

**Report of North Somerset's  
West of England Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members**

**Committee Members**

Cllr Mike Bird, Cllr Huw James, and Cllr Peter Crew.

**The West of England Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting met on October 7th ahead of the WECA & Joint Committee's meeting held on October 9th. The following topics were discussed:**

**1. WECA and North Somerset**

The WECA O&S Committee have the overwhelmingly strong view that it would be beneficial to the region for North Somerset Council to join WECA, as it is clear to the committee that the Combined Authority should align with the West of England's functional economic area.

The O&S Committee encourage all Mayors and Leaders to do everything possible to bring this about in discussion with government so that these arrangements are in place in advance of the 2021 WECA Mayoral election.

**2. Covid Recovery Plan and Climate Emergency Action Plan (agenda item 11)**

We were pleased to welcome, for the first time, Mayor Bowles to our meeting to discuss these items and would extend an invitation to him to attend future meetings on a reasonably regular basis as we found the engagement helpful. In broad terms we welcome both the Recovery Plan and the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

**a. Recovery Plan:**

The West of England Recovery Plan has breadth and ambition, and we welcome the work of the Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce, with the full involvement of the region's local authorities and the business and other communities.

**b. Climate Emergency Action Plan:**

The WECA Climate Emergency Action Plan has clear structure and a headline ambition to achieve net zero carbon in the region by 2030, which is significantly ahead of the 2050 national target. Officers have worked in partnership across the authorities in developing the action plan. Issues we felt were important to note were:

- The importance of using SMART (Specific; Measurable; Attainable; Relevant; Timed) targets so that the action plan had clear milestones against which progress and success can be measured and demonstrated.
- We feel that the action plan will have to be linked into the Local Economic Strategy, the Joint Local Transport Plan, and similar future strategies, plans and projects.
- It's essential that we maximise investment opportunities will bring both economic and environmental benefit, namely hydrogen energy and clean technologies.

## 2. Investment Fund (agenda item 15)

A £32.2m of headroom has been identified in the programme to 2022/23 as a result of a scheme deliverability review. Proposals for the reallocation of funding from this headroom are to be presented to the Committee's next meeting in December. The O&S Committee are supportive of the proposal that a significant part of this funding, approx. £20-£25m, will be used to create a Development Infrastructure Fund.

### **Notes:**

- Public Reports Pack available here: <https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g447/Public%20reports%20pack%2009th-Oct-2020%2010.30%20Joint%20meeting%20-%20West%20of%20England%20Combined%20Authority%20Committ.pdf?T=10>
- The West of England Combined Authority Committee and West of England Joint Committee Forward Plan covers future matters the Overview and Scrutiny Panel may further examine. If there are any items that you would like to find more about or examine in more depth, do not hesitate to contact Officers and email us: <https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s2198/8%20-%20Forward%20Plan%20-%20WECA%20Joint%20Committee.pdf>
- Members wishing to watch the activities of the WECA and Joint Committee's Meetings, recordings of the video alongside minutes can be found here: <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/meetings/>
- You can find out more about the Regional Recovery Taskforce here: <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/west-of-england-regional-recovery-taskforce-our-recovery-plan/>