



# West of England Partnership

**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**



**North  
Somerset  
COUNCIL**

**South Gloucestershire  
Council**

**Minutes of meeting of the**

## **Joint Scrutiny Committee**

**Friday 11 December 2009, 10am, The Campus, Weston-super-Mare**

### **Present**

#### **Bath & North East Somerset Council**

CLlr Caroline Roberts  
CLlr Adrian Inker  
(Substitute for CLlr Eleanor Jackson)

#### **Bristol City Council**

CLlr Mark Bradshaw  
CLlr Barbara Lewis  
CLlr Steve Comer

#### **North Somerset Council**

CLlr Tony Moulin  
CLlr David Pasley  
CLlr Clive Webb

#### **South Gloucestershire Council**

CLlr Pat Hockey  
CLlr Ian Smith

### **In attendance**

Colin Molton	Homes and Communities Agency
David Warburton	Homes and Communities Agency
Ian Knight	Regional Development Agency
Terry Wagstaff	West of England Partnership
Barbara Davies	West of England Partnership
Pete Davis	West of England Partnership
Penny Bell	West of England Partnership

### **1. Apologies for absence**

CLlr Eleanor Jackson, Bath & North East Somerset Council  
CLlr Martin Veal, Bath & North East Somerset Council  
CLlr Geoff King, South Gloucestershire Council

David Trigwell, Bath & North East Somerset Council  
Tracey Morgan, Bristol City Council

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. Member and Public Forum

Roger English of Portishead Railway Group was present at the meeting to present statements on behalf of Campaign for Better Transport. The first statement included a series of comments and recommendations regarding the response to the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS), statements 2 and 3 were regarding Rapid Transit and rail issues and the final statement included a series of comments regarding the Multi-Area Agreement (MAA).

Martin Garrett, representing Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance, presented a statement on the potential powers available under the Local Transport Act 2008, and recommended that the Partnership considered the opportunities that could be available if an Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) was to be established.

Members noted and considered the statements made, and discussion ensued regarding the Local Transport Act and the benefits of establishing an ITA:

- Terry Wagstaff informed members that the potential establishment of an ITA was considered recently at a meeting of the Joint Transport Executive Committee and a vote was taken not to proceed with an ITA at the present time unless circumstances changed. Instead, a review of existing powers was to be carried out which would explore the most effective way to exploit existing powers that were available. A report on the outcome of the review would be taken to the Joint Transport Executive Committee at its meeting on 4 February 2010.
- Terry Wagstaff highlighted current initiatives that were taking place at present, including regional ticketing options, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Highways Agency and the MoU currently in development with Network Rail and the rail industry.
- Councillor Bradshaw felt that a review of transport powers should be used to identify the gap between what the Partnership can presently do, and what the Partnership aspired to do. Terry Wagstaff said that the review would identify gaps.
- Councillor Pasley commented that the benefits of an ITA would not be as great for residents of North Somerset compared to the benefits to city residents in Bristol and Bath, and that it therefore seemed unfair to impose an additional tax upon people who were not likely to receive the same level of benefits.
- Councillor Lewis requested to see a copy of the draft MoU with the rail industry before it was signed. The MoU was still in the development stage but it was agreed that a copy of the current version would be sent to members of the Committee.
- Councillor Hockey commented on the significance of knowing how other ITAs in the country were performing and what achievements they had made, as this would provide key evidence on whether ITAs were effective or not.
- Councillor Comer felt that opportunities may be missed if left too long, and that public perception in the area was that local authorities were not taking public transport seriously.

- Councillor Moulin felt that the public were frustrated with the present situation and that it was important to get planners and developers on board in order to take things forward. Being 'integrated' was key and it may be effective to rename the Joint Transport Executive Committee the 'Integrated Transport Committee'.
- Councillor Roberts questioned the procedure of the overview role of the Committee and whether it should make recommendations to the Partnership, and also raised questions about fare setting and the reasons why fares appeared to be cheaper in other areas.

**Councillor Bradshaw summarised the discussion as follows:**

- 1. A copy of the draft MoU with the rail industry should be provided to members of the Joint Scrutiny Committee for comments, before the final sign-off.**
- 2. A copy of the report which goes to the Joint Transport Executive Committee on the review of transport powers should be provided to members of the Joint Scrutiny Committee.**
- 3. There was a need to relay to the Partnership that the Joint Scrutiny Committee wished to be an active partner and have a clear overview role, and that papers on current issues needed to be provided in order to achieve this.**

#### **4. Minutes of meeting held on 30 October 2009**

Councillor Pasley informed members that his comment from the last meeting had been omitted from the minutes. During the discussion regarding Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (JLTP3), Councillor Pasley had mentioned the benefits of switching off traffic lights in terms of reducing traffic congestion. North Somerset Council had trialled this scheme with great success and it was important to consider innovation in traffic management when considering the details of JLTP3.

The minutes were agreed a true record of the meeting subject to the above addition.

#### **5. Matters arising from the minutes**

##### **i. Network Rail representation at a future meeting**

Terry Wagstaff informed members that Network Rail had been invited to the 22 January meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Committee but were unable to attend due to commitments with the RUS timetable. However, a representative of Network Rail was due to attend the meeting of Joint Transport Executive Committee on 18 March 2010 and members were welcome to attend that meeting to observe and raise issues. The presentation by Network Rail given to the Joint Transport Executive Committee on 12 November was to be circulated to members.

##### **ii. Opportunities for joint procurement by the four local authorities**

Terry Wagstaff had made enquiries about collaboration between authorities on joint procurement at the request of the Joint Committee. He reported some discussions had been held but no formal strategic arrangements concluded. He also reminded members that strategic procurement in general was not a function of the West of England Partnership, and therefore of the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

It was recommended that this be pursued within members' own individual authorities.

iii. **Exchange of work programme with Joint Health Committee**

Penny Bell informed members that the Joint Health Committee was not a standing Committee and did not have a work programme, therefore exchange of work programmes with this Committee was not appropriate. Councillor Bradshaw would contact the Chair of the Joint Health Committee to investigate any scope for future joint working.

iv. **Local Transport Act**

See item 3 for details of discussion and outcomes on this subject.

## 6. **Single Conversation**

Colin Molton and David Warburton of Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Ian Knight of Regional Development Agency (RDA) were present at the meeting to provide an overview of and updates on the Single Conversation.

Colin Molton, Regional Director of HCA South West, gave a presentation on the background to the Single Conversation which can be found at:

<http://www.westofengland.org/media/169552/item%206%20single%20conv%20hca.pdf>

Ian Knight provided an overview of the RDA perspective and stressed that the RDA was committed to working in partnership with the HCA on the Single Conversation process. The RDA had 3 priorities which were:

1. The West of England – this area was a high priority on the Single Conversation agenda
2. To increase business productivity in the region
3. Working and investing to support a low carbon economy.

The RDA had an ongoing business planning process and the Single Conversation would feature heavily in making future Corporate Plan arrangements.

In response to the presentations, the following points were made:

- Councillor Bradshaw commented on the issues of deprivation and asked how these fit into the Single Conversation. Colin Molton stated that issues regarding deprivation needed to be looked at and that regeneration and renewal was needed in key places. Ian Knight referred to the RDA policy approach to respond to areas of high multiple deprivation and also the need to support economic development and to meet the needs of businesses.
- Councillor Webb was pleased with the RDA's priority to support a low carbon economy and asked whether creation of new homes or provision of new jobs was the stronger priority. Ian Knight stated that it was vital to provide appropriate housing to support the economy and that the recession shouldn't divert focus from the need for more homes. Colin Molton commented that homes wouldn't be built where they were not wanted and that it was important to drive the local employment base first. David Warburton commented on the aspiration to achieve

mixed tenure and mixed-use neighbourhoods, and the creation of sustainable communities.

- Councillor Comer welcomed the commitment to mixed-use developments but was concerned about the slow-down in the private housing sector and the impacts this had on the housing market, and particularly affordable housing supply. Councillor Comer recommended looking at research from other countries regarding Community Land Trusts (CLTs) and how they can be used to 'lock-in' affordability for future generations.
- Colin Molton informed members that affordable housing was a very important issue, especially as the South West was the only region with above average house prices and below average incomes. The problems with the private housing sector were being addressed by contributing more mainstream affordable housing grant into schemes to raise the percentage of affordable housing on sites. There were also 2 rounds of 'Kickstart' money being announced next week, which should further assist to get sites in development again. Efforts were also being made at a national level to develop a toolkit for CLTs so there was scope to explore this further in the future.
- Ian Knight commented on the stability of the German housing market throughout the recession and commented that there were certainly lessons to be learnt from such countries.
- Councillor Lewis referred to the desire to attract businesses and employers to South Bristol and Weston-super-Mare and asked how it was planned to stimulate this, considering that businesses had no desire to locate in these areas. Ian Knight informed members that research work was being done with employers and that main issues for consideration included a lack of access into the area, the quality of the local workforce and perception of the area in general. There was a matrix of issues to tackle, which required a co-ordinated response from all partners.
- Councillor Hockey asked at what stage the HCA came in to assist with funding. Colin Molton stated that the HCA only gets involved in developments where there was a real need for investment and there was likely to be market failure, as it was important to have as much private sector investment as possible. A new Economic Viability model was currently being trialled in the West of England.
- Councillor Moulin commented on how Germany had ridden the storm of the recession well so far and how it had a high percentage of manufacturing industries and a better mix of employment than the UK. There was a need to understand how businesses grew to have better chances of retaining them.
- Councillor Roberts asked about the relationship between Germany and the UK in terms of home ownership and also the proximity of housing to work sites, for example hospitals. Councillor Roberts also brought attention to the problem with large, empty offices that were no longer required due to increases in flexible working and home working. Colin Molton acknowledged the need to look at office sites and commented that there were some good examples such as Lakeshore in South Bristol, where offices had been converted into apartments.

Terry Wagstaff presented a map that illustrated where the priority locations were for jobs and homes that required public investment. The map can be viewed at:

<http://www.westofengland.org/meetings/joint-scrutiny-committee/11-december-2009>

- Local Authority and Partnership Officers had been working with the HCA and RDA to identify the priority locations. The officer conclusions were based on each authorities' Core Strategies and discussions with members of each authority. The majority of sites being considered were on previously developed land, but at least one urban extension was also being considered in the Single Conversation.
- Regional negotiations would be taking place between January and March 2010, with progress being reported to the Planning, Housing and Communities Board on 17 December 2009, to the Leaders meeting on 18 December 2009 and to the Board on 14 January 2010. A report would be made to Council Cabinets.
- Councillor Pasley felt that there was the opportunity to exploit the tourism market in areas such as Weston-super-Mare to attract employers and visitors to the area.
- Councillor Comer recommended that the reference to Westmoreland House in the priority development locations table should read ' Stokes Croft'.

## **7. Major Transport Schemes**

Pete Davis gave a presentation that provided an update on progress and issues with the major transport schemes. The presentation could be found at:

<http://www.westofengland.org/meetings/joint-scrutiny-committee/11-december-2009>

- Councillor Bradshaw thanked Pete Davis for his presentation. The 'Travel+' branding was a very important way of communicating the Partnership's work and Councillor Bradshaw asked how this logo was being used on the ground. Barbara Davies informed members that officers were currently exploring how best to use the 'Travel+' branding and that it was hoped to include the logo more widely on infrastructure starting with the Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN) scheme. It was also hoped that the logo would be used on signs and boards when new schemes were under construction.
- Councillor Roberts expressed concern regarding the provision of real-time information with GBBN, and also the reduction in bus services in Bath and other areas. There was a growing need to look at alternative operators but would they have the technology and timetables that were required? Pete Davis informed members that any other bus operators would need to have the correct equipment on their buses. Although delayed, progress was being made with the joint procurement of real-time information on buses, which was expected to be completed early next year.
- Councillor Lewis highlighted concern regarding the Callington Road link that had potential for a Rapid Transit route, because Cycling City was interested in the same route, and asked what measures were in place to safeguard it for future Rapid Transit. Pete Davis informed members that some parts of that particular route were safeguarded but not all of it. Councillor Bradshaw highlighted the need for an asset register and to communicate with authorities to incorporate schemes in Local Plans.

- Councillor Hockey felt that the potential for different schemes to link up was still not being communicated effectively and that it was important, particularly during consultations, to show how schemes such as the North Fringe to Hengrove Package could link up with other Rapid Transit schemes. In South Gloucestershire the consultation deadlines made it difficult to have any meaningful consultation without being at risk of delaying the project. Councillor Hockey asked why the Park and Ride at Parkway North had not been included in the scheme, as well as an extension to Cribbs Causeway.
- In response to Councillor Hockey's comments, Barbara Davies acknowledged the need to show the links between the different major transport schemes, and agreed to provide improved information on the web and in future publications. Barbara also informed members that the consultation did show the options surrounding Parkway station, but that she would raise Councillor Hockey's concerns with South Gloucestershire Council officers leading on this element of the package.
- Councillor Bradshaw suggested that a joint response from officers should be circulated in response to the concerns raised by Councillor Hockey.
- Councillor Comer commented on the length of the lead times that related to the major transport schemes and asked, in light of a possible emergency budget following next year's election, how many of the schemes had secure funding. Barbara Davies informed members that the GBBN scheme was the only project that had secured funding and was being delivered on the ground. All of the other schemes were at various stages of approval and did not have funding completely secured yet.
- Councillor Moulin commented that it was important to receive regular updates on progress, and that creating longer term pictures helped to promote longer term thinking and to get people used to the aspirations. Councillor Moulin also referred to the earlier comment regarding the need for an asset register and highlighted that this had similarly been produced for rail infrastructure in the past.
- Councillor Bradshaw concluded the discussion by agreeing with the requirement for the rail asset register to be extended to include other infrastructure, and commented that this may help to inform Joint Local Transport Plan 3.

## **8. Travel Plans**

Steven Penaluna had prepared a report to inform the Committee of the work that had taken place with regards to Travel Plans.

Members noted the report and Councillor Bradshaw recommended that if members had any comments on the issues raised in the report that they contact him or Penny Bell at the Partnership office.

## **9. Pitt Report: Learning lessons from the 2007 Floods**

This item was deferred to the meeting on Friday 22 January 2010.

## **10. 2008/09 Scrutiny Achievements**

This item was deferred to the meeting on Friday 22 January 2010.

**11. Next meeting**

Friday 22 January 2010, 10am, Council House, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TR