



# West of England Partnership

**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**



**North  
Somerset  
COUNCIL**

**South Gloucestershire  
Council**

**Minutes of meeting of the**

## **Joint Scrutiny Committee**

**Friday 5 March, 10am, Guildhall, Bath**

### **Present**

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

Cllr Caroline Roberts  
Cllr Martin Veal  
Cllr Eleanor Jackson

#### **Bristol City Council**

Cllr Mark Bradshaw (Chair)  
Cllr Barbara Lewis  
Cllr Patrick Hassell

#### **North Somerset Council**

Cllr Clive Webb  
Cllr David Pasley

#### **South Gloucestershire Council**

Cllr Pat Hockey  
Cllr Geoff King

### **In attendance**

Terry Wagstaff	West of England Partnership
Sally Gregory	West of England Partnership
James White	West of England Partnership
Julia Dean	West of England Partnership
Laura Grady	West of England Partnership

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

Cllr Tony Moulin, North Somerset Council  
Cllr Steve Comer, Bristol City Council  
Cllr Ian Smith, South Gloucestershire Council.

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

Cllr Geoff King declared his employment with First Group.

### **3. Member and Public Forum**

Two statements had been received from one member of the public, which were noted.

### **4. Chair's business**

None

## **5. Minutes of meeting held on 19 February 2010**

Cllr Pat Hockey requested an amendment to page 3 of the item 5, Single Conversation. Subject to this, the minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

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

- i) Transport powers  
Terry Wagstaff reported that, as a result of the discussion at the Partnership Board meeting on 25 February, he would produce a paper suitable for public dissemination about the powers the Joint Transport Executive Committee had available to them.
- ii) Single Conversation  
The Board had endorsed the Joint Investment & Delivery Plan, with some adjustments to be consistent with the South Gloucestershire Core Strategy. Bath & North East Somerset Cabinet had adopted the Plan this week; the other three Councils would consider it during March.
- iii) Flood risk map  
This had been circulated to members, who requested a map with more detail.

## **7. Communications and Media**

Terry Wagstaff said that the profile of the Partnership was about credibility and presence. It was important to achieve buy-in to messages from a wide range of audiences and through a wide range of methods. Methods used depended on what was appropriate and on cost.

There were underlying messages that needed to be communicated and they had to be authentic, real, credible and deliverable. It should be clear whether something was the Partnership's message or from the four Councils, and what the purpose and the outcomes being pursued were. Specific messages needed 'an edge' and to be timely and frequent; some messages bore repeating (to encourage behavioural change), others did not.

It was important to support consultation to help promote the agenda of the Partnership. A media plan should be linked to planned work outcomes across all work areas, but it was important not to overwhelm people with the range of messages. Members of the Partnership could help to get the Partnership messages across.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Raising the Partnership profile to stakeholders and partners was likely to achieve greater participation in strategic consultations. The public were more interested in local issues managed by the individual Councils, rather than the strategic Partnership consultations.
- Branding and badging Partnership work was important; for example, increasing the profile of Travel+. Newsletters, glossy pamphlets, etc. that explained how the four authorities worked together to obtain funding would

help understanding.

- The West of England was not an area, place or name that people identified with.
- A single Partnership spokesperson would help people identify the Partnership and it would make it easier for repetition of messages to be effective.
- There was a balance between promoting successes and achievements of the Partnership and promoting the messages about what it aimed to achieve. Messages had to be clear and easy to understand. Economies of scale, shared experiences and skills should be stressed, as they all provided additional value for money.
- Sharing and promoting Partnership work and promoting work with partners, such as Business Link, was important. Barbara Davies commented that it was particularly helpful when the Councils spoke about how working as the Partnership was benefiting them. The Joint Committee agreed this would be helpful and also suggested that the Councils had links to the Partnership on their websites.
- Marketing required a budget and clear targets to achieve a coordinated schedule, linked to the work programme. Commercial organisations were prepared to allocate 25-40% of their budgets to achieve successful marketing campaigns.
- The Partnership needed to address different groups of people by different methods, with similar, but adjusted messages.
  - The public should be told of achievements and successes; but should the Partnership encourage them to change their behaviour, for example, on health or transport modes?
  - Partners, Council staff and members needed to be aware of the Partnership vision and how they could help. Their role in promoting the work of the Partnership and how that could help achieve the vision and outcomes was also important.
  - The sub-region needed to achieve 'clout' with national government.

The Chair summarised the discussion:

- Integration across the Councils and all workstreams was important. This was about telling the story of how the Partnership attracted investment and funding for local services;
- It was important to identify the practical difference the Partnership had made to people's everyday lives and to recognise that much of the work was strategic rather than local;
- Strong Partnership messages (such as Travel+) and initiatives (such as GBBN and the development of a smartcard back office) were important. Their profile needed to be raised and used consistently by all the Councils;
- The relationship between the Partnership and the four Councils needed to be expressed clearly and consistently;

- Resources were a problem and it was suggested that the four Heads of Communications were asked how they planned to support the Partnership over the coming year;
- A media plan was required for the coming year covering all the Partnership's work areas.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee thought there was a gap between the understanding of members of the Partnership about what it did and the understanding of the public and stakeholders. Members agreed that they would like to raise this issue with the Partnership Board to see how this gap could be reduced. Terry Wagstaff explained he would be discussing this with the Leaders and Chief Executives and was grateful to Scrutiny for their views.

## **8. Councillor Carl Francis-Pester, Joint Waste Management Committee**

Cllr Francis-Pester sent his apologies, as he was unable to attend due to a last minute matter. The Chair suggested members of Joint Scrutiny e-mailed him questions to pass on to Cllr Francis-Pester.

The Chair requested that exempt papers for the next meeting of the Joint Waste Management Committee be made available to members of the Joint Scrutiny Committee to enable them to carry out their scrutiny function. Terry Wagstaff said that the papers concerned specific contractual issues and undertook to investigate their distribution to members of the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

## **9. Joint Waste Core Strategy**

Laura Grady updated members on the submission of the Joint Waste Core Strategy (JWCS) to the Secretary of State. She explained that the JWCS Pre-Submission Document had been considered by all four Councils in August 2009, and all had agreed that it was 'fit to submit'. Since then the process had been about clarification of representations.

The JWCS had been developed by all four authorities and consultation on all stages had followed each of the four authorities' 'Statements of Community Involvement'. The aim was to submit the JWCS to the Secretary of State in April. The Partnership would be informed when a public examination would take place. It was anticipated in July at the earliest, more likely in September. As it progressed through the stages, the JWCS would take on more 'weight' as a planning document, before becoming a formal Development Plan Document on adoption.

The current stage of consultation was on 'soundness' and specific legal compliance, rather than general content. The closing date for comments on soundness had been 1 March and 36 organisations/companies or individuals had responded. Laura outlined that there had been some clarification sought on the four Councils' approach to landfill. At inquiry the authorities would defend this approach but it would be important to have a prepared and agreed position in the event that the Inspector sought changes to the Landfill Policy, as there would be no appeal after the inspector's decision. In addition to this, a representation had been received regarding the capacity of Landfill required and Laura explained that this was subject to further investigation by officers.

Site-specific concerns had been raised, including objections to sites not being included and objections to the General Area at Yate being identified.

Work was continuing on the habitat assessment, in order to be sure that the in-combination effects of emerging development proposals in the Bath & North East Somerset Council's Issues & Options stage of the Core Strategy had been considered.

Members of the Committee asked about a new process where old, capped landfill sites were being opened up and waste recovered and removed for recycling, allowing the sites to be used for future landfill and whether had this been investigated. Laura confirmed that she would ask for information from the technical team about this process and whether reusing landfill sites had been included in 'capacity needs' within the JWCS.

The Committee thanked Laura and the team for their hard work and asked to be kept informed of progress.

## **10. Scrutiny Theme 3: Tackling Disadvantage**

Barbara Davies introduced the report, drawing members' attention to the cross-cutting nature of the theme and how it was embedded in many areas of Partnership work.

The new Skills and Competitiveness Board had 'Tackling Disadvantage' as a core element of its work. It was also a key part of the Multi-Area Agreement and Single Conversation work. Through the goal of Equality of Opportunity, accessibility to employment and jobs from remote or rural areas was being addressed by many of the transport major schemes and was one of the areas of the Joint Local Transport Plan 3 currently being drafted. The new Chair of the Transport Commission was Rachel Robinson of the Care Forum, emphasising links with the voluntary and third sectors.

The following points were made in discussion:

- The importance of clarifying the lead on this issue, in order to drive and challenge other parts of the organisation.
- The importance of accessibility to public transport and affordable fares in order to tackle disadvantage. Whilst fares were outside the Councils' control, the role of the Joint Local Transport Plan and the Accessibility Action Plans was explained. The authorities were also working to improve accessibility with the Health Trusts, the Royal Portbury Docks, North Fringe and Aztec West businesses, and on Travel Plans with many other organisations.
- Information on whether access to transport was preventing people gaining employment would be helpful and may be available from Job Centre Plus and Connexions.
- The importance of work and training close to where people lived, including in the neighbouring counties of Wiltshire and Somerset, was emphasised.

The Chair summarised the discussion saying

- Joint Scrutiny Committee members felt that 'Tacking Disadvantage' should be seen by the Partnership as a strategic priority and he requested a note went to the Partnership Board asking them to ensure that the lead for the issue was clarified.
- There was a need to gather data and evidence on the relationship between connectivity and work to understand if travel costs are a barrier to training or job opportunities.
- Investigations should continue on how to incentivise different travel modes for different groups.
- Committee members were pleased to hear that 'Tackling Disadvantage' by improving accessibility for all residents to health services, employment, digital infrastructure and other local services was one of the themes of the next Joint Local Transport Plan.
- The need to match housing and job availability to 'deprivation' was vital.

The Committee asked that a 'deprivation map' be made available and noted the report.

## 11. Rail

David Redgewell made a statement on behalf of SW Transport Network.

James White updated the meeting on the content of the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) that had been published very recently. Whilst there was good news within the RUS, James warned that inclusion in the RUS did not mean funding was available, or that the Office Of Rail Regulation approved or agreed funding for the proposals. Network Rail had said that they would be happy to work with partners to agree alternative sources of funding to achieve shared outcomes.

James reported that the main points in the RUS were:

- Over the next 10 years lengthened trains would be introduced to meet demand, specifically on the Cardiff to Portsmouth route via Bristol and Bath and Cardiff to Taunton via Bristol.
- The Greater Bristol Metro aspiration could be achieved operationally (subject to funding).
- Benefit to cost ratio for Bristol to Bath services was strong.
- A half-hourly service to Yate could be viable with third party funding.
- The half-hourly service to Weston and Worle required new infrastructure, making the benefit to cost ratio weak and therefore the service unlikely to happen.
- The half-hourly service along the Severn Beach Line did not produce a positive benefit to cost ratio. (James said that this needed further investigation; e.g. long layovers were included in the benefit to cost ratio calculations and the number of passengers may have been underestimated).
- A good case was made to improve the Bristol Temple Meads to Parsons Street line to four tracks.

- The third and fourth tracks to Filton Bank could possibly be reinstated, with a good business case for increased capacity opening the way for improved local services.
- Possible gaps in the electrified rail services were highlighted that could in the future be 'infilled', which could include the electrification of the Severn Beach Line and Weston, once the Bristol to Cardiff line was electrified.
- A tentative suggestion for an Area Review was included, but it was not clear who would carry it out; however, it was pleasing that the RUS identified a need to look again at local services.
- The RUS fed into a ten year programme and the government's High Level Output Specification (HLOS) that set out what could be done and when.

James said that the RUS suggested that electrification would be in place to Bristol by 2016 and to Cardiff by 2017.

Members requested clarification on how the Greater Bristol Metro, RUS and electrification fitted with the development of the Greater Bristol Metro, as in the Regional Funding Advice programme. James explained how evidence supporting the Greater Bristol Metro had been sent in response to the draft emerging RUS.

The Department for Transport and Network Rail had to plan for the growth agenda and the RUS was starting to provide the evidence base. James explained that there was now an opportunity to develop part of the Greater Bristol Metro, using the electrification work as a starting point.

James said that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was to be agreed between Network Rail, providers of the infrastructure, and First Great Western, as the main local operator who, together with Cross Country, provided 98% of rail services in the sub-region. Other operators, such as South West Trains, who run a comparatively small number of services locally, could join the MoU at a later stage. At present, following guidance from the DfT, the four Councils were concentrating on achieving results and outcomes with Network Rail, First Great Western and Cross Country.

Joint Scrutiny Committee members asked that the Joint Transport Executive Committee reconsidered including South West Trains in the MoU.

Cllr Pat Hockey asked if the South Gloucestershire Scrutiny request to include the Defence Minister in correspondence with Lord Adonis about the need for additional rolling stock had been received. This related to the likely increase in the number of staff working at the Ministry of Defence at Abbey Wood. James confirmed that the brief received had covered rail issues alone. The letter had been copied to local MPs and a reply was expected soon.

After discussion it was agreed that a further letter be sent to the Chair of the South West Transport Select Committee (copied to local MPs) asking them to give their support to the provision of rolling stock locally and for any assistance they could give persuading the Ministry of Defence to assist in mitigating the effect their increased employee numbers were having on the local transport network.

Cllr David Pasley asked about current situation regarding the Portishead Link. James reported that North Somerset Council had funded a study under the Network Rail GRIP process. This was an eight-stage process that looked at problems and possible solutions, moving onto detailed planning and cost information. North

Somerset Council's work related to Stage 2, looking at options and outline costs. North Somerset Council was expected to publish the report soon. A passenger demand survey was taking place to establish the business case. The Council was also looking at alternative options and had to consider their viability and their business case. The case for the Portishead Line was showing increasing costs. Currently the line carried freight, and undulated, wavering left and right and curving tightly. It was not suitable or deemed safe for passenger trains at higher speeds. Therefore, it was necessary to investigate how much of the line needed to be upgraded, with signalling to allow freight and passenger traffic and new stations, as well as considering how it could be funded.

The Chair raised the issue of the lead in time for making timetable adjustments on the Severn Beach Line service and urged the Partnership to ensure Bristol City Council allowed sufficient time to make any adjustments.

Members of the Committee asked about fare collection data and how a lack of fare collection could produce inaccurate passenger numbers, adversely affecting future service provision. James reported the Partnership carried out a 'snapshot survey' annually on all rail passengers on all routes, providing a useful data check against First Great Western figures.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee asked for confirmation that all four partner authorities had protection policies in place in their Core Strategies and Local Development Frameworks to protect rail land.

The Chair asked that information from Bath and North East Somerset Council on access improvements at Bath Spa Station be circulated.

Joint Scrutiny Members noted the report and thanked James. It agreed to give the Joint Transport Executive Committee their full support on these issues.

## **12. 2009/10 Scrutiny Achievements**

The Chair asked all members to provide him with additions or omissions from the report, or where members felt the emphasis should be changed. He suggested that an additional column be added, titled "How the Partnership responded."

The report was noted.

## **13. Any Other Business**

The Chair thanked all members of the Committee for their patience, persuasiveness and hard work over the year. He felt that together they had made a real impact, resulting in better schemes for the Partnership area.

## **14. Next meeting**

To be notified.

The meeting ended at 1pm.