

## Western Gateway Partnership Board Meeting

### Agenda

Tuesday 25th March 2025, 14:30 -16:30

Location: Kapsovar Room, Guildhall, High Street, Bath, BA1 5AW

	Item	Who	Time
1	Welcome and apologies	Cllr Manda Rigby	14:30
2	Chair's announcement	Cllr Manda Rigby	14:35
3	Minutes and actions from the previous meeting (See Appendix 1 below)	Cllr Manda Rigby	14:40
4	Public Participation (Paper circulated separately to Board members) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions or Representations from members of the public in line with the Board's Public Participation Scheme.</li> </ul>	Cllr Manda Rigby	14:45
<b>MATTERS FOR DECISION</b>			
5	Update and approval of final draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) - <u>Paper A</u>	Cllr Hannah Young  Hannah Fountain	14:50
6	Approval of Business Plan and programme for 2025/26 Approval of annual member contribution of £20,000 per authority Confirmation of DfT funding for 2025/26 - <u>Paper B</u>	James White	15:10
7	Strategic Cycle Network approval - <u>Paper C</u>	Hannah Fountain	15:20
8	A303 Update - Letter on Western Gateway position - <u>Paper E</u>	James White	15:30
<b>MATTERS FOR INFORMATION</b>			
9	Technical Programme Update - <u>Paper F</u> Freight Rail Electric Vehicle Coach strategy Regional Centre of Excellence Rural Mobility	James White  Hattie James  Hannah Fountain	15:40
10	Finance update - <u>Paper G</u>	Mena Abidakun	15:50
11	Updates from Associate Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DfT - Verbal update</li> <li>• Network Rail - Paper and verbal update</li> <li>• National Highways - verbal update</li> </ul>	Ben Kempner Matt Haywood Alyssa Powell Richard Leonard	15:55

12	<p><b>Exclusion of the Press &amp; Public</b></p> <p>RECOMMENDATION that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act namely the financial or business affairs of persons tendering for the provision of council goods or services and of the Combined Authority, in both cases, and in accordance with Section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, by virtue of the fact that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.</p>		16:10
13	AOB	Cllr Manda Rigby	16:20

**Date of next meeting: Wednesday 18th June, 2025**  
**Time and Location: TBC**

**APPENDIX ONE - DRAFT Minutes and Actions from last meeting**

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November, 11:00 -13:00**

**Location: Virtual**

<b>Attendees:</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Cllr David Gray	Gloucestershire County Council (DR)
Cllr Manda Rigby	Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) (MR)
Cllr Hannah Young	North Somerset Council (HY)
Cllr Chris Willmore	South Gloucestershire Council (CW)
Hannah Shrimpton	Peninsula Transport (HS)
Felicity Clayton	National Highways (FC)
David Redgewell	Public participant (DW)
Cllr Emma Edwards	Bristol City Council (EE)
Stephen Wilson	Wiltshire Council (SW)
Matthew Prince	Somerset Council (MP)
Colin Chick	Gloucestershire County Council (CC)
Rosa Kell Wells	Public participant (RKW)
Cllr Tamara Reay	Wiltshire Council (TR)
Cllr Jon Andrews	Dorset Council (JA)
Cllr Andy Hadley	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) (AH)
Cllr Kye Dudd	West of England Combined Authority (KD)
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)
Hattie James	Western Gateway STB (HJ)
Arina Salhotra	Sphere Marketing (AS)
Alice Darley	National Highways (AD)
Jack Wiltshire	Dorset Council (JW)
Hannah Fountain	Western Gateway STB (HF)
Bill Davies	West of England Combined Authority (BD)
Mena Abidakun	Western Gateway STB (MA)
Jess Holroyd	Western Gateway STB (JH)

Apologies were received from:	
Ross Burton	Department for Transport (RB)
Jaime Rockhill	Network Rail (JR)
Louise McBride	West of England Combined Authority (LM)

Actions	Allocated to	Target Date:
Matt Haywood to find more about the process of reviewing the Bristol Temple Meads to Oxford line. To chat to GWR colleagues reviewing the trial.	MH	March 2025
HJ to update the EV Action Plan with additional comments received	HJ	December 2024
HJ to provide updates on the rural mobility pilot schemes.	HJ	February 2025

Item No	Notes / Actions
1.	<p><b>Welcome, apologies and introductions.</b></p> <p>Cllr Rigby welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies.</p>
2.	<p><b>Actions and Minutes of Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>These were agreed to be an accurate record. All actions from previous meeting closed.</p>
3.	<p><b>Public Questions</b></p> <p>Cllr Rigby confirmed some questions were received in advance by a member of the public.</p> <p>He expressed his concerns regarding the Megabus Scottish City link coaches, which have ceased to operate in England except for a handful of locations - a cancellation of around 700 coach services from next month. Mr Redgewell requested the STB to make representation to government about the loss of important coach services and what can be done to slow the decline and support services. He questioned the recent award of £83M in BSIP funding to authorities in the south west and wondered if a portion of this could be used on coach services.</p> <p>Mr Redgewell referred to the Coach forum and inquired whether it would be possible to include an operator update at the upcoming forum, rather than updates solely from Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT). He expressed his gratitude to Western Gateway and Peninsula Transport for the ongoing coach initiatives and the new services from Bristol airport to Gloucester, Cheltenham, and Weston-super-Mare.</p>

	<p>He asked about subsidizing longer distance journey services.</p> <p>Cllr Rigby acknowledged all points raised. The board papers contained the answers to the questions, and any additional comments were to be addressed later.</p>
4.	<p><b>Updates from Associate Members</b></p> <p>Apologies received from the DfT. Update note was provided ahead of the board meeting which was shared with board members.</p> <p>Matt Haywood joins from Network Rail, along with Alice Darley from National Highways. Alice will be going onto a secondment for the next 9 months.</p> <p><b>Matt Haywood at Network Rail:</b></p> <p>Jaime Rockhill sends his apologies. Network Rail paper was shared alongside the board papers. Some key headlines from the paper include the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expecting the spending review in Spring.</li> <li>• Demand and revenue run ahead of national figures for Western Gateway region. Data sets on annual station figures. We can also offer origin destination matrix - Matt will share the link to this.</li> <li>• Service improvements - May will see strengthening of short versions that South Western run and influx of new units for Cross Country broadly and ease capacity on West of England line.</li> <li>• Published Wiltshire Study</li> <li>• Underway with the Salisbury study</li> <li>• Steering group for Tisbury loop SOBC on 10<sup>th</sup> December</li> <li>• Draft report of Dorset Metro work by end of March</li> <li>• Working on proposal for engineering work and business case proposal for additional platform at Westbury.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Reay asked about trial between Bristol Temple Meads and Oxford on Saturday and what the process is for reviewing it.</p> <p>MH: Still need to make case for trains needed to run the train permanently. It has been well received, they are focusing for an hourly daily service which will require operational funding. MH will chat to colleagues and come back to Cllr Reay.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Matt Haywood to find more about the process of reviewing the Bristol Temple Meads to Oxford line. To chat to GWR colleagues reviewing the trial.</b></p> <p><b>Alice Darley at National Highways:</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alice ran through key headlines, with attention paid to RIS3 update. There will be an interim settlement for 2025/2026.</li> <li>• A417 is continuing with structural work being delivered successfully.</li> <li>• The A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester in Somerset opened to traffic on Monday, November 4, 2024</li> <li>• The A358 scheme was cancelled with budget announcement. Work has been handed back to Somerset council.</li> <li>• Renewals and safety pieces - A36 scheme was around stabilising the landscape, A432 work is continuing, demolition of bridge in Spring.</li> </ul> <p>Alice introduced Felicity Clayton - Head of Network Development at National Highways who will be representing National Highways on future board meetings.</p> <p>There were no questions on Alice's report.</p> <p>Cllr Rigby thanked Alice for her work.</p>
5.	<p><b>Strategic Investment Plan (SIP)</b></p> <p>Cllr Hannah Young presented the draft Strategic Investment Plan. Members were circulated a designed version prior to the board meeting. Cllr Young thanked the officers for getting this together given the tight timeframe.</p> <p>Cllr Young highlighted that the National Highways schemes are treated a little differently due to the RIS cycle issues.</p> <p>HF added that the draft text was circulated a week ago and prompted discussions, there have been tweaks and changes in the interim. These updates will include the names and brief descriptions of the schemes. In the designed version the table contains the new scheme names and descriptions, but these will be permeated through the rest of the document. The photos are holding ones, and we will be going out to authorities for more photos.</p> <p>CC raised concerns about the SIP not including transport schemes that have historically been in plans. Gloucestershire Council have invested in these heavily i.e. J10.</p> <p>Cllr Rigby acknowledged CC's concerns and we have until Dec 13<sup>th</sup> to tweak and amend wording and reflect the other schemes.</p> <p>Cllr Willmore commented on page 16, that the smaller schemes are mentioned in detail. Cllr Willmore continued that the major schemes haven't been included. Cllr Willmore continued that of the tweaking process between now and a couple of week will be for officers to strengthen the way they are described to explain why big schemes are not included in the document. They will be reflected and fuller in next years' roll forward when we're clearer about National Highways position. We can't support all the schemes as we don't have evidential basis.</p>

CC is in support of this. The schemes he is referencing are fully funded and supported and are different to other schemes being referenced that aren't in the document. Cllr Rigby noted all comments.

Cllr Hadley supports the work the team have done. He does feel that Poole Town Centre fell out of the scheme (understands around complexity and cost) and wants a comment around ones that aren't included and that they are still a priority.

Cllr Young wants to offer reassurance that it is the first time we've used the assessment methodology, and it has been tested via the project board. She said we have a legacy of schemes in process that are different of assessment of new schemes through the methodology. She agrees it is right to have things in documents that reflect things in train and with the new transport plan we have a methodology to help prioritise schemes in the future.

AD has a comment about the road investment strategy - they have supported that approach for September treatment of SRN scheme because of where they are with the road investment strategy. No guarantee of when we have further info on the schemes. Just to flag we may not be a significantly different position than what we are now.

AD talked about balance portfolio and decarb. She feels it is right that the STB focuses on this as key strands. She feels roads are in a journey in decarb agenda, roads to score similarly in sifting process is constrained by that. We may need to think about how roads play into sifting process to achieve a balance portfolio while they are in decarbonising process. She welcomes pragmatic approach but there is warning flag for next iteration.

Cllr Dudd said he is here representing Dan Norris. Cllr Dudd this piece of work. Would like to see non-physical infrastructure elements, especially around public transport - non-physical infrastructure elements include ticketing policy - treating area as geography - fayre zone to drive more passenger numbers away from private vehicles.

Cllr Rigby confirmed this was a good point well made.

Cllr Emma Edwards is here replacing Cllr Ed Plowden. She found the document interesting. One thing is looking at Portishead Line and the Henbury Line - question around phasing and how prioritisation was made. Due to arena in South Glos and building houses and transport links and is now in phase 2. Cllr Edwards asked where the priorities have come from and if there was scope to look at one link before the other?

Cllr Gray said that we should make mention to big advance schemes. For e.g. junction 9 proposals would unplug major block across country.

HF with regards to the Metro West lines, this was drawn from what WECA sent to us. The scoring goes back to the assessment methodology. Those higher on the list have scored better on a cost benefit analysis.

BD said the phasing is a slight misnomer, they are both priorities for the combined authority. They are both broadly moving towards 2027.

	<p>Cllr Young said she is committed to the Portishead Metro West scheme.</p> <p>Items 1-8 were then shown on the screen. These showed the following recommendations for votes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Note progress on the SIP.</li> <li>II. Approve application of the agreed assessment process (of which the output is the list of 38 prioritised proposals)</li> <li>III. Note the overall costs of the prioritised programme.</li> <li>IV. Approve the draft Strategic Investment Plan for consultation.</li> <li>V. Approve proposed consultation process.</li> <li>VI. Approve the list of key stakeholders as set out in Appendix A</li> <li>VII. Note options for document design and provide recommendations if desired.</li> <li>VIII. Delegate approval of final documents for consultation to SIP Board</li> </ol> <p>Cllr Willmore said there have been some big concerns raised and asked that we could note and to add to point 8 ‘bearing in mind the conversations we have had at the main board.’</p> <p><b>All recommendations were unanimously agreed.</b> No one abstained or voted against.</p>
6.	<p><b>EV action plan - Paper C</b></p> <p>HJ said it is a joint project with Peninsula Transport STB. Have run EV South West forums which are attended by all LAs. We are not putting in infrastructure put are encouraging conversations cross-boundaries.</p> <p>We would like the approval of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note progress on South West EV work</li> <li>2. To approve the EV Strategic Action Plan</li> </ol> <p>Cllr Hadley said in section 2.5 it talks about area for priority in public sector investment and rural and town villages - said problem about deprived areas. He would like to see something about EV charging points in section 4.4 and this should be encouraged to happen.</p> <p>HJ has noted this down. Cllr Andrews said they get a lot of push back from communities on EV action points. He also said how can people charge their vehicles on cheap electricity overnight. He supports Andy’s support about areas of deprivation.</p> <p>Cllr Reay asked if there could be clarify on user type and purpose and leisure journeys are catered for. It is not jumping out in the document. Wiltshire is using LEVI funding to develop a strategy for off-street parking.</p> <p>HJ said all the points are well made and discussions are going on.</p> <p><b>ACTION: HJ to strengthen the reference made to user type, purpose and leisure journeys in the EV action plan.</b></p>



	<p><b>HJ to note comments made by Cllr Hadley and Cllr Andrews and include reference to in the EV action plan.</b></p> <p><b>Everyone are in favour of the action plan, noting the discussions today.</b></p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>Rural Mobility - Paper B</b></p> <p>HJ highlighted that WG is working on a joint project with Peninsular Transport. They have a call for pilots out, the deadline is 8<sup>th</sup> December. They are engaging with all LAs. There are 100k for the whole of the South West which will be split into 50k for each region. They may award one for total or split into smaller pilots, within this financial year following WECA's grant assurance process. To ensure we award the grant this financial year, we have to tell them who we wish to award by w/c 9th Dec. This only gives us 48 hours after the application closes to be able to evaluate, so we have asked for a lead volunteer member to help with assessment process. No application submissions yet but people are working hard on them. Happy to provide an update.</p> <p>Cllr Rigby asked if anyone can do this on 10<sup>th</sup> Dec. Cllr Reay is happy to assist with this on 10<sup>th</sup> December, along with Cllr Willmore. Cllr Rigby has signed off Cllr Reay and Cllr Willmore's assistance.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Note progress on the Rural Mobility Project</li> <li>II. Delegate decision of outcome of call for pilots to a volunteer Board Member, or alternatively the STB Programme Team.</li> </ul> <p>Everyone is in agreement with the decisions.</p> <p><b>ACTION: HJ to provide update on the rural mobility pilot schemes.</b></p> <p><b>DECISION - Cllr Reay and Cllr Willmore chosen as lead for the Rural Mobility assessment</b></p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><b>Programme Update - Paper D</b></p> <p>JW was at a roundtable session with DfT and other STBs, covering priorities for 12 months and what support is needed, discussion about statutory status, what role can the STB play working with Mayoral Combined Authorities and how to balance needs across region.</p> <p>Cllr Rigby said Mr Redgewell flagged at the beginning of the meeting about Megabus pulling out. Cllr Rigby said it would be good to put money behind it and share best practise with them. Cllr Young said it was good to see the Megabus featured in the paper. Cllr Young asked if there is a need for assessment to be wider than the route mentioned due to Megabus withdrawing more generally, and asked if there wider gaps within the region now?</p>

	<p>Cllr Hadley supports Cllr Young’s comments about Megabus. Cllr Hadley queried the drone delivery in the freight strategy, or whether this is last mile autonomous vehicle delivery and seeks clarification.</p> <p>HF responded that the Megabus issue is being picked up in a wider context. On phase 2 of the strategy we are looking at route from Cheltenham to Bristol Airport - phase 3 looking at additional routes coming up from South Coast. For phase 3 work, this will be run by Megabus and others, and has been scoped. With request for additional funding, we need to retrospectively alter phase 2 output, which was the assessment of the route. We had completed the assessment when news came in. JW communicated that he is not aware for any plans in piloting drones, and there is no dedicated work on this year for freight. Cllr Hadley raised there may be an omission around the last mile delivery piece. JW highlighted that we need to look at other ways we can deliver in rural areas without the need for white vans.</p> <p>JW again drew attention to the notes and recommendations for the Board.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. To note the progress of the programme update report.</li> <li>II. Approve an increase of up to £10k for the Coach work, due to an extension of scope</li> <li>III. Approve an increase of up to £10k in the cycling budget to cover a possible additional round of engagement and revision and associated costs.</li> </ol> <p>JW said bringing in consultants to support us. JW said we don’t need to allocate additional resource but we will come back if we require additional funding. Cllr Willmore asked how we will pay for consultants. JW said this comes from RCEO budget. Cllr Willmore said for Glos and WECA authorities who are affected - if we sign off from budget we are not detracting from this highways issue? JW said this is noted.</p> <p>Everyone is in favour of recommendations. No one voted against.</p>
9.	<p><b>Finance Report - Paper - E</b></p> <p>MA summarised the paper. Started with 960k with a total spent to date of 690k. Will see spend picking up as projects are paid off. There is some underspent in freight work, SIP and EV because work has been taken in house. This will go into the risk contingency pot.</p> <p>The board is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. To note the current financial position on the report till date II.</li> <li>II. To delegate decisions on re-profiling spend to Senior Officer Group</li> </ol> <p>Cllr Rigby asked whether there should be a limit of 5k on the reprofiling before it comes back to the Board. HF raised this would require a lot of additions to the agenda. Cllr Rigby said if these are overarching budget decisions these are different to SIP ones which is an operational matter. Cllr Hadley asked whether a percentage was more appropriate but he said it is about trust. Cllr Rigby clarified it is more about transparency. MA said for this quarter to next quarter there will be substantial payment reallocation and should we come to the Board via email? Cllr Rigby and Cllr Willmore</p>

proposed they are informed between Board meetings. Cllr Hadley said can we add 'in consultation with the chair.'

- I. Revised II to: To delegate decisions on re-profiling spend to Senior Officer Group in consultation with the Chair.'

Everyone was in favour.

JW ran through the housing figures and highlighted some of the key challenges, which focus on the most rural parts of the Western Gateway geography. JW then ran through the next steps work on refocusing the Regional Centre of Excellence work. There is a small amount of budget for this.

There were no other discussion points for the meeting. The next meeting will look to be held in person in March at the Guild Hall in Bath.