

Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 28th September 2022, 14:00 to 16:00.

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Attendees:	
Name	Organisation
<i>Cllr David Gray</i>	<i>Gloucestershire County Council, Vice Chair</i>
<i>Cllr Don Alexander</i>	<i>Bristol City Council</i>
<i>Cllr Steve Pearce</i>	<i>Bristol City Council</i>
<i>Cllr Mike Greene</i>	<i>Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP), Chair</i>
<i>Cllr Manda Rigby</i>	<i>Bath and North East Somerset Council</i>
<i>Cllr Ray Bryan</i>	<i>Dorset Council</i>
<i>Cllr Dr Mark McClelland</i>	<i>Wiltshire Council</i>
<i>Allan Creedy</i>	<i>Wiltshire Council</i>
<i>Cllr Stephen Reade</i>	<i>South Gloucestershire Council</i>
<i>Cllr Simon Gibson</i>	<i>Dorset Council</i>
<i>Jim Stewart</i>	<i>Poole Harbour Commissioners, WG Transport & Business Forum</i>
<i>Andrew Whitehead</i>	<i>South Gloucestershire Council</i>
<i>David Land</i>	<i>Gloucestershire County Council</i>
<i>Pam Turton</i>	<i>Bath and North East Somerset Council</i>
<i>Ewan Wilson</i>	<i>Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP)</i>
<i>James White</i>	<i>West of England Combined Authority</i>
<i>Julian McLaughlin</i>	<i>Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole</i>
<i>Nuala Waters</i>	<i>West of England Combined Authority</i>
<i>Arina Salhotra</i>	<i>Sphere Marketing</i>
<i>Sarah Beatrice</i>	<i>West of England Combined Authority</i>
<i>Alice Darley</i>	<i>National Highways</i>
<i>Krystyna Pitt</i>	<i>West of England Combined Authority, minutes</i>
<i>Daniel Round</i>	<i>Network Rail</i>
<i>David Glinos</i>	<i>Department for Transport</i>
<i>Simon Excell</i>	<i>Gloucestershire County Council</i>
<i>Tom Godsmark</i>	<i>West of England Combined Authority</i>
<i>Matthew Beresford</i>	<i>West of England Combined Authority</i>
<i>Jake Pryor</i>	<i>Bristol City Council</i>
<i>Mark Day</i>	<i>ARUP</i>
<i>Wayne Sayers</i>	<i>Dorset Council</i>
<i>Craig Drennan</i>	<i>WSP</i>

Apologies were received from:	
Mayor Dan Norris	West of England Combined Authority
Mike O'Dowd Jones	Somerset Council
Andrew Davies	Bristol City Council
Cllr Sarah Warren	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Sophie Broadfield	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Peter Mann	West of England Combined Authority

Actions & Decisions	Allocated to	Target Date:
September Board agenda to include a response to the publication of the National Highways draft report	Prog. Team	14/09/2022
Cllr Alexander and Cllr Gray to meet with the Programme Team to discuss recruitment	Prog. Team	07/12/2022
Slides for National Highways presentation to be circulated	Prog. Team	26/10/2022
Review timetable in light of the National Highways initial report due end Oct/early Nov	Prog. Team	26/10/2022

Item No	Notes / Actions
1	Introductions – Chair
2	<p>Minutes and actions from the previous meeting – Chair</p> <p>Cllr Greene outlined the actions resulting from the July Board. Actions completed with the exception of the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> September Board agenda to include a response to the publication of the National Highways draft report Report not received and so action to be carried forward Link to final rail report to be provided by Programme Team Link will be provided shortly <p>Cllr Greene noted that following the July Board the recruitment process had not proceeded as was hoped and it was noted here that a member(s) of the Board be involved in the recruitment process. It was proposed that two Board members, Cllr Alexander and Cllr Gray meet with the Programme Team following this meeting to discuss how best to move forward to include involvement on the interview panel.</p> <p>ACTION – Cllr Alexander and Cllr Gray to meet with the Programme Team to discuss recruitment</p> <p>The Board approved the draft minutes</p>
3	<p>Public Participation– Chair</p> <p>No public questions or statements received</p>
4	<p>Updates from Associate Members – in addition to written updates, verbal updates from those attending where relevant.</p> <p>Cllr Greene thanked our associate members for their updates.</p> <p>Network Rail - Daniel Round DR gave an update from Network Rail highlighting some of the main points of the paper as submitted.</p>

Item No	Notes / Actions
	<p>Cllr Greene asked with the 85% of pre covid passenger numbers returning to the railways, has there been a difference in type of traveller and times of usage compared to pre covid times?</p> <p>DR confirmed that there is a different mix of passengers. Commuting and business travel has not reached the level that it was with leisure travel now well in excess of pre-pandemic levels. It is a very different mix making it challenging as it is different to the pre-pandemic network.</p> <p>Cllr Greene proposed that although challenging, it may also provide opportunities including cost saving and the potential of greater profitability. Will there be significant timetabling changes if this continues?</p> <p>DR suggested that there may be timetable changes as although passenger volumes are around 85% of pre-pandemic levels, the challenge is in terms of revenue even with high levels of network users. Commuter markets have not yet bounced back resulting in revenue lagging behind pre covid levels as leisure trips are often taken when tickets are the least expensive. This presents a cost to the industry, but an opportunity as well.</p> <p>Cllr Reade thanked DR for the update and reflected that this pattern is the same for buses post pandemic. He asked whether DR was aware of any current targeted promotions as this could have a positive future impact.</p> <p>DR confirmed that there was the '<i>Great British Rail Sale</i>' during the summer with reduced short notice tickets which proved a success in generating numbers.</p> <p>Cllr Pearce thanked DR for the update paper and cited the issue of passive provision, where it is important that whatever works we implement today does not negatively impact our ability to improve services further in the future. Any new infrastructure should not prevent future rail works and this needs to be taken into account.</p> <p>NR agreed with comments from Cllr Pearce, however conceded that sadly a different view may be taken when funding is tight. Looking at future provision is key to some of the decisions and this point is noted and will be taken forward.</p> <p>Cllr Gray asked what are the dynamics around freight as we move to a much higher cost of energy and what are the implications of that going forward?</p> <p>DR noted that freight was very important during the pandemic. There has been a significant increase in intermodal traffic on the railways in the last couple of years, and in parts of the region, the aggregate market continues to grow. Freight continues to grow and will have a significant role to play in terms of modal shift and decarbonisation. National Rail considers the whole system; freight and passenger services, and the challenge is integrating freight. Regarding increasing energy costs, it is still too early to know, however freight must be profitable. There has been an uptick in freight which is positive.</p> <p>DfT – David Glinos DG gave an update from DfT highlighting some of the main points of the paper as submitted. He confirmed that there are likely to be invitations for a fourth round of funding from the Active Travel Capital fund.</p>

Item No	Notes / Actions
	<p>CLlr Green thanked DG for the update and paper. The Bus Recovery grant has encouraged bus operators working in an enhanced partnership with the local authorities to make progress and so the extension of this by six months is welcome. How will the £2 cap pilot scheme work?</p> <p>DG confirmed that the details have not been finalised. Areas who want to participate in the scheme will be able to but will not be forced to do so.</p> <p>CLlr Greene asked whether payments will be made directly to the operators if they take a financial hit?</p> <p>DG responded that he is not sure how the money will flow. This will be in the further details currently being finalised.</p> <p>CLlr Greene asked for clarification around whether Baroness Vere’s responsibility includes rail.</p> <p>DG confirmed that Baroness Vere’s responsibility is for light rail and the rail portfolio is held by Kevin Foster.</p> <p>CLlr Bryan thanked DG for the report and requested that someone at the DfT could contact him regarding the unsuccessful BSIP bid. We cannot keep a bus service running without any gov funding. It would be helpful to get some answers to move forward for better public transport across the Dorset area.</p> <p>DG explained that on a regional level the <i>bus back better fund</i> had been affected by the pandemic meaning that many places were unsuccessful despite submitting a good bid. Unfortunately funding was limited. DG will chase again for more thorough feedback on the Dorset bid.</p> <p>CLlr Reede thanked DG for extension of recovery grant and asked as WECA have had BSIPS approved, when will they receive the funding?</p> <p>DG confirmed that ministers are looking at this at the moment and confirmation should arrive shortly.</p> <p>CLlr Greene added that Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole was also successful with funding promised to be approved imminently.</p> <p>CLlr Rigby asked for further information around Active Travel tranche 4 as invitations for bids will be imminent and to apply by late Dec. It would be good if the DfT could please get guidance out asap even if not the application forms. This is quite a tight timeline especially at this time of the year.</p> <p>DG confirmed that he fully expects BaNES to be participating in Active Travel 3 year funding profile</p> <p>CLlr Pearce thanked DG for the report. The Secretary of state is likely to lead on maritime and the South West has a lot of coastline and large ports providing a particular advantage so CLlr Pearce will be keen to focus more on maritime and requested that DG could relay this to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>National Highways - Alice Darley</p> <p>AD gave an update from National Highways highlighting some of the main points of the paper as submitted.</p>

Item No	Notes / Actions
	<p>RIS (Road Investment Strategy) 3 development – There is an opportunity to influence this. RIS starting 2025 sets the agenda for National Highways for 5 years. A process working with DfT on a set of publications is due for release later this autumn, and are based on evidence and stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>A three month public consultation will immediately follow their release. This is an opportunity for the STBs to respond to recommendations and make further recommendations to government regarding the RIS.</p> <p>Cllr Greene asked regarding the RIS3, are you content with the level of engagement with Western gateway or is there a need for us to engage further?</p> <p>AD suggested that the challenge for the STB is that the strategy is still in formation. We have to keep the conversation going so there will be opportunities as timing has not been ideal.</p>
	<p>Update from National Highways – Richard Leonard and Mark Day from ARUP M4 to Dorset South Coast Study Report</p> <p>RL and MD – spoke to the slides.</p> <p>RL concluded that the key take away is that it is challenging but there are interventions to improve connectivity.</p> <p>Cllr Greene thanked RL and mentioned that it is helpful to understand how National Highways are going about this. What interaction have you had with the local authorities involved in this area?</p> <p>RL confirmed that there is a bilateral steering group which includes colleagues from across the region, but also conversations with local highways authorities on concepts and locations. Local highway and planning authorities have been actively involved throughout the journey. The study is far better for the level of engagement and we are really grateful to the team and all of the members.</p> <p>Cllr Greene queried why some of the routes stop a few miles north of the south coast.</p> <p>RL confirmed that the A31 was taken as the southern level of the area but the study recognised that other interventions are needed for the last few miles south of the A31 to the coast.</p> <p>Cllr Greene commented that stopping the connectivity improvements at the A31 would only cause more problems if the improvements do not continue further south.</p> <p>Cllr Bryan thanked RL and MD for the presentation. There is a lot of information to take in and asked whether a copy of the slides could be circulated for further examination. The road network around the Dorset area has long been lacking and there was little mention of the A35 which is equally important. The fact that you are looking east/west and north/south will be a big improvement and this is imperative for the businesses in the north of the county.</p> <p>ACTION – Slides to be circulated</p> <p>Cllr Rigby thanked RL for the presentation and added that the linking with freight is welcome as it is an issue with connectivity and not just roads. One concerning note was that there seemed to be a lack of</p>

Item No	Notes / Actions
	<p>with Members. Better, more deliverable solutions might result following wider engagement as Members will be aware of the politics of the area. We need to ensure input from all stakeholders is sought as there is a challenge of balancing the needs of all groups before recommendations can be supported.</p> <p>RL confirmed that they are using the structure of local authorities to brief Members on what is going on, adding that it is important to note that these are high level strategic recommendations to take forward in the main forum. We do also have conversations with the MPs separate from the steering group.</p> <p>Cllr Rigby suggested that talking directly with Members will help the process.</p> <p>JS reiterated the concerns raised by the Chair that the plan didn't go all the way to the coast and was also concerned that the presentation did not mention ports as connectivity to the Dorset ports is an important element. As an example, we are hoping to start up a new ferry route to north Africa. JS would like reassurance that the ports of Portland and Poole have been included in the study.</p> <p>RL confirmed that discussions are ongoing especially regarding the last mile, but will check how this is being reflected and taken into consideration alongside broader issues in housing and development etc.</p> <p>JS hopes that the reassurance that the interest of the port and the traffic flows from the port have been taken into account in this study.</p> <p>Cllr McClelland thanks RL and his team for the work and added that it is interesting to see the development of the study. The A350 is critical to Wiltshire. It is encouraging that the study identifies the road safety and congestion of the roads around Salisbury. Salisbury needs a bypass for through traffic so any improvements in that regard would be welcome.</p> <p>Cllr Greene asked for confirmation that the study is looking at the north/south route?</p> <p>RL confirmed this and also that the proposals include smaller and also more transformational schemes. Salisbury is one of the key elements of the corridor.</p> <p>Cllr Greene Thanked RL and MD</p>
5	<p>Update on Programme – Financial Update <u>Paper A – Nuala Waters</u></p> <p>NW – Spoke to the paper</p> <p>Cllr Greene was content with all of the recommendations.</p> <p>Cllr Greene moved the proposal and Cllr Pearce seconded.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Noted the contents of the programme, update report II. Approved delegation to the Senior Officers Group and DfT/Project Sponsor for the Strategic Transport Plan Phase 1 Baseline Report and 4 Strategic Corridor reports. III. Approved delegation to the Senior Officers Group and DfT/Project Sponsor for the Freight project scope of works. IV. Approved an informal session with the Board to review the outputs of the Alternative Fuels study and long list of sites, with formal approval at the December Board.

Item No	Notes / Actions
	<p>V. Approved the Alternative Fuels Stage 2 shortlisting works ahead of the December Board and commission Midlands Connect as our supplier.</p>
	<p>Forward decision plan - Paper B – Nuala Waters</p> <p>NW spoke to the paper.</p> <p>NW added that an extension to the budget of approximately £40K has been requested to provide additional evidence base. The delay to the December board is beneficial and will deliver an improved product regarding the coach strategy.</p> <p>Cllr Greene asked whether this can be contained within our existing budget?</p> <p>NW confirmed this.</p> <p>Cllr Greene moved the proposal and Cllr Pearce seconded.</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Noted the contents of the Forward Decision Plan and advise the programme team of any issues or additional briefings required
7	<p>Update on Strategic Transport Plan (STP) - New Timescales Paper C</p> <p>JW spoke to the paper and noted that there are a number of reasons for the proposed change in timeframe. Work has been ongoing but has taken our consultants longer to produce. Our timeframe has slipped due to this and also due to the emerging DfT guidance. It was noted in the report that we are waiting for the draft guidance, however we have been advised that this does not apply to regional plans. We are reassured that there are no significant barriers which may affect our plan. It is worth noting the view that the Local Transport Plans (LTPs) should move towards a ‘vision and validate’ approach. This is different to the current ‘predict and provide’ approach but it does not rule out old schemes, however it might start to move focus away from major transport schemes.</p> <p>It is key for the STP to align with guidance from the DfT. The main issue is due to the delay in producing the evidence base and not having enough time to meet the original deadline approval in March. The proposed revised approach will produce an issues and options paper in early 2023. Following this, and using the issues and options consultation to draft the STP to reflect the vision and validate approach with a draft ready for the June Board for approval to then take to formal consultation. This results in a 5-6 month delay from the original timescales but it gives us more time to complete the consultation. The work could be accelerated but this is already a very tight timescale and there is both a reputational risk and a risk of being out of step with what is going on nationally.</p> <p>Cllr Greene noted that this is disappointing, accepting there have been challenges along the way and that it has been useful to ensure that we will be complying with the DfT. Reluctantly it makes sense to do it this way. Issues and options ensures that we get two rounds of engagement. Cllr Greene asked are there any other consequences for the STB or LA members in the six month delay? Is there going to be a difficulty if we do not have a sub-national transport plan in place?</p>

Item No	Notes / Actions
	<p>JW responded that there may be a second round of major road network funding and without having a strategic transport plan in place, there is a risk that we do not have a firm policy basis with which to make decisions. Current timescales for the second round of MRN funding is unknown. The second issue may be around the RIS and the need to align with these, so the sooner we have an STP in place, the better for the whole process.</p> <p>Cllr Greene suggested on this basis that although we need to ensure that due process is followed, we need to show that we have an emerging STP.</p> <p>AD added that in comparison with other STBs, it is only Western Gateway and Peninsula Transport yet to deliver their STP. Peninsula are on track to deliver in March. In terms of the RIS, AD agreed with JW that there is an issue here. However, there is no need for a complete strategy as long as Western Gateway STB can identify the top priorities and publicly be able to put these forward, then these can align with the National Highways work.</p> <p>Cllr Greene noted that through our issues and options paper, we can identify these priorities and convey to National Highways the confidence we have in the direction of travel and the key points that we expect to come out of the transport plan.</p> <p>AD agreed and suggested that the key issue may be around the timing of this work as National Highways may be publishing the initial report in late Oct/ early Nov which will then launch the DfT twelve week early consultation.</p> <p>Cllr Greene suggested that the programme team look at this to see whether the timetable needs to be changed.</p> <p>ACTION – JW to review timetable in light of the National Highways initial report due end Oct/ early Nov.</p> <p>Cllr Reede noted that he is also very disappointed about the delay and following on from AD, is concerned that it will get messy if the guidance is unclear. Is this all going through the Western Gateway or local authorities or a combination? Opportunities could be missed.</p> <p>Cllr Greene added that we understand that we will not have a final strategy until Autumn 2023, however we cannot afford to be falling behind all the other STBs so we have to leave it to our officers to ensure that doesn't happen.</p> <p>AD emphasised that the key thing is to submit a response to the consultation and to be seen with the other STBs to be influencing policy.</p> <p>Recommendations: The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I Approve the revised approach for producing the Western Gateway's Strategic Transport Plan. II Approve the revised timescale for producing and consulting on the draft Strategic Transport Plan.
10	<p>AOB (to be previously advised to Chair, please (mike.greene@bcpcouncil.gov.uk))</p> <p>Suggested dates for Partnership Board Meetings 2023: Tuesday 28th February Wednesday 28th June Wednesday 27th September</p>

Item No	Notes / Actions
	Wednesday 6th December

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 7th December, 1400-1600

Venue: County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8JQ