

Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 20th July, 14:00-16:00
Location: Via Zoom

Attendees:	
Name	Organisation
Cllr David Gray	Gloucestershire County Council (DR)
Cllr Hannah Young	North Somerset Council (HY)
Cllr Chris Willmore	South Gloucestershire Council (CW)
Cllr Tamara Reay	Wiltshire Council (TR)
Cllr Ed Plowden	Bristol City Council (EP)
Cllr Jon Andrews	Dorset Council (JA)
Cllr Hannah Young	North Somerset Council (HY)
Cllr Andy Hadley	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) (AH)
Cllr Sarah Warren	Bath North East Somerset (SW)
Andy Whitehead	South Gloucestershire Council (AW)
Orlagh Phipps	Gloucestershire County Council (OP)
Pam Turton	Bath and North East Somerset Council (PT)
James White	Western Gateway STB (JWh)
Arina Salhotra	Sphere Marketing (AS)
Alice Darley	National Highways (AD)
Matt Haywood	Network Rail (MH)
Jack Wiltshire	Dorset Council (JW)
Simon Chapman	National Highways (SC)
Hannah Fountain	Western Gateway STB (HF)
Jessica Holroyd	Western Gateway STB (JH)
Matt Palmer	South Gloucestershire Council (MP)
Samantha Howell	Wiltshire Council (SH)
Julian McLaughlin	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) (JM)
Mena Abidakun	Western Gateway STB (MA)
Louise McBride	West of England Combined Authority (LM)
David Glinos	Department for Transport (DG)
Jaime Rockhill	Network Rail (JR)
Allan Creedy	Wiltshire Council (AC)
Richard Pincroft	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) (RP)

Jacob Pryor	Bristol City Council (JP)
Apologies were received from:	
Bill Davies	West of England Combined Authority (BD)
Cllr Vikki Slade	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) (VS)
Colin Chick	Gloucestershire County Council (CC)
Cllr Manda Rigby	Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) (MR)
Richard Wintrip	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) (RW)

Actions	Allocated to	Target Date:
HF to circulate the slides with the SIP metrics for approval from each LA.	HF	02/10/24

DATE	KEY DECISIONS	STATUS:
10/07/24	Elect a Chair of the Board	Completed
10/07/24	Elect a Vice Chair of the Board	Completed
10/07/24	Elect a Chair of the SIP Project Board	Completed
10/07/24	Approve revised Business Plan	Approved
10/07/24	Final approval of the STP	Approved
10/07/24	Approve SIP programme extension	Approved
10/07/24	Approve all 12 SIP objectives	HF to circulate the objectives post meeting and unless there is explicit disapproval of any objectives, this will be signed off.
10/07/24	Approve allocation of £145k to proceed with finalising the SIP.	Approved
10/07/24	Delegate day to day management of budget to the project board	Approved
10/07/24	The Board approved the rail programme for 2024/25 as set out in Table One in paper C.	Approved
10/07/24	Note the end of year financial position and approve the budget	Approved - everyone has signed this off, aside from WECA who do not have political representation present.
10/07/24	The Board to delegate decisions on re-profiling spend (within total budget) to Senior Officer Group.	Approved
10/07/24	The Board to delegate day to day decisions on operational spend (within the overall budget agreed for each workstream) of up to £50,000 to the Programme Team.	Approved

Item No	Notes / Actions
1	<p>Welcome, apologies and introductions.</p> <p>All welcomed and apologies given. Introductions were made by new and existing Board members. Cllr Plowden declared that he is working out a notice period at Sustrans, leaving on 31st June. He is the Director of the National Cycle Network. As it is a UK wide role, he has not been involved in any work on the cycling strategy so does not believe there is a conflict of interest. AC confirmed this.</p>
2	<p>Governance of Election of Chair and Vice Chair / Election of Board member for Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) Project Board</p> <p>There were no public questions.</p> <p>Nominations for Chair:</p> <p>Cllr Willmore and Cllr Gray nominated Cllr Rigby from BANES. There were no other nominees.</p> <p>DECISION: Cllr Manda Rigby has been elected as Chair of the Board.</p> <p>Nominations for Vice Chair:</p> <p>HY nominated Cllr Willmore. Cllr Andrews seconded this.</p> <p>DECISION: Cllr Chris Willmore was elected as Vice Chair.</p> <p>Cllr Willmore said Cllr Young has indicated she'd be willing to serve as SIP Project executive member. Cllr Young confirmed she is happy to take on this role and would step down should anyone be interested in taking over later on. Cllr Warren seconded Cllr Young.</p> <p>DECISION: Cllr Hannah Young is elected as SIP Project Chair.</p>
3	<p>Actions and Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>These were agreed to be an accurate record.</p>
4	<p>Public Participation</p> <p>There was no public question on this occasion.</p>
5	<p>Updates from Associate Members</p> <p>David Glinos from Department for Transport (DfT)</p> <p>Introduced himself as Area Lead for the South West of England and the STB Sponsor for Western Gateway STB and Peninsula Transport STB. Prime Minister has approved cabinet and ministerial positions and DG gave an update on these positions. Secretary of State is Louise Haigh, Minister of State is Peter Hendy, Parliamentary under Secretary of State is Lilian Greenwood, and also as Parliamentary under Secretary of State is Simon Lightwood. He may be the Lead Minister for Local Transport and STB matters (but this may change). Mike Kane is Parliamentary under Secretary of State. DG said there are</p>

five government missions, which are clear, ambitious and achievable. The transport sector will contribute to these. DG then shared his screen of the five missions. These are:

- 1) Get Britain Building Again
- 2) Switch on Great British Energy
- 3) Get the NHS Back on its Feet.
- 4) Take Back Our Streets
- 5) Break Down Barriers to Opportunity

New DfT motto is to 'Move fast and fix things'. Prime Minister has met with Mayors including Dan Norris, and is committed to setting up a Council for Regions and Nations. Further information will be announced in due course.

CW asked how best we can be kept abreast of changes. DG said via the DfT website and himself. Members raised it would be good to get an indication of timeframes on changes and if things align in terms of terminology with new government in place. DG confirmed there is some flexibility on this. DG said things are dependent on priorities and budget but hopes to provide more clarity soon.

Matt Haywood from Network Rail

Introduced himself as the Lead Strategic Planner for the Western Gateway geography, and introduced his colleague Jaime Rockhill (who leads on the Wessex route). In light of the new government, there are still the same commitments to rail reform and structural issues which is positive. They are expecting to see the creation of Great British Railways function in the next six months, which will bring together disparate parts of the industry. A key thing required is Parliamentary legislation, which is required to allow franchising and directing mind view of the national timetable. Within this is the commitment to regional partnerships and devolved authorities - this comes through under the existing plans for rail and getting Britain moving.

In the industry there is 80% of new revenue of what was pre-Covid - new reality of railway is less revenue and increasing focus on delivering value. What is encouraging for Western Gateway is that the South West has outperformed the national statistics with the highest annual growth in revenue. Important changes in timetabling since June - improved services at the weekend - Heart of Wessex Line and new minimum hourly services at all stations in Gloucestershire. In September there will be the introduction of trial services between Bristol and Oxford on a weekend. Major bits of work to include drainage renewal work at Severn Tunnel. Significant renewals on key junctions around Westbury between December and January.

JR highlighted access for all funding - accessibility improvements to various stations. Yeovil Junction and Dorchester are subjects of strategic station plans. Also have one in Bournemouth. The Wessex mainline strategic study has just been published. SOBC wise they are working on Heart of Wessex and looking at Dorset Metro work and Weymouth.

MH said in the context of new government and reform, it will be more important to show collaborative work and shared objectives. Also mentioned the importance of fleet replacement.

	<p>AH asked if we are in a good place to make sure the pace is right and grab opportunities from ministers.</p> <p>JR replied absolutely, there are opportunities. Getting them to SOBC means they are ready if pots of funding are allocated.</p> <p>Alice Darley from National Highways</p> <p>AD introduced herself as working on the regional network strategy for the South of the country. Leads company's relationship with STBs across the South. Works closely with officers and served on the project board for the STP and SIP.</p> <p>One of the key areas has been working up proposals with DfT for network road investment strategy. Currently in waiting game to see what ministers want to do. Timescale is tight as approaching the end of the road investment two period which ends in March next year to get road strategy number three out in time. May look at partial one year settlement. Looking to have this in place by March. Lots of work behind the scenes.</p> <p>Having conversations with STB officers around development road investment strategy and priorities for STB. Conversations still continue - had a recent session with JWh and AC to continue to build evidence base and information to put forward to ministers.</p> <p>In paper there are a few schemes update, key ones include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A417 construction work and traffic management (STB visited this in the pre-election period) • The Stonehenge scheme is going through legal challenges. Keir Starmer has mentioned this and so we will await more information. <p>TR asked whether AD could give an update on when the formal M4 to Dorset Coast study will be published.</p> <p>AD said this is wrapped up in RIS3 recommendations. This went to ministers a year ago. No feedback as of yet. Have been weaving findings of study into the development of proposals for RIS3.</p>
5.	<p>Revised Business Plan</p> <p>JWh said the Business Plan that went to Board in March was based on higher level of funding, so we've had to adjust the business plan slightly. Total budget is £996k. Still committed to many areas of the Business Plan (STP, SIP, rail work, rural mobility, freight, coaches, EV, alternative fuels, Regional Centre of Excellence).</p> <p>Cllr Willmore asked if anyone had any questions or comments on recommendations. There was no reply. Cllr Willmore confirmed this will be signed off.</p> <p>DECISION: Revised Business Plan has been signed off.</p>
6.	<p>Strategic Investment Plan Update (SIP)</p> <p>6 recommendations to be approved as part of the paper.</p> <p>1) To secure final approval for the STP</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cllr Willmore asked if each LA could put this in the chat and send reminder for those who don't sign. DECISION: All approved. 2) Approve the new programme due to extension because of general election and Board meeting being pushed by a month. Cllr Willmore asked if everyone was happy. DECISION: All approved. 3) Approve 12 objectives. Cllr Hadley would like to consider if rail should feature as objective in itself. Cllr Willmore stated this is to be taken away for Board to look through next iteration. Otherwise no further comments or objections. 4) Approve allocation of £145k to proceed with finalising the SIP. It is in the Business Plan. DECISION: All approved and it is part of the Business Plan which has been approved. 5) Happy to delegate day-to-day management of budget to the project board. DECISION: All approved. 6) Put forward Board member for the SIP - Cllr Young DECISION: Agreed earlier.
4.	<p>Cycling strategy</p> <p>Strategy was initially developed in 2022. Gone out for reassessment. On the decision tree, we are in the final state of detailed metric and decision review. Atkins and Sustrans have been commissioned to deliver this review. There have been some changes to the scoring criteria. Hoping to have output on 2nd October. All comments/questions welcomed.</p> <p>CW said when we were doing the STP there was a lack in the earlier draft around commitment of cycling and crucial first mile and last mile. AH said this first and last mile does rely on train operators allowing bikes on trains. AH does not feel we are addressing big gaps in the network.</p> <p>DG said it would be good to get cycling published as soon as possible, particularly of quick wins that are deliverable in next 2-3 years.</p> <p>CW said we want a conversation about a long-term strategy, but we need something in place quickly to be able to bid for when funding arises. EP agreed with this. EP also supports AH's comment about potential for e-bikes extending day-to-day journeys.</p> <p>HF said she will take these away and can have specific conversation about EP and AH's approaches. SW would like to join this discussion.</p>
7.	<p>Rail</p> <p>JWh reported a good business case emerging for Heart of Wessex line - for hourly services between Dorchester, Weymouth and Westbury, going forward will involve heavy investment. Work on West of England Line between Salisbury and Yeovil Junction. Work split across two years.</p> <p>Small modest contribution for electrification business case work at Filton Bank and Bristol Parkway. Main funding from GWR and WECA.</p>

	<p>Waiting for Wiltshire Strategic Rail Study and is about to be published. We will review this with the Board and look at interventions we may wish to take forward.</p> <p>We are looking to progress Dorset Metro. Jointly funded from WG and Dorset Council.</p> <p>Metro West to the South, long-standing aspiration to improve services to Weston-super-Mare and beyond.</p> <p>DECISION: Everyone noted the recommendations as set out by James White and there were no comments. All approved.</p>
8.	<p>Work programme</p> <p>MA gave an update. Nine workstreams working on. Seven are reporting as green, two as amber.</p> <p>AH asked a question regarding freight. He said there has been mention of intermodal container trains and reopening the Hamworthy branch for gravel trains, along with a new maritime service from Morocco. He asked whether we are thinking about other elements of freight. JWh said we are aware of not just containers, but all opportunities including shipping.</p> <p>Rural Mobility</p> <p>HF updated we have been waiting for the consultant to send out the report following the launch meeting in January. As part of that they have identified six grand challenges for rural mobility of which the pilots will be focused upon and an overall objective about connectivity between rural settlements. CW asked if we are reframing this in light of main mission. HF said documentation hasn't been approved so time to reframe in light of new government mission. DG said there is a strategy of the previous government and see what the status will be when it is reconfirmed/redrafted. He highlighted the need to await government's recommendations.</p> <p>Coach</p> <p>HF said coach study is progressing well. Expecting output of first route assessment study. We are using mobile phone data for assessment but there were a few glitches. Also pausing due to Peninsula Transport joining the strategy and forum.</p> <p>AH said not sure if gaps 1 and 3 would be of interest to Peninsula and are we missing an opportunity to progress. HF said the pausing is due to the other recommendations in the coach strategy - in person workshop with coach federation which is separate to the route studies - we're waiting for Peninsula to catch up on this. In terms of route studies, we're awaiting to see how successful the output is from the first assessment of Strategic Coach Route 2, which is less dependent on Peninsula's engagement.</p> <p>Decarbonisation</p> <p>HJ said TfN and WSP have developed a carbon assessment playbook tool that has been rolled out across STBs - we are due to have our version for Western Gateway region by beginning of August and will be rolling out training across LA.</p> <p>Alternative fuels for freight</p>

HJ said lots of tools are coming our way, the Alternative Fuel for Freight Infrastructure (ALFFI) tool has been developed by Midlands Connect. This will look at the EV, hydrogen concept of charging HGVs. Yet to receive final version, which we'll then roll out to LAs. AH asked if the sites for alternative fuel infrastructure only being available for HGVs/ sharing the chargers with coaches or buses? HJ said we won't be limited to focusing on specific modes.

EV update

HJ said we have run two successful forums with officers which have been attended by officers in Western Gateway and Peninsula. We are running forum next week with stakeholders (National Grid, Energy Saving Trust, Ofgem etc). We will be writing an EV strategic action plan alongside Peninsula Transport to state what the STBs position is.

Freight

Year 2 monitoring report has been published - it has useful key points about modal shift to rail, maritime etc. Key issues such as bridge strikes, HGV using unsuitable routes - it sets out where we sit in the region. Joint project with Peninsula. Freight forums have been on hold because of general election period.

Regional Centre of Excellence

Requirement from DfT to provide support to LAs with their local transport plans, and also has tools they can use. Work in progress for this work package.

Budget

MA gave brief background of last years' budget. 2022/23 loss of funding of £200k, the budget was then revised to incorporate the delivery of the technical programme which included the STP. The budget also included staffing costs and support costs, including communications and engagement activities and operational costs. At the end of last year, we had a total shortfall of £118k based on forecasted budget and the committed spend prior to when the Combined Authority concluded the year and finance processes leaving a reserve of £136k - this will provide a contingency against risk of future redundancy and mitigate programme risk.

Revised budget for 2024/25 is covered in the business plan. The budget report isn't a static document and may require adjustments, and will be regularly monitored.

There were no questions on budget.

DECISION: Everyone has signed this off, aside from WECA who do not have political representation present.

HF indicated that we do need explicit approval from each LA on 12 metrics on the SIP. HF said there was discussion on whether we needed to include emphasis on rail. CW said we are happy with the metrics but the Board as we go forward looks at how we look at rail. CW suggests HF circulates the slides with the metrics and if anyone is unhappy beyond that, to let HF know (beyond fine tuning on rail prioritisation).

ACTION: HF to circulate the slides with the SIP metrics for approval from each LA.

10.	<p>Comms update</p> <p>MA said the tender process was undertaken within the West of England Combined Authority procurement processes. Sphere Marketing was the winning supplier for continuous provision for this key service.</p> <p>AS from Sphere Marketing ran through the comms update and gave some high-level information. In May there was the highest number of people opening the STB stakeholder newsletter, which featured the STP. In June they achieved the highest click-through rate on the stakeholder newsletter. The STB conference held in February 2024 was attended by over 2k visitors - the STB conference will be in Interchange 2025 next year on the 4th and 5th of March. Following the Business Plan approval Sphere Marketing will now move forward to understand officers' communication requirements going forwards.</p> <p>LM asked if the highest level of engagement was due to anything being done differently in the newsletter. AS said nothing had been done differently.</p> <p>CW thanked all the officers for the work everyone has been doing and to the associate members.</p>
	<p>AOB</p> <p>JA said the agenda was too packed and asked if the meeting could be on Teams in future, but that face-to-face would be preferable. Concern over Dorset Council being mentioned once. The next meeting will be Chaired by Cllr Rigby.</p>