Agency	University of Bristol
First Group	University of the West of England
Forum for the Future	Voscur (Council for Voluntary Service)
Friends of Bristol Suburban Railways	West at Work
Friends of the Earth	West of England Employment & Skills Board
Government Office for the South West (GOSW)	Weston College
Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	

There were also 3 young people from the Bristol area and 14 members of staff from the West of England Partnership Office in attendance.

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome and introduction from Cllr John Calway, Partnership Chair and Leader, South Gloucestershire Council.

Keynote speaker

The opening address was by Professor Martin Boddy, Associate Dean and Professor of Urban and Regional Studies at the University of the West of England. His presentation, *West of England: Ambition and Opportunity* reflected on the Partnership's work to date, the environment in which the Partnership operates and the challenges which he thought faced it and the sub-region.

Professor Boddy began by reminding the audience of the recent economic successes of the sub-region, which enjoyed a high quality of life, and included the second most sustainable city in the country. He said the sub-region benefited from 'agglomeration economies', arising from the large, diverse and interconnected economy. However, it experienced congestion, a growing population, high priced housing and problems of housing availability in places where people wanted to live and employment land availability where businesses wanted to locate.

How growth was managed would be critical to realising benefits, avoiding the potential costs and meeting targets on sustainability and carbon reduction. Much had been achieved, including the Multi-Area Agreement, but he said that serious concerns remained, particularly because the effects of the recession could lead to a surge in house prices. Past growth had depended on attracting people and jobs into the sub-region.

It was vital that housing, employment and infrastructure planning was integrated and co-ordinated. The supply of employment land could constrain growth, due to a limited supply of the right type of land where business wanted to locate. Planning policies should be reviewed to provide for employment land and premises where business wanted to locate, integrated with the provision of housing, transport and other amenities. New funding mechanisms, such as Accelerated Development Zones, should be used to close the infrastructure gap. There was also a need for a more positive approach to attracting inward investment.

An efficient and effective public transport system was vital to addressing congestion and Professor Boddy considered that Bristol was significantly behind other Core Cities in the provision and mechanisms for provision of integrated public transport. He highlighted the seven priority schemes in the Multi-Area Agreement, but was concerned that implementation of the schemes was 'glacially slow' and thought that demand management and congestion charging would become necessary, however unpopular with individual road users.

High level skills were the key to building competitiveness in the knowledge-based economy. The West of England needed, through a dialogue with employers, to retain the students studying at the four universities and to pay attention to the skills of its resident workforce.

It was important that the West of England remained an attractive and affordable place to live, with the right kind of housing in the right places to meet demand. He thought urban extensions were the way to do this.

However, persistent worklessness and deprivation also needed to be overcome. Much effort had been spent trying to do this, but it had been ineffective. Professor Boddy thought that a long term focus on pre-school, early years and attitudes in the home was necessary to address inequalities.

He reminded the conference that growth wasn't everything – although it was 'almost everything'. Well-being didn't rise with rising levels of GDP. It was also crucial to move to a low carbon, sustainable future.

He outlined the impacts of the recession, but thought little could be done at a sub-regional level to impact on the course of recovery. However, he thought that timescales for strategic planning should be 25-30 years, well beyond those of the ups and downs of the economy at large.

Professor Boddy highlighted findings that superior performance of mainland European city-regions had been attributed in some accounts to more effective governance at city-region scale than in the UK generally. He linked governance arrangements with economic integration, which was evident in the West of England, and wondered if the current levels of collaboration through the Partnership were fit for purpose. The existence of four authorities, he suggested, involved some fragmentation and 'transaction costs'.

He suggested a number of ways the Partnership might do better, including demonstrating the wider benefits of being part of the West of England, using more effective ways of evaluating wider benefits of projects and programmes and carrying out 'Treasury Green Book' style appraisals.

He concluded by summarising key aspects looking to the future:

- Building a high-skill, knowledge-based economy
- Maximising big-city benefits and urban agglomeration
- Providing efficient and effective transport provision
- Ensuring that the provision of housing and employment land was responsive to demand
- Having a long term vision, for 30-40 years, not just a list of projects
- Having governance structures fit for purpose, that fit the scale and scope of the West of England as a fully functioning city-region.

But he recognised some real challenges:

- The possibility of ten years of public expenditure constraint
- The potential abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy and housing requirements, and increasing political reluctance to back significant new housing development, particularly on greenfield sites
- The 'real possibility of a decade of urban decline' if the economic context worsened
- The very real danger that the West of England failed to address the fundamentals needed for future resilience – on planning, housing, transport, inwards investment, employment land supply, even skills, with the next few years being critical.

Workshops 1 and 2

Delivering a Sustainable Transport System

Speakers:

- **Barbara Davies**, Head of Joint Transport, West of England Partnership, set out the transport challenges facing the West of England. She outlined the successes of the four councils in working together, including the Joint Local Transport Plan 2006 to 2011 and the Regional Funding Allocation 2 list of major scheme bids. She mentioned the importance of cycling and rail. Looking ahead there was the replacement Joint Local Transport Plan 3 2011 to 2026 and the new www.travelplus.org.uk website.
- **Justin Davies**, Managing Director, First Bristol, Somerset & Avon, stressed the importance of partnership working as the only way forward, valuing and raising the quality of staff and building for success. He questioned whether the current bus network was fit for purpose, highlighting the challenges faced from housing and job growth and the 35% of bus revenue that now came from concessions.
- **Sharon Daly**, Transport Consultant, Steer Davies Gleave focused on the proposals for bus based rapid transit in the West of England, the largest bus based public transport scheme outside of London. Delivery of the network would be phased, but it would be important to maintain the vision in the face of complex and difficult decisions. Ultimately the aim was for it to become second nature to say “I’ll take the rapid transit this morning.”

Challenges:

- Minimising the impact of transport on the environment; reducing carbon emissions
- Supporting economic growth, tackling congestion and improving journey times
- Promoting use of alternatives to the car and encouraging sustainable travel behaviour
- Improving health and access to employment and local services
- Improving safety for all road users.

Pete Davis, West of England Partnership, facilitated the workshops. The issues raised were:

- The use of public transport and having a network fit for purpose
- Raising awareness of transport: talk it up don’t knock it, take pride in it and make it a priority
- Be more visionary and creative in producing business cases for schemes
- Rapid transit should be extended to Cribbs Causeway
- Developing transport skills with scope to influence businesses and colleges
- Promoting smartcards to speed up buses and integrate with different modes and operators; and addressing ticketing, fares and frequencies
- The importance of responding to Network Rail’s Great Western Mainline Route Utilisation Strategy

- The level of subsidy required to support rapid transit evening and Sunday bus services.
- Young people being a huge market for ticketing and services, and for the promotion of a non-car culture
- Interchanges - Bristol Temple Meads, rail and bus, park and ride, non-car users and rural areas
- Taxis and community transport
- Spare capacity in the rail network, but a need for rail rolling stock and funding
- Multi-Area Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding with rail industry and transfer of potential rail powers
- High profile needed for public transport with 'wow factor' for new buses
- Rural transport and the challenge of providing commercial services and the need to consult with non-bus users
- Working with health partners on access to health facilities and active travel to improve personal health.

Investing in Skills & Employment

Speakers:

- **David Draycott**, West of England Partnership, described how improving competitiveness meant improving skills, and that adding to skills levels was a key lever to increasing GVA and the wealth creating potential of the sub-region. David highlighted some of the main challenges faced by the Partnership and outlined key targets to be achieved.
- **Tracy Hughes**, Head of Delivery Strategy for the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP), presented an overview of the Welfare Reform and its key principles and also the Commissioning Strategy of DWP. Tracey also described the different levels of activity associated with the localisation of employment programmes and outlined current issues and next steps.
- **Malcolm Gillespie**, Regional Director SW, Learning and Skills Council, highlighted key features of the Government's skills policy and help available for businesses and individuals in the current economic climate. He stressed the need for flexibility to meet the specific needs of the local economy. The West of England partners would need to work increasingly closely to ensure that the region maximises the impact of public funding on key local priorities. Also discussed was the pressure on funding, which was likely to impact skills providers in 2010/11 and beyond. This would reinforce the need for prioritisation and collaboration and required more employers to make real commitment to investing in the skills of their people.

Challenges:

- Supporting the economic upturn
- Tackling worklessness
- Maximising the economic participation of young people, in response to the slowdown in growth of the working age population
- Driving up higher-level skills to meet increasing employer demand.

The issues raised in the Workshops were:

- Priority for public expenditure – what should it be?
- How to encourage the private sector to invest more
- Localisation; agenda should be sizeable; why isn't the Department of Work & Pensions more courageous?
- Commission at National level; Multi-Area Agreement (MAA)/SCP boundaries
- How does the West of England Employment and Skills Board plan to engage businesses that are not part of the Board?
- The Board must be decision making body; it needs a process for recruiting Board members
- National organisations coming in and squeezing local organisations that have a track record
- MAAs currently challenge the government to be more joined up; there is a lack of joined up thinking and efficiency
- Push hard for the MAA to be driving vehicle
- Confidence building, learning and vocational courses lost to academic courses with more written work; we need a broad, balanced approach to lifelong learning
- "Section 4" – Chief Executive of Skills Funding Agency to account for way skills funding is allocated
- Post 19 skills/education training have to take account of the Partnership's plan & priorities
- NVQ is good model from skills point of view; K.S.A – knowledge / skills / attitude
- Consistency of delivery
- Engaging small employers to release skills
- Integrated approach to dealing with disadvantaged families.

Building Communities of the Future

Speakers:

- **Paul Lavelle**, Enabling Advisor, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, described the elements that together comprise a sustainable city and the contribution of sub-regional planning in creating sustainable communities. He highlighted the geographical scale of functional urban areas and the importance of connectivity to creating sustainable places within functional urban areas. The approach used in developing a sub-regional strategy for Cambridge was outlined.
- **David Warburton**, Area Director, Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) described the emphasis and approach underlying the work of the HCA. He advised that the HCA was seeking to create sustainable communities through a 'place based' approach. The Single Conversation provided the framework for securing this outcome through continuous engagement with a wide range of partners to ensure a comprehensive approach to supporting development.
- **Terry Wagstaff**, Chief Executive, West of England Partnership, described the role and objectives of the Partnership in building communities, the key challenges arising,

the Partnership's view of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and work on the Delivery Plan.

Challenges:

- Meeting the current shortages of and rising need for more homes
- Maintaining and improving our natural and built environment and heritage
- Planning for further growth within a framework that ensures that development is mixed and sustainable.

Workshops:

Laura Grady, West of England Partnership facilitated both workshops. The issues raised were:

- The need to work in partnership with developers in order to minimise conflict and facilitate the development process.
- The importance of green infrastructure to securing a wide range of objectives was not recognised; this was needed to secure the skills required to identify and deliver green infrastructure benefits.
- The need to ensure that communities have access to a range of modes of travel.
- Planning for the future needed to take account of a wide range of locational needs; it should not simply reflect business location requirements, but acknowledge regeneration potential and the needs of deprived communities; tensions between the needs of the 'market' and the needs of local communities needed to be reconciled.
- The need to improve the access of deprived communities to growth sectors, areas of jobs growth and prosperity.
- Uncertainties arising with the RSS were leading to uncertainty about the development strategy.
- Local communities should determine local development strategies.
- Past trends should not determine strategies for the future; past mistakes or unwelcome outcomes should not be replicated over the future.
- A long-term vision of the future for the West of England was needed. This should offer a view about how the area may change over the next 30 or 50 years; key changes needed to be identified.
- Flood zones and the infrastructure requirements arising should be recognised in preparing a long-term vision or strategy for the future of the sub-region.
- Planning for growth needs to be balanced with dealing with climate change.
- The local community needed to become engaged with the strategic, sub-regional planning issues in order to secure greater recognition of the strategic agenda and outcomes that reflected more balanced consideration of local and sub-regional issues.
- There was a need to ensure opportunity for the expansion of local businesses and thereby jobs for local residents, relocations did not create many jobs for local residents with the jobs available being retained by the existing workforce.
- Employers should be given more encouragement to prepare green travel plans.
- Greater clarity was needed about the meaning of 'mixed communities'.
- Better signposting of pedestrian routes was required.
- How can unwelcome development be prevented? How could we ensure that new development supported the delivery of sustainable buildings and communities?

- How could we secure job led development, especially when we depended on residential development to fund infrastructure? How could we attract business investment to locations where the communities needed it?
- Falling land values as a result of the recession were having a significant impact on development viability. How should we tackle this?
- How could we ensure that future development is of an appropriate standard and design?
- Securing sustainable development over the future would require considerable public support either directly through grants or through the sale of publicly owned land at low prices.
- Planning for future communities must take account of the needs of existing communities and the impacts of growth and new development on these communities.
- New communities should offer a wide mix of tenures including innovative arrangements to broaden access to housing.
- How could we secure self-contained market towns?
- New jobs needed to be located where people lived.
- The new Environment Agency building being developed in Bristol met the highest building standards and demonstrated that such developments could be secured.
- New governance arrangements were needed for the West of England that acknowledged the functionality of the sub-region; this might be a unified, 'single tier' authority.

Afternoon plenary

Please note that not all the issues raised in the morning were presented to the panels. The afternoon presenters focused on the key issues, but some panels ran out of time.

Delivering a Sustainable Transport System

Panel:

- Cllr Charles Gerrish, Chair: Joint Transport Committee, West of England Partnership
- Sonia Mills, Chief Executive, North Bristol NHS Trust
- Peter Jackson, Director of Planning, Transportation & Strategic Environment, South Gloucestershire Council

Pete Davis from the Partnership's Joint Transport Team introduced the summary of issues raised in the morning workshops. The responses from the Panel to these issues (and others raised during the discussion) were:

1. **Public transport network**

- The bus network may not be **fit for purpose** because it was established in the 1950s and 1960s and there had been continuous change since then. We needed to look at how employers could contribute to getting the improvements required to get the network up to date, possibly by groups of employers enhancing public services. Bristol City Council was keen to review the bus routes.
- There were initiatives underway at regional and authority level in relation to **ticketing**, and agreement that a smart card should be brought forward as soon as possible, although there were difficulties to overcome in getting the 'back office' payments exchange to operate.
- **Community transport** had been a recent success story, since it was more demand-responsive and operated where demand was low, such as in rural areas. Local authorities were looking at extending services with a flexible timetable that could respond to requests.

Other issues raised:

- There was concern that roads in new developments were not being designed with buses in mind.
- The quality of the buses was considered a problem on some routes; in particular, buses that did not have low floors and there was a suggestion that procurement should include a requirement for low floor buses. It was noted that local authorities faced a dilemma when an operator withdrew a service. Their priority was to get a service reinstated, and the quality of the buses was secondary.

2. **Encouraging young people to use public transport**

- This was a big issue, particularly in rural areas. From January, South Gloucestershire Council would be piloting a 14 – 19 concessionary travel scheme on buses, initially in 2 areas, but in the rest of South Gloucestershire from April.

- The level of interest in bus travel from young people was low and there was a need to change the culture to ensure that the car was not the default method of travel. There was concern that rural areas would be excluded from the scheme because of the lack of public transport. In BANES a Youth Bank assisted with funding travel to activities.
- We should aim to encourage young people to use healthier methods of transport, eg cycling. The way that new communities were structured would be important to encourage this.
- The trial was generally welcomed, but the aim should be one scheme across the whole area, preferably at regional level.

3. **Positive Culture**

- We needed move to a position where public transport was the first choice, the 'norm'.
- There was significant investment in the West of England and, although we had some way to go, there had been huge achievements in recent years. Getting there involved a series of steps and we all had a role in explaining this.
- The long timescales involved presented a problem.
- We needed to use different forms of communicating, eg to young people, both about the network and how to use it.

Other issues raised:

- Bath was a walkable city but parking often blocked pavements and there were no decent maps with the best walking routes. It was very expensive to repair pavements/curbs in Bath because of heritage requirements for particular materials. Plans were well advanced to making Bath traffic free from 10am to 6pm.

Investing in Skills & Employment

Panel:

- Cllr Barbara Janke, Leader, Bristol City Council
- Stephen Harrison, Chair, West of England Skills and Employment Board, Regional Chairman, PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Amanda Deeks, Chief Executive, South Gloucestershire Council

Keith Elliott from City of Bristol College introduced the summary of issues raised in the morning workshops. The responses from Panel were:

1. **Greater engagement with the private sector**

- Greater interaction with the private sector was the *raison d'être* of the Employment and Skills Board, although public sector and third sector employers also needed to be represented. Achievement would be important to keep them involved.
- The sub-region needed to be seen to be speaking with one voice.
- Local authorities should lead by example and needed to be joined up themselves as organisations, given that they were in contact with other organisations for several different reasons.

2. **Tackling worklessness**

- There was a need to focus on the growth sectors, e.g. digital solutions/inclusion, and look for new opportunities, e.g. green jobs, taking forward peak oil recommendations.
- We must look at the skills needed for tomorrow, as well as today.
- It is important that the right skills were provided, e.g. by offering young people more advanced ICT skills.
- Employers would locate where the skills were available. The West of England was a great place to live and work and, with well developed higher and further education sectors, there were lots of opportunities.
- In Bristol there was a demand-led group which had worked consistently with the council.
- There was a need for better joining up, particularly of local authorities' actions, as skills were only aspect of worklessness.
- Actions at the sub-regional level needed to complement those taken by the local authorities and by others at local authority level.
- The Skills Board could help the 'bounce back'.

Other issues:

- Some groups were locked into worklessness and would not have a 'bounce back'. There needed to be better ways of working with people; for example, the Black Chamber provided mentors for people who had no family experience of setting up businesses. This would help people create jobs for the people themselves and, in the future, for others.
- There was still a problem of jobs being available in the North Fringe and a high level of worklessness high in South Bristol. However, it was noted that South Bristol and Weston were being promoted as employment locations and the Rapid Transit route from Hengrove Park to the North Fringe was one of the transport schemes being progressed.
- There was concern that local authority procurement only took account of price. It was explained that wider issues, such as social benefits and issues related to climate change were taken account of.

3. **Local commissioning to tackle worklessness**

- Local commissioning was an important objective for the Employment and Skills Board, with co-commissioning for what was required in this sub-region.
- The more personal and more complex the service, the more locally it should be provided.
- There were many procurement opportunities and the sub-region needed to be joined up.

Other issues:

- A procurement process report had highlighted the fact that procurement cannot set out how many organisations were procured with or specify, for example, how many were Black led. This was an issue for small organisations; the sub-region needed to lead by example.

Building Communities of the Future

Panel:

- Cllr Matthew Riddle, Chair, Planning Housing & Communities Board, West of England Partnership
- Tom King, Assistant Director, Planning and Housing, Government Office of South West
- Zoe Willcox, Service Director, Planning & Sustainable Development, Bristol City Council

Laura Grady outlined a summary of issues raised from the morning workshops. The responses from Panel were:

1. Long term Vision

- Should this be 30 or 50 years?
- Whatever the outcome of the Regional Spatial Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal, the evidence and drivers would stay and have to be addressed for successful communities:
 - i. We must be inclusive and start with people;
 - ii. The Vision must be understandable;
 - iii. We must reconcile the market and business location requirements with the needs of the community;
 - iv. The relationship between the West of England and the wider world must be addressed.
- There was a clear vision for the West of England and a shared understanding, even if the scope was still to be determined. The delay in the Regional Spatial Strategy was not a reason to stop moving forward.
- We needed to be trying to get government investment.
- The climate change/carbon agenda was very important; most of the housing in 40 to 50 years would be ones which had already been built.
- We needed to grow without damage to the environment.
- Through the Single Conversation there would be co-ordinated prioritisation to move things forward.

Other issues:

- Given the involvement of the Homes and Communities Agency and Urban Splash, what would the West of England Partnership do to unlock Bath Western Riverside? It was pointed out that the procurement of this was the subject of a complicated case before the European Commission and the Homes and Communities Agency had to take the unresolved issues into account. Urban Splash was prioritised as a bid to Kick Start.

2. Securing public engagement

- The bigger the area, the harder it was to engage with people.
- It took 10 years' work by the local authorities to establish spatial options for Cambridge. Involvement needed to be long-term and continuous.
- Growth and changing places was not currently an issue in schools, but it needed to be.
- More local authority members needed to be engaged with the West of England Partnership agenda and the profile of the Partnership needed to be raised, so

that members were aware of it and of the issues that the Partnership was consulting on.

- The Partnership needed to be better linked to the 'bottom up' approaches and be more meaningful at local level.
- The Partnership needed to be honest, up-front and clear on what the issues were. However, these were not just decisions for the Partnership and the local authorities.

Other issues:

- A lot of the language used by the Partnership is incomprehensible and abstract. The Partnership does not name places in case of problems and this led to disillusionment. Consultation needed to happen early on.

3. **Reconciling market & business location requirements with the need of the community**

- This was dealt with by sound planning guidance, through the Local Development Frameworks and the Single Conversation.

Closing remarks

Terry Wagstaff thanked everyone involved in running the conference. He said that it had identified the complexity of the issues, which the sub-region faced.

Martin Boddy had been encouraging by indicating that the Partnership was pursuing the right agenda and had also identified challenges, with his views on Leadership and the basis of delivery, which the Partnership needed to reflect upon.

Terry Wagstaff thought that there were few surprises in the issues which had been raised in the workshops and the afternoon plenary, but wanted to highlight some specific points:

- The sub-region's transport agenda and investment plans
- The work planned on tackling skills needs
- The need to maintain the £600m public investment currently in the programme and attract private investment
- Concern about how we worked with developers and ensured that the agreed plans were implemented, so the community was protected.

He thought that the broader challenges were:

- Is our ambition strong enough?
- Is our leadership strong enough?
- To provide a clearer and more specific vision
- To deliver outcomes in the short and medium term.

To do this the Partnership would need to work smarter and join up agendas. It would be important to distinguish between the joint work necessary and that of the individual authorities.