

## **Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body (STB)**

### **Board Meeting**

#### **Paper A**

Date **24<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Title of report: **Protocol for Local Authority Contribution**

Purpose of report: **To present a protocol to manage situations where a Local Authority is temporarily unable to pay its annual contribution, and to seek Board approval**

#### **Recommendations:**

The members of the Board are recommended to approve:

- I. The protocol for temporary non-payment of annual contribution by Local Authorities, as set out in Appendix One (separate attachment)

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 On 2 September 2025, the Department for Transport (DfT) informed all Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs) that Government funding would cease at the end of March 2027. STBs were invited to submit a work programme and transition funding bid for 2026/27 by December 2025.
- 1.2 In response, the Western Gateway STB developed a work programme for 2026/27, including a funding request of £600,000 from DfT. Confirmation was received in January 2026 that Western Gateway would receive £450,000.
- 1.3 On 3 November 2025, Western Gateway wrote to constituent Local Authorities requesting a modest increase of 20% in annual contributions, from £20,000 to £24,000 for 2026/27, to support delivery of the agreed work programme and strengthen the STB's financial position during the transition period.
- 1.4 At the Partnership Board meeting on 3 December 2025, members agreed by consensus on the request of annual contributions of £24,000 from each constituent authority, whilst recognising the financial pressures facing some Local Authorities.

### **2. Emerging Issue: Risk of Non-Payment**

- 2.1 At the Partnership Board meeting on 25 February 2026, members discussed the potential impact of financial pressures on constituent authorities and the

possibility that some authorities may be temporarily unable to make their annual contribution.

- 2.2 It was recognised that there was no existing mechanism within the governance framework to manage non-payment of Local Authority's agreed annual contribution due to financial difficulties.
- 2.3 As a result, the Board requested Western Gateway officers to develop a protocol that would provide a clear and consistent framework for managing any instances of temporary non-payment, while maintaining effective partnership working and organisational stability.
- 2.4 The protocol is designed to ensure fairness, continued partnership working, protect the Western Gateway STB's governance integrity and uphold the principle that the Western Gateway STB's work benefits all members while respecting the financial constraints of individual authorities.

### **3. Development of Protocol**

- 3.1 In March 2026 following the Board's request, a draft protocol was prepared.
- 3.2 In April 2026, the draft was circulated to Senior Officers of all constituent authorities for review and comment and was discussed at the Senior Officers Group meeting
- 3.3 Feedback received from constituent authorities informed the final version of the protocol. The revised draft was circulated to Senior Officers on 26 May 2026 and is attached at Appendix One (separate attachment).

### **4. Purpose and Principles of the Protocol**

- 4.1 The protocol is designed to:
  - Ensure fairness and consistency across all Constituent Authorities
  - Support continued partnership working during periods of financial challenge
  - Protect the governance and credibility of the Western Gateway STB; and
  - Recognise that the STB delivers shared strategic benefit to all members whilst acknowledging individual financial constraints.

### **Recommendation**

- I. **Approve the protocol for temporary non-payment of annual contribution by Local Authorities, as set out in Appendix One**

### **5. Consultation, communication and engagement**

- 5.1 The draft protocol was shared with Senior Officers on 8 April 2026 for review and discussion with their members. Feedback was considered through discussions at Senior Officers Group meetings in April and June 2026 and

has informed the final version presented for approval. Final draft circulated to Senior Officers on May 2026, ahead of the June meeting.

## **6. Equalities Implications**

6.1 No adverse impact on any protected groups is expected.

## **7. Legal Considerations**

7.1 The Western Gateway STB remains an informal non-statutory partnership. The protocol strengthens governance arrangements within this framework

## **8. Financial considerations**

8.1 The agreed increase in annual Local Authority contributions from £20,000 to £24,000 for 2026/27 will generate total contributions of £216,000.

8.2 The protocol does not alter the agreed contribution level, but it provides a managed approach where payment cannot be made due to financial difficulties.

## **9. Conclusion and recommendations**

9.1 Given the financial pressures facing some Local Authorities and the absence of an existing mechanism to manage contribution shortfalls, the proposed protocol provides a practical, fair, and transparent solution.

9.2 Following consultation with Local Authorities, a protocol has been developed to provide this framework whilst supporting effective partnership working and maintaining the integrity of the Western Gateway STB.

9.3 The Board is asked to approve the protocol for temporary non-payment of annual contribution by a Local Authority as set out in Appendix One (separate attachment)

**Appendix One:** Protocol for non-payment of Local Authority Contribution – separate attachment

Contact Officer

Mena Abidakun, Project Manager, Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body  
Email – [Mena.abidakun@westofengland-ca.gov.uk](mailto:Mena.abidakun@westofengland-ca.gov.uk)