

WEST OF ENGLAND PARTNERSHIP
West of England Partnership Board 7th December 2007

Report From Social, Economic and Environmental Partners

“Moving To A Sub Regional Strategic Transport Authority”

1. We are all of the clear opinion that the time has come for a new, assertive, approach to transport and access challenges in the West of England. It is no longer possible to continue with a voluntary arrangement to address the opportunities proffered by the Transport Innovation funding and which does not have the mechanisms available to drive forward the transport agenda.
2. The recent bid for Transport Innovation Fund illustrates the urgent necessity for high level political direction which is capable of pushing forward a co-ordinated and strategic transport approach. Other major schemes requiring such direction are the Greater Bristol Bus Network and Bus Rapid Transit.
3. The Transport Bill provides the opportunity to investigate the scope for a Strategic Transport Authority (STA), the detailed form and funding of which can be determined in the light of local circumstances.
4. We are concerned that unless action is taken to progress towards an STA opportunities for major funding for transport will again be lost to the sub-region.

It is urged that the 4 unitary authority Leaders should agree to meet as an STA in shadow form from January 2008 and should urgently commission detailed work to assess the steps needed to establish an effective Strategic Transport Authority in the West of England.