

Statement Paul Crossley

WEP MAA

The Liberal Democrat group remained concerned about the increasing use of the West of England as a delivery forum for services and investment for our community. We regret that at the last cabinet the decision to put our LSC share into an WEP pot was taken rather than bringing it back to Banes. I agree with David Cameron's stated desire to reduce the number of quangos and do not want to see WEP evolve into one.

We consider that the Council should be looking at a greater range of partnering opportunities rather than just concentrating on WEP. For example we consider that on waste we have more synergy with Somerset and on housing and consequent congestion the impact of Wiltshire on us is far more significant than Bristol or S Glos.

On the economy we do not support the expansion of Bristol airport which we think will adversely affect our rural areas. BUT we do support the ability of Bristol Port to service our country now and into the future and are greatly concerned that the WEP decided to support the Government proposals to investigate the large barrage. This inability of the WEP to proceed on design innovation for our region through a variety of new tidal solutions and opt for a three barrage consultation show in our view that WEP does not deliver good economic outcomes for the region and has a priority set different to ours.

On skills we consider this better done from within Banes by developing our resources.

All in all this document leaves too many unanswered questions, not enough firm targetting and not enough assurance that we will get anything positive out of it. It puts too much pressure on us setting our agenda according to the needs of other authorities.

We suggest that the Cabinet should seriously consider withdrawing from this process.