



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 22 October 2019 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

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| Councillor Lisa Trickett (Chair) | Birmingham City Council |
| Councillor Cathy Bayton (Vice-Chair) | Association of Black Country Authorities |
| Councillor Lynnette Kelly (Vice-Chair) | Coventry and Solihull Local Authorities |
| Councillor Ahmad Bostan | Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Councillor Richard Brown | Coventry City Council |
| Councillor Dean Carroll | Shropshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities |
| Councillor Mike Chalk | Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities |
| Councillor Peter Fowler | Birmingham City Council |
| Councillor Angus Lees | Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Councillor Dr. Simon People | Staffordshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities |
| Councillor Stephen Simkins | Association of Black Country Authorities |

Statutory Officers In Attendance

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| Deborah Cadman | Chief Executive |
| Tim Martin | Monitoring Officer |
| Lyndsey Roberts | Statutory Scrutiny Officer |

**Item Title
No.**

13. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lucy Seymour-Smith (Birmingham City Council) and Paul Sweet (City of Wolverhampton Council).

14. Inquorate Meeting

Tim Martin, Head of Governance, Clerk and Monitoring Officer, indicated that this meeting was inquorate and therefore decisions taken at the meeting would be submitted to the WMCA Board of 8 November 2019 for formal approval.

15. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Lisa Trickett reported that she was under contract to support the broader work being undertaken by Climate-KIC and Councillor Stephen Simkins reported that he was the Chair of the West Midlands Pension Fund Committee.

16. Minutes - 2 September 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on the 2 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

17. Matters Arising

(a) Member Attendance

Members expressed their disappointment on the meeting being inquorate again. Councillor Lynnette Kelly also highlighted that no representative from the local enterprise partnerships had been in attendance during the current new municipal year. The Chair indicated that she would contact those who had given apologies for every meeting to determine whether they still wished to remain on the committee and contact would also be made to local authority leaders and the chairs of LEPs to share the concerns being expressed by members of the committee.

(b) Action Plan

The Director of Public Services Reform informed committee that he would be working with Councillor Richard Brown on the outstanding action relating to information on 5G being supplied to the committee.

(c) Meeting Location

Members of the committee considered that future meetings were to be held at the offices of the WMCA at 16 Summer Lane, as this was a central location to all. It was also noted that the facility of live streaming committee meetings was being explored.

18. Presentation on the WMCA's Carbon Reduction Action Plan Proposals

The committee received a presentation from the Henry Kippin, Director of Public Service Reform, on how the WMCA would be addressing the climate challenge in the West Midlands in a collaborative and engaging way. A West Midlands target of net-zero emissions by no later than 2041 had been set and agreed at WMCA Board in July 2019.

It was noted that a report would be submitted to the WMCA Board in November 2019 outlining a plan as a starting point for dialogue and engagement with various stakeholders across the region. The plan was based on five underlying principles: we need to make the journey to 2041 without leaving anyone behind; we need to boost our resilience to 'locked in' climate breakdown; we need to reconcile our past with our future; we need to build more places and have more connectivity between places; and we need to reduce demand for energy and resources without impacting on shared prosperity.

Councillor Stephen Simkins suggested that a building standard should be set by the WMCA for the region, however the Director of Public Service Reform indicated that the WMCA had no control over local planning authorities but could help the region act collaboratively in making a commitment to common standards. Councillor Richard Brown expressed his concerns at the risks and timescales of time to achieve a baseline carbon dioxide reduction of 36% by 2022. There was also concern over the lack of funding allocated to implement the plan to achieve its target of 2041. Councillor Ahmad Bostan highlighted the need to gain investment from Government to be able to make a difference and transition but also the need to ensure affordability for all communities at both a housing and transport level.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

The presentation be noted.

19. Feedback from Overview & Scrutiny Committee Mayor's Question Time: Policy

The committee considered a report outlining the feedback and recommendations to the WMCA Board from the Mayoral Q&A session held on the 9 October.

The Chair highlighted that committee would have an additional Mayoral Q&A session in February 2020 that would be focussed on connectivity matters. She also referenced paragraph 4.2 of the report and noted the potential for members to look at whether the WMCA was appropriately structured from a governance perspective to discharge its functions and responsibilities.

Both Councillor Ahmad Boston and Councillor Lynnette Kelly expressed their disappointment at the Mayor's comment regarding their respective cities not having spent their share of the Housing First funding, which did not reflect the situation as they understood it. The councillors requested those comments be clarified.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The Mayoral Q&A event held with members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, joined by members of the Young Combined Authority, on 9 October be noted.
- (2) The conclusions arising out of the event as set out in the report be endorsed.
- (3) A further Mayoral Q&A event be held in February 2020 with a specific focus on connectivity matters.

20. WMCA Scrutiny Review on the Effectiveness of Transport Delivery Committee in Overseeing the Delivery of the WMCA Transport Policies

The committee considered a report updating it on the progress of the work of the Transport Governance Scrutiny Review Group.

It was proposed that the review look at the effectiveness of Transport Delivery Committee in ensuring that the transport policies of the WMCA positively contributed towards the delivery of its wider corporate objectives. The conclusions of the review group would be presented back to committee at its meeting on 17 December 2019.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The proposed scoping document for a scrutiny review into the effectiveness to Transport Delivery Committee in overseeing the delivery of the WMCA's transport policies be approved.

21. Forward Plan

The committee noted a forward plan of items that were to be reported to future meetings of this committee and the WMCA Board.

22. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 17 December 2019 at 10.00am

23. Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

That in accordance with s100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business as it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of the Act.

24. Presentation on Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2020

The committee received a presentation setting out an overview of WMCA finances for 2019/20 to date, an update on the WMCA's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), options for closing the growing future gap and a timetable for development of the MTFP 2020.

The committee received information on the additional funding that had been devolved from Government to the WMCA to deliver its priorities through two devolution deals, a housing deal and a skills deal. Councillor Lisa Trickett requested that it was clearly identified in the information presented what was additional funding in comparison to existing funding. In relation to the funding gap identified for transport, the committee requested to have sight of the 30 key prioritisation objectives.

The Chair expressed concerns around the investment not reflecting the priorities on the WMCA and focusing on closing the financial gap. Members raised concerns in relation to business rates growth, HS2, uncertainties of Brexit and the potential investment and growth capacity of local authorities.

Members would be invited to attend a budget workshop where future financial information would be provided along with the requests for information on capital investment. The Chair noted that this item had been considered in private session, and she reminded the committee that scrutiny was most effective when conducted in public. She therefore expected that future scrutiny of budget matters would be held in public session so that scrutiny could be carried out in a transparent way.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.20 pm.