



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 18 December 2019 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Lisa Trickett (Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Cathy Bayton (Vice-Chair)	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Ahmad Bostan	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Peter Fowler	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Dr. Simon People	Staffordshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Stephen Simkins	Association of Black Country Authorities

In Attendance

Deborah Cadman	West Midlands Combined Authority
Councillor Kath Hartley	Transport Delivery Committee
Linda Horne	West Midlands Combined Authority Young Combined Authority

Item No. Title

25. 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 on 17 January 2020 for formal approval.

26. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lynnette Kelly (Coventry & Solihull Local Authorities), Councillor Richard Brown (Coventry City Council), Paul Brown (Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership), Councillor Chris Cade (Warwickshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities), Councillor Mike Chalk (Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities), Councillor Angus Lees (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Lucy Seymour-Smith (Birmingham City Council), Councillor Kate Wild (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council) and Sarah Windrum (Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership).

27. Mayoral Q&A - Budget 2020/21

Members of the committee, along with Aisha Masood from the Young Combined Authority, questioned the Mayor on financial matters relating to the WMCA and its developing budget for 2020/21. The Portfolio Lead for Finance, Councillor Bob Sleigh, was also questioned on matters relating to the Investment Programme that had been considered at meetings of the

Investment Board.

Members questioned the Mayor on issues including financial transparency between proposed and actual spend, measures to achieve inclusive growth outcomes, targeting investments and outcome-based funding, the future funding arrangements for the Young Combined Authority, future intentions for a mayoral precept and a WMCA business rate supplement, and a greater focus on explaining to the public the outcomes that the WMCA had achieved.

In respect of specific matters to bring to the attention of the WMCA Board, it was recommended that:

- (a) A mechanism be developed that provided for assessing the impact on the WMCA's Investment Programme of new projects coming forward, and that this mechanism include an evaluation of carbon counting, social impact and value-added assessments.
- (b) An environment impact assessment be undertaken before any new WMCA policy was introduced so that its direct impact on the environment was assessed as part of wider policy considerations.
- (c) Any assessment of the regional skills gap be focuses on addressing the future and projected skills needs of the region.
- (d) A commitment be given to fund the Young Combined Authority for the four-year period 2020/21 – 2023/24
- (e) Investment be prioritised to reflect the changing contexts within the region since the WMCA was initially established in 2016 (eg. Climate emergency, economic impacts).
- (f) Caution be exercised over the use of reserves to fund the WMCA's revenue expenditure and the need to identify a more sustainable longer-term approach.
- (g) The delivery and performance monitoring framework be further developed so that it provided greater public transparency and clarity regarding the successes and challenges in delivering the WMCA's policy objectives.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

The matters identified above that arose out of the Mayoral Q&A on 18 December 2019 be considered further by the WMCA Board.

28. Minutes - 22 October 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22 October 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

In regard to the outstanding action relating to Housing First spend, clarity was provided by the Head of Governance on the comments made by the

Mayor at the Question Time session held on 9 October 2019.

29. Matters Arising

The committee noted the response from the Mayor in regards to the Mayor's Question Time held on 9 October 2019 that had been previously circulated to all members.

30. Scrutiny Review into the Effectiveness of Transport Delivery Committee in Overseeing the Delivery of WMCA Transport Policies

The committee considered a report from Councillor Cathy Bayton on the findings of the recent scrutiny review undertaken to determine the effectiveness of Transport Delivery Committee and to ensure that the transport policies of the West Midlands Combined Authority positively contributed towards the delivery of its wider corporate objectives.

Councillor Cathy Bayton highlighted that further to discussions with the Transport Portfolio Lead Councillor Ian Ward, an amendment would be made to recommendation 3 whereby membership of the proposed Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee was suggested to be drawn from any member of a constituent authority transport scrutiny committee. This change in wording was supported by members of the committee.

Councillor Kath Hartley, Chair of Transport Delivery Committee, offered a number of comments on the recommendations contained within the report, including supporting the establishment of the Strategic Transport Board to co-ordinate the development of transport policy across the region.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The conclusions and recommendations of the scrutiny review group, as set out within the report, be endorsed subject to an amendment to the potential membership of the proposed Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee..

31. WMCA Scrutiny Review on the Effectiveness of the WMCA's Governance Structures in delivering the policy objectives of the WMCA

Councillor Lisa Trickett provided the committee with an update on the progress made with the development of a scoping document for a scrutiny review on the effectiveness of the WMCA's governance structures in delivering its policy objectives.

The proposed review would look at whether the governance structures of the West Midlands Combined Authority were appropriate to deliver its aims and policy objectives, given the growth of the WMCA's remit and influence. Councillor Lisa Trickett would lead on this review alongside with the following councillors who indicated their interest of involvement with the review; Councillor Simon Peale, Councillor Stephen Simkins, Councillor Ahmad Bostan, Councillor Peter Fowler and Aisha Masood (representative from the Young Combined Authority).

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The proposed scoping document for a scrutiny review into the effectiveness of the WMCA's governance structure in delivering the policy objectives of the West Midlands Combined Authority be considered and approved.

32. Scrutiny Champions Update

Councillor Simon Peale reported back to the committee following a meeting with Gareth Bradford, Director of Housing & Regeneration, in relation to queries on the allocations of housing funds between local authorities and affordable housing.

33. Forward Plans

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

34. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 21 January 2020 at 10.00am

The meeting ended at 12.55 pm.