

The West of England Partnership

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WEST OF ENGLAND PARTNERSHIP
JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13 FEBRUARY 2009 AT 10.00AM**

Members of the Joint Committee

Bath and North East Somerset

- P Councillor John Bull
- P Councillor Caroline Roberts
- P Councillor Martin Veal

Bristol City Council

- P Councillor Barbara Lewis – Chair
- P Councillor Dr Jon Rogers
- A Councillor Colin Smith

North Somerset Council

- P Councillor Tony Moulin
- P Councillor Clive Webb
- P Councillor Bob Garner (as substitute for Cllr David Pasley)
- A Councillor David Pasley

South Gloucestershire Council

- P Councillor Pat Hockey
- A Councillor Geoff King
- P Councillor Ian Smith

WEPJSC

1.2.09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr David Pasley of North Somerset Council (substitute Councillor Bob Garner) Councillor Geoff King of South Gloucestershire Council

WEPJSC

2.2.09 PUBLIC FORUM

Dave Redgwell of Campaign for Better Transport (CfBT), and as a member of the Planning, and Transport Infrastructure Group at the Regional Development Agency submitted a statement and raised the following issues:-

- With reference to Minutes 5.1/09 (7), CfBT did not wish to see double decker buses on rapid transit routes and had pointed out that the restricted headroom along the rapid routes would not allow their use in any event.
- Grave concerns about the Greater Bristol transport packages now having moved down the priority order in the Regional Funding advice (RFA) to be submitted to the Regional Minister on 28th February and various other road schemes had suddenly appeared at the top.
- Concern that the Leaders board for the South West meets in private.
- Concerns about the way that supported bus services are dealt with in different ways across the four WOEP authorities.
- Concerns about the Bath Package not making any reference to the WOEP arrangements when it was clearly part of the WOEP transport arrangements and it is essential that the public see the role of the WOEP
- The Bath Package should come to the joint scrutiny committee as a formal item
- Concerns about the dangers of having many transport technologies across the WOEP area, eg the Bath Package technology possibly not being co-ordinated with other technologies being developed in other areas.
- Concerns that South Gloucestershire Council had not responded to issues raised previously in relation to bus shelters

The Chief Executive WOEP circulated a copy of the South West RDA's paper on RFA2 with the latest lists of schemes. The Bath package and other GBBN schemes were committed schemes.

Seven other priority schemes still being discussed for Programme Entry in February.

Regionally 23 priority schemes were still in the RFA2 programme on the basis that GOSW had previously advised 45% over programming was expected. However, GOSW were now advising only 20% over programming was expected so the proposed priorities had now to be reviewed . A meeting of the 4 Directors of Transport in the region on 20th February would be looking at the implications of the 20% over programming advice on the schemes in the programme including the level of local contribution required and regional connectivity schemes.

All West of England priority schemes had a start in the first 10 years of the RFA2 but in some cases would need additional funding in RFA3.

Members were very concerned that ministers should be being lobbied directly by WEOP and the Joint Scrutiny Committee (not simply relying on letters and not waiting for the Regional situation to be clarified) Members were very concerned that the Sub Region (WOEP area) should be lobbying directly now.

RESOLVED - that the following items be added to the agenda for the next meeting:-

- the Bath package
- Feedback from the WOEP Executive body
- That the Chair and executive member representatives form part of any lobbying group to the minister and/or local MP's

**WEPJSC
3.2/09**

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2009

**RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd January 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
(but note minute 2.2/09 above relating to Minute 5.1/09 (7))**

The Chief Executive WOEP gave a presentation on the Multi Area Agreement (MAA) which was due to go to Cabinets in March and then to government in April.

Members made the following comments:-

- they would have preferred to have commented on the MAA itself
- the MAA should make very clear reference to the current credit crisis and its effect on the future
- the MAA needed to be more specific and less bland
- the MAA should be very clear about the very different timescales relating to different aspects of the MAA and how the current credit crisis is likely to affect those different aspects. In that way the MAA can be realistic whilst still addressing the medium and long term future for the sub-region which would look beyond the current economic climate.
- The reference to the slowdown in the growth of the working age population should be seen as an opportunity to employ a more experienced workforce rather than as a problem per se.
- the reference to reducing worklessness should refer to the role of the voluntary sector as a key to delivery
- Reference should be made to skills delivery being shared out to meet needs across the area rather than, as at present, reflecting the role of individual establishments each competing for clients
- The effects of climate change should be an integral part of the MAA
- The transport maps are all geared to the RFA bids but there also needs to be evidence of how those bids join up with the current network to give an overall picture
- Consideration need to to be given to a single policy across the four authorities which could guide sustainable

development - B&NES scrutiny body was working on such a proposed policy.

- The joint committee needed a report on the MAA detailing its purpose, period of operation, refresh schedule, and including reference to all the issues raised above.

The Chief Executive WOEP, then commented that: _

- the targets shown in the MAA (NI's and PSA's) were the critical ones for the sub region – the MAA looked at more than the economy, hence the LAA targets were not necessarily the only ones to be taken into account
- the MAA did make clear reference to the current credit crunch situation but he would ensure the executive body was made aware of the joint committees concerns that they believed the current economic crisis needed a much greater role in the document
- the MAA was a medium to long term document and in the past the sub region had been criticised for not looking far enough ahead particularly in securing resources for infrastructure. The MAA had to include looking beyond the current economic situation, though the timescales varied between 5 -20 years for different aspects covered by the MAA.
- There was also the issue of lack of clarity on the RSS and transport infrastructure. More clarity was needed in the Core strategies and Local Development Frameworks before the MAA could be more specific than it was currently.
- a map showing all the main arterial arteries should be included in the MAA

RESOLVED: That the Chief Executive WOEP convey the views of the joint committee on the MAA to the executive body.

- **that a further report on the MAA submitted to the joint committee detailing its purpose, period of operation, refresh schedule, and including reference to all the issues raised by the joint committee at the meeting.**

- That B&NES officers circulate details of its scrutiny work on a single sustainable development policy for the WOEP area to members of the joint scrutiny committee.

**WEPJSC
5.2/09**

PROPOSALS FOR DEDICATED SCRUTINY SUPPORT

The Chair explained that she had asked for the report to be prepared by Bristol CC officer as she believed greater clarity was needed about the role of the joint scrutiny committee, that the joint committee should be pursuing a more in-depth and wider role and that the officer support it required was more than it currently received. The Chair was also of the view that the WOEP should not be involved in providing officer support for both the executive and scrutiny bodies involved with the WOEP, ie that the scrutiny role should be supported from constituent partnership councils.

North Somerset , Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils all agreed that they could not formally support the stance taken by Bristol Council in the report as they took the view that it was ultimately an issue for the chief executives to determine not the joint committee. However, they were all agreed that the issue of a greater level of officer support was required. The meeting agreed that it would be appropriate to ask the chief executives of each authority be asked again to jointly consider the issue of dedicated officer scrutiny support.

RESOLVED:That Bristol City Scrutiny Officers prepare an initial draft report based on the report submitted to the Joint Committee for Dedicated Scrutiny Support for circulation to members of the joint committee, copy to the Chief Executives of the WOEP constituent councils. Assuming an agreed version can be agreed by the joint committee members following this initial circulation, the final report to be submitted to the 4 chief executives for their joint consideration and report back to the joint committee.

WEPJSC ITEMS FOR 13 MARCH MEETING

6.2/09

RESOLVED:

(a) That the following items be considered at the next meeting (Bristol CC to host):-

- 1. Railway Land Asset Register**
 - 2. Integrated Transport Authority: Implications of the Local Transport Act 2008**
 - 3. Greater Bristol Metro: Presentation on rail RFA 2 bid**
 - 4. Local Transport Plan 3 Guidance: Consultation**
 - 5. Bath Package**
 - 6. Feed back from the Executive Body (to be a future standard item on all agenda)**
 - 7. Review Of Joint Scrutiny Committee - role and officer support**
 - 8. Quality Bus Partnerships – progress if any being made within the GBBN , the role of QBS's at WOEP and/or individual authorities.**
- (b) B&NES to host April meeting and to circulate provisional dates for that meeting**

The meeting ended at 1.10pm.

CHAIR:.....