

## **MY EMAIL TO WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY (WECA) 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Thank you for your last email and update. That is so reassuring to know that all responses received will be considered separately.

I was lucky enough to get a ticket to attend the WECA meeting in Keynsham BANES on Tuesday, when the JLTP4 was discussed. I found out about it by chance. I attended specifically for the JLTP4 consultation.

**Please confirm when similar meetings will be held in the other council areas i.e. before the 20<sup>th</sup> March when the consultation ends.**

Prior to the meeting, the audience were asked to submit a question. I submitted my question good faith. I made a point of saying to the staff and writing on my paper that I was asking a question that at least 2500 will be interested in hearing the answer. *My question: How much do you consider the increased pollution levels that your plans will create?*

During the meeting we were shown the same film that is on the website. The questions had been grouped up and some of the general topics that were raised were given an 'overview' response. NOT ONE question was read out in full. The combined replies that were given to the general issues raised. All we heard was non-specific answers. I, and SO MANY others, were very disappointed. There was no further opportunity mentioned to put the specific audience questions to WECA. People were left waiting for their answers.

Audience members were not given an opportunity to speak.

After the meeting, I took the opportunity to share with Tim Bowles, just how disappointed I was that he did not specifically answer the questions. He said that was because of time constraints. As part of the core group on the Facebook Group, I have been involved with organising public meetings. I understand that you have to manage expectations. I do appreciate the time constraints BUT audiences' expectations NEED to be managed. They were not.

I made a suggestion to Tim. I asked him to publish all the questions and his specific answers. I, for one, was also VERY interested to hear what questions others were asking. I was also particularly keen to feed back to the Facebook group that I am in, what his reply was to my question. He said that he would take that suggestion away. Tim also said that he could not guarantee that he would do this, without any reason why not.

I appreciate that the meeting was held. BUT I, and others, didn't think that it was a two way process, it left people thinking that this was just 'a tick box exercise'. No-one had a chance to question anything that was said during the meeting. There was no follow up mentioned for people who still have very valuable concerns about the impact of the plans on them.

Moving forward, will the questions submitted at the meeting be answered? Will the questions and answers be published? If not, how do people who still have very valuable specific questions about the impact of the plans on them engage in conversation with WECA?

I can genuinely can say that the plans between the Hicks Gate Roundabout and the Hartcliffe Roundabout WILL be the weak link in the plans to join up the Bristol Ring Road. I do not have any official qualifications in transport although I do have 35+ years of living in the area and even more years of moving around the area as a pedestrian, bus passenger and a car driver. I know that qualifies me to be able to confidently comment on the section of the JLTP4 that covers where I live.

To make it easier for you, the Facebook group, with over 2500 people, all with very similar concerns, would appreciate it if WECA could engage with us and work with us to address these issues. The people in the 'South Bristol Wrong Road' Facebook group want to have meaningful conversations with WECA regarding the JLTP4. I know that a selection of people in the group are actively working with the planning team to come up with alternatives BUT that means that the current plan stays on the table. We need assurances that the current plan to build a road across the Green Belt and use

Whitchurch Lane as the orbital highway, is taken off of the plans. Please engage with the residents to confirm why the suggestion of using it is just not suitable. It is just not fit for purpose. What's more the plans goes against all your Visions Objectives and Outcomes. This is not acceptable.

No-one appears to be listening to the residents when it is pointed out that you have NOT applied your stated Visions Objectives and Outcomes to the plans for Whitchurch and Stockwood.

If I am mistaken, or have misinterpreted the information that you have provided, PLEASE speak with me and let me, and the thousands of others in the area, know. I have never been involved in a campaign such as this before. BUT after speaking to SO MANY friends and neighbours and picking up on over 99% of the local people are VERY concerned that the plans are not fit for purpose, I am determined to all that I can to make my voice heard and help others do the same.

If WECA want to genuinely engage with people and are really listening to what I am saying and truly you want to hear from those whose lives will be affected, please say.

I followed up the meeting by emailing Tim Bowles the very next morning, so far I have not heard back from him.

I look forward to hearing back from you, as soon as possible.

#### **REPLY FROM REMY OSMAN POLICY ADVISOR AT WECA 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Your email of 7<sup>th</sup> March has been passed onto me as I was involved with the organisation of last week's Transport Forum.

This event was the first of a series of Transport Forums we plan to hold over the year. The idea was for a general public forum to learn and ask questions about WECA and operators' wider transport plans, and thus not exclusively around the JLTP4. The date of next forum will be announced in due course.

Thank you for your suggestions on the Question and Answer format which I will feed back for when we are planning the next event.

Your below points regarding the specific plans have been noted by our transport team in the usual way. I have passed on your specific question regarding pollution levels, and you should hear back in due course from either myself or the relevant team.

Thanks again for your feedback on the Forum; we are eager to keep improving going forward, so it was valuable to hear your thoughts.

#### **MY RESPONSE 11<sup>th</sup> MARCH**

It was appreciated that the meeting was not exclusively around the JLTP4. However, **it was the only public meeting that I am aware of**, held by the those whose vision inspired the JLTP4. Only offering approximately 30 minutes to such an important topic within a meeting was totally underestimating the level of interest and potential questions that it generates. You say that the idea was for the public to learn and ask questions. It is appreciated that the public did submit questions to be asked BUT not one question was read out and no specific questions were answered regarding the JLTP4. Talking at us with non-specific information, leaves us with MORE questions than answers. It appears from your answer that there will be no other public meeting for the public to ask questions before the deadline of 20<sup>th</sup> March. **Is that right?**

**What timescale can I expect, regarding hearing back from you, or the relevant team, regarding the question that I submitted at the meeting?**

I appreciate that you are eager to keep improving going forward and that it was valuable to hear my thoughts. In the meantime, I have some more questions that I would really appreciate answers to regarding the JLTP4. As WECA have issued the JLTP4, I have no other point of contact, in WECA, to ask but you.

Please can you respond to the following questions, if you need clarification as to what I mean by each of the questions, please do not hesitate to ask me for a further explanation. It is so important that I base my submission on facts. Please note that ideally I need the answers to my questions within the next day or so, to allow me to put together my submission for the JLTP4, and to respond by 20<sup>th</sup> March.

**Please can you confirm the following:**

#### HOUSING

The housing plans are based on the figure of 105,000

- **where did the figure of 105,000 homes come from?**

There is already significant numbers of houses being built.

- **When does the figure of 105,000 start to be counted? How many of the 105,000 have been built already?**
- **Since there are so many new houses already how many people have been taken of the housing list as a direct result of the recent new houses?**

Alternative solutions to help provide homes to the people on the housing list

- **What is being done to look into the root causes of homelessness?**
- **What alternative ways, are being explored, to house people. E.g. rent a room schemes?**

#### Location of homes

There are very few employment opportunities in the South Bristol area of Whitchurch and Stockwood. Any homes that are built will have occupants that will have to travel to work.

Why are you considering building homes and new roads nowhere near hubs of employment. The balance of homes and employment in an area is paramount to the future success of the area.

- **Is the balance of employment and housing being considered? If so, what is the ideal balance?**
- **Is the policy to always use brown field sites first?**
- **Will BANES commit to providing health services, schools etc to service the 2500 homes in Whitchurch village? The existing services in BCC area already are not coping with the current numbers of residents.**

#### CONGESTION

From what I can gather, solutions need to be found to improve congestion on the A4. I was astounded to see that the solution was to build across green belt and force the congestion on the A4 through a residential road, physically dividing a community and increasing pollution levels for all of the residents. I personally really appreciate that Marvin Rees has sent a transport team to work with the SBWR (South Bristol Wrong Road Facebook Group). Although, this is just looking at one element of the plan. Why were residents were not involved at a far earlier stage, i.e. BEFORE the plans were drawn up. I am not aware of WECA working with any other groups, looking at issues that are generated by the JLTP4

Alternative additional ways to reduce congestion other than building roads and changing road usage

- **What is stopping the councils deciding the frequency, the fare structure and where buses are needed?** Then the routes can be put out to tender. For every lucrative route gained the winning bus company must take on a less profitable one
- Is it time to consider re-regulation the bus service.
- With the bus pass age rising to 66/67/68 more people less than this age will not be encouraged to use the bus. **Have you looked into a discount card for older bus users or a loyalty card, the more you use the bus, the cheaper it gets or you get a free journey every now and then?**
- **Are you looking into why children no longer walk to school, what things are you putting in place to make sure they can?**
- **Where are we with the underground plans?** Start small if funds do not allow. This has got to be a positive solution to take us 2036 and beyond
- **How much weight did you put to the fact that the plans for the Stockwood/Whitchurch area will create MORE pollution? Where are the studies to show how much pollution there already is on Whitchurch Lane?**

The proposed scheme may lead to an overall reduction in congestion throughout south/east Bristol. **BUT it will lead to an overall increase through south Bristol!** That is just shifting the problem around and not actually dealing with it. **That is not acceptable to me.**

Marvin told me that 'unsuitable traffic' will be removed from Ridgeway lane. **What is the 'unsuitable traffic' that will be removed from Ridgeway Lane?** I live on Ridgeway Lane and even if that meant less traffic outside my door, which I have my doubts about, I do not want to push the traffic onto other residents. I am not a Nimby! **Are you saying that Whitchurch Lane will get an increase of through traffic, despite knowing that it is already running at almost full capacity?**

Through SBWR, I am helping and encouraging friends and neighbours to actively participate. **WE**

#### **ANSWERS TO OUR QUESTIONS**

**As you are aware, the majority of the members of the SBWR group appear to be negatively impacted by the proposed plans?**

It would be very much appreciated if you could **answer all of my questions** and make comments about the points I have made.

These are the sorts of questions that many of our Group has. Whilst I am writing to you from a personal perspective. I will be happy to share your reply with the Facebook group (which has already over 2500 members). I am happy to be a vehicle to communicate the information that people need so that they can make an informed choice about what they think of the plans.

If you are able to respond the all of the questions and comments above I am sure that will go some way to restoring our faith and prove that you truly want to work with the residents to reach the best solutions as possible.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you ASAP.

#### **REPLY FROM THE MAYORS OFFICE 5<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2019**

Thank you for your email. I am sure that you will appreciate that as you have asked multiple questions, it has taken a while to gather the information required.

105,500 homes is the total number of homes for the wider city region from 2016 to 2036. The figure is explained in the housing evidence base for the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP): Topic Paper 1 Housing Requirement (SD14N) You can read more [here](#). The JSP housing requirement will be counted from

2016. Data for the region has been compiled and is published in Table 2 of SD14G, Topic Paper 5: Housing Supply

The JSP is based on evidence which assessed the employment and housing needs of the region. The Economic Development Needs Assessment (SD15B) identified the need to accommodate 82,500 additional jobs, which has informed the Employment Land Requirement as outlined in Policy 4 of the JSP. Policy 2 of the JSP states that the housing and job requirements will be achieved through maximising the sustainable development of previously developed land and other appropriate opportunities within existing urban areas. This approach is outlined in Topic Paper 7: Urban Living (SD14K).

Please note that the JSP is not a West of England Combined Authority-led plan, and any further JSP-related enquiries can be directed to [info@jointplanningwofe.org.uk](mailto:info@jointplanningwofe.org.uk).

We are working with our constituent councils on plans to improve walking & cycling routes in the region. In terms of Mass Transit, further funding has been allocated to proceed with the proposals as we work with our constituent councils to work up the plans. Real time and historic air quality data for Bristol is available [here](#).

In terms of busses, with the exception of a handful of bus routes, the majority of bus services outside of London are operated on a commercial basis. This means that bus operators set the routes, fares, frequency and hours of operation for the services which they run and have direct responsibility for the day to day operations of services. At present, local authorities have limited powers to directly influence the decisions that operators make and with the exception of a handful of routes that are not commercially viable, do not financially support bus operations.

The English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, established in 2007, allows those of pensionable age (and also those of any age with a disability) to travel free of charge on journeys starting within Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset or South Gloucestershire, Monday to Friday after 9am and anytime on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, and on local buses starting anywhere else in England, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 11pm and anytime on Saturday, Sunday or public holidays.

Regarding your other questions including homelessness and housing lists, these are the responsibilities of our constituent councils who will have information online or if you get in touch directly. I understand that you have been in touch with Bristol Mayor Marvin Rees who has already answered some of these questions.