

The West of England Partnership

Board Meeting

5 December 2008
The Campus, Weston-super-Mare

Present:

Bath and North-East Somerset

Cllr Francine Haeberling
Cllr David Dixon
Cllr Adrian Inker

Bristol City Council

Cllr Helen Holland (Chair)
Cllr Dennis Brown
Cllr Richard Eddy

North Somerset Council

Cllr Nigel Ashton
Cllr Elfan Ap Rees

South Gloucestershire Council

Cllr John Calway
Cllr Ruth Davis

Social, Economic & Environmental Partners

Steve Grainger, Avon Biodiversity Partnership
Rachel Robinson, ChangeUp Consortia

Observers

Hilary Neal, Government Office for the South West (GOSW)
Ian Knight, South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)
Barbara Lewis, Bristol City Council (Chair of Joint Scrutiny Committee)

In attendance

John Everitt, Bath and North East Somerset Council
Jon House, Bristol City Council
Graham Turner, North Somerset Council
David Turner, North Somerset Council
Peter Jackson, South Gloucestershire Council
Terry Wagstaff, West of England Partnership
Barbara Davies, West of England Partnership
Tim Lansley, West of England Partnership
Sally Gregory, West of England Partnership

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Nan Kirsan, North Somerset Council
Cllr Barbara Janke, Bristol City Council
Cllr Roger Hutchinson, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Paul Crossley, Bath & NE Somerset Council
Sonia Mills, North Bristol NHS Trust
Len Hall, Bristol University
John Savage and Tessa Coombes, Business West

Ian Ducat, SWTUC
Jan Ormondroyd, Bristol City Council
David Rapley, Wiltshire County Council

2. MINUTES OF MEETING ON 24 OCTOBER

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

3. MATTERS ARISING

- i). Growth Points: Hilary Neal said that there would be an announcement the following week.
- ii). Delivery Plan: This work would not be finished by February.
- iii). Environment: Terry Wagstaff had met with Steve Grainger and with Jon Clark, who were working together on environmental issues. He thought that the issue had been resolved. Each of their respective organisations was leading on particular issues.
- iv). SEEPs: A meeting had been held (see below).

4. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

None had been received.

5. UPDATE

Barbara Davies highlighted the consultation taking place on Rapid Transit and the positive interest shown in the 'Street Car', a rapid transit type vehicle which had been tried out in Bristol during the week. Consultation was also taking place in relation to the link between the Long Ashton bypass and Hartcliffe. There was a new document reviewing the progress on the Joint Local Transport Plan, due to be sent to the government the following week, after which it would go onto the Partnership's website.

Cllr David Dixon said that residents in Bath were now opposing the Bath Package. Cllr Helen Holland said that this highlighted the need for work to galvanise partners in support of the Partnership's work.

In relation to inward investment Cllr Ruth Davis emphasised the need to support existing businesses in the sub-region. Jon House offered, through officers, to share Bristol City Council's response to the recession. Both the Regional Development Agency (RDA) and the Local Government Association (LGA) were doing work on recession-proofing, and Richard Bayley (Government Office for the South West – GOSW) was leading a group on this at regional level, with a number of other organisations also carrying out recession related work.

The Partnership was trying to align planning for Phase 3 of Joint Waste Management work with the Defra timetable and, as a result, the need for rapid progress would continue.

Hillary Neal said that progress had been made on the Employment and Skills aspect of the Multi-Area Agreement (MAA) and that there was a challenging timetable ahead on other aspects if the MAA was to be signed off in the spring. Leaders would need to look at this, but progress would depend on there being resources available in the Partnership Office.

Resolved that:

- **The report be noted**
- **Terry Wagstaff to report at the next meeting on the various recession related pieces of work underway.**

6. CONSTITUTION

The constitution was not concerned with indemnities between councils, which was dealt with by an agreement, which it was hoped would soon be signed. There was a discussion about who should be included in the quorum of 40% and it was agreed not to specify a specific number of SEEP representatives, because of the need not to hold up timely decision-making and the fact that the attendance of SEEPs was not normally a problem.

Further to a report of the meeting held with the SEEPs, Rachel Robinson emphasised the need for them to have an earlier sight of papers if they were to consult their sectors and fairly represent those sectors' views.

Resolved that:

- **The revised constitution was agreed subject to the amendment that the quorum of 40% (referred to on page 7) include at least one representative from each unitary authority**
- **The Partnership chart would be updated to reflect the fact that the Employment and Skills Board had a strategic responsibility, as well as a delivery responsibility.**

7. REGIONAL FUNDING ADVICE (RFA 2)

Terry Wagstaff gave a presentation about the submission to SWRDA. He thought that it would help if the priorities identified could be narrowed down to 7 or 8 for the sub-region. Terry was congratulated on assembling the submission. There was now a need to make a good case for investment in the sub-region. Major transport schemes, including the increase of motorway capacity, and other infrastructure schemes needed to be matched to the areas of most growth. There was concern that, given that the West of England was the economic driver for the south west, the envelope was not big enough.

It was agreed that it should be made clear that some of the infrastructure required was necessary because of previous growth. Also, that if some of the

problems, eg the motorway and rail network capacities, were not sorted out, they would have a detrimental effect on the rest of the south west as well.

Steve Grainger was concerned that there was no reference to the social, cultural and other community infrastructure required for sustainable growth. Terry Wagstaff said that this was underpinned by the objectives set out on pages 9 and 10 and that these issues would be taken forward as part of the Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) being developed in each authority. These issues were now integral to the authorities' approach to development. In the course of developing the LDFs officers would think across communities. Collaboration with Health Authorities and public utilities needed to start at an early stage.

North Somerset Council had a chart which showed that by far the biggest population growth in the region was expected in the West of England.

It was recognised that there was a need to increase the capacity to bring schemes forward, as other authorities had schemes ready.

The transport schemes put forward included both rail and road based schemes, the top 4 based on public transport.

Ian Knight joined the meeting and welcomed the submission with stated targets for housing and employment. He said that they must start planning to deliver and needed to take a realistic approach to phasing. He said some data was surprising and that they needed to talk to the authorities to understand how the housing numbers were made up. He said they needed to identify the top priorities, those which must get through. He was particularly interested in the commitment to brownfield regeneration, Bath Western Riverside and South Bristol, and asked if there could be a policy promoting these before the urban extensions. If there was such an argument, it needed to be made clearly with supporting numbers.

Resolved that:

- **A meeting would be arranged for Leaders and Chief Executives, and where possible the Executive Member and Director, prior to 15 December**
- **Prior to this and in consultation with the Executive Members and Directors projects would be grouped: capacity building, city/town centres, brownfield land, estate regeneration, transport infrastructure catching up with previous growth, urban extensions and areas of search**
- **SWRDA would also be in touch with the unitary authorities and the West of England Partnership Office.**

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

2 – 4pm on Thursday 5 February at BAWA, Filton.