



West Midlands Combined Authority

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 13 July 2020 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Lisa Trickett (Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Cathy Bayton (Vice-Chair)	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Richard Brown	Coventry City Council
Paul Brown	Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership
Councillor Chris Cade	Warwickshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Peter Fowler	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Angus Lees	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Lucy Seymour-Smith	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Stephen Simkins	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Kate Wild	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

In Attendance

Deborah Cadman	West Midlands Combined Authority
Paul Clarke	West Midlands Combined Authority
Louise Cowen	West Midlands Combined Authority
Dan Essex	West Midlands Combined Authority
Julia Goldsworthy	West Midlands Combined Authority
Councillor Julian Grubb	Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Linda Horne	West Midlands Combined Authority
Mohammed Lukeman	Young Combined Authority
Tim Martin	West Midlands Combined Authority
Aisha Masood	Young Combined Authority
Rebecca Riley	West Midlands Combined Authority
Lyndsey Roberts	West Midlands Combined Authority

Item Title No.

54. 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 24 July 2020 for formal approval.

55. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ahmad Bostan (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Paul Sweet (City of Wolverhampton Council), Councillor Dean Carroll (Shropshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities), Councillor Mike Chalk (Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities), Mike Lyons (Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP) and Councillor Diane Todd (Staffordshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities).

56. Minutes - 15 June 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15 June 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

57. Matters Arising

Membership

The Chair welcomed Councillor Diane Todd as the Staffordshire non-constituent local authorities and Councillor Robert Grinsell as the joint Coventry/Solihull representative to the committee. She thanked Councillor Simon Peale for his input and engagement with the work undertaken by the committee.

The Chair asked that a letter be sent to both Councillor Simon Peale and Councillor Lynnette Kelly to thank them for their work and valued contributions made during the course of the year.

Mayoral Question Time: Connectivity – Response from the Mayor to recommendations presented to the WMCA Board on 5 June 2020

The committee noted the response received from the Mayor in respect of the issues it had identified following the Connectivity Q&A on 13 February 2020. The committee sought further clarity on funding allocation relating to the Emergency Active Travel Fund, of which will be provided by the Director of Finance. The issue relating to a change in policy for 16 – 18 Photocard Travel pass would be reviewed by the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

58. Covid-19 Regional Recovery

The committee received an overview of the work undertaken to date to respond, support and accelerate economic recovery from the Director of Strategy. An overview of the State of Region report was provided which provided analysis of the region's economic strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The committee also received information on the emergency economic response and measures taken at a national, local, regional and sub-regional level. Members were given an overview of regions investment case to Government which set out the key immediate asks of the Government from the West Midlands which totalled £3.2bn of investment over a three-year period. It was also recognised that the West Midlands had secured up to £66m for schemes to drive economic recovery and six areas had been identified to reset, rebuild, recharge, create and safeguard jobs for the West Midlands economy.

The Chair stressed the importance of ensuring that the pursued methods of growth for the region reflected and addressed the inequalities, ensuring a difference was made to communities and local economy. Further to the announcement relating to the £66m of Government funding awarded to the West Midlands, the committee was keen to have sight of the criteria being used to assess approved schemes going forward for approval to Government.

Councillor Cathy Bayton raised concerned that the schemes being progressed did not adequately address the retail and hospitality industry and questioned as to why to the WMCA was seeking funding for a project such as the Creating Grand Central Diagnostics Hub at Birmingham New Street station that they had no responsibility over. The Director of Strategy assured the committee that schemes going forward were in collaboration with a range of institutions across the region and that the WMCA would often play a 'convening' role. The Director of Strategy undertook to confirm the delivering body for the diagnostics hub scheme.

Councillor Stephen Simkins indicated that work needed to be undertaken to address the delivery and financial impact the scheme being considered would have on local authorities, which were themselves facing financial pressures. The Director of Strategy understood the committee's concerns that the schemes taken forward did not address all areas, but the Recharge for West Midlands investment case was focused on projects that could be delivered within the current financial year, would deliver immediate impact in the real economy and would help the Governments priority of 'levelling-up'.

Councillor Cathy Bayton noted that a number of projects within the asks of Government, including the Dudley Interchange and Very Light Rail schemes, were essential projects to support local economic recovery and redevelopment and had previously been supported by the WMCA. The implications of these schemes now losing out on funding to other schemes would be significant. Councillor Angus Lees endorsed these comments. The Chair undertook to speak further with Black Country representatives on this committee about this issue.

Members of the committee stressed the importance of ensuring clarity between those scheme with existing funding commitments and those that were seeking the new funding sources targeted at post-Covid-19 regional economic regeneration.

The committee discussed a number of work areas it wished to pursue during the year. These included assessing the extent that projects contained within the Recharging the West Midlands investment case addressed structural needs within the region, ensuring that the brownfield land remediation funding contributed to local housing need, and a tracking document that mapped Government funding allocations against the 'asks' made with the regional investment case.

In addition, the Director of Strategy was asked to provide further details on the favourable assessment of achieving zero hunger within the State of the Region report, given the experiences of communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The report be noted.
- (2) Further work be undertaken to develop the actions and workstreams identified by members into a work programme for the committee for the coming year.

59. Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee Governance Arrangements

The committee received a report from the Governance Services Manager informing it of the governance arrangements for the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee for 2020/21, including the appointment of a Chair for the sub-committee, its terms of reference and the appointments made by constituent authorities. It was noted that although non-constituent authorities representation was not reflected in the membership (which mirrored the membership arrangement of the Transport Delivery Committee and the Strategic Transport Board) invites would be made to attend meetings when it was considering items impacting on non-constituent areas.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The Terms of Reference for the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee be approved.
- (2) Councillor Cathy Bayton be appointed as Chair of the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee.
- (3) The members nominated by constituent authorities to sit on the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee as detailed in the report be noted.
- (4) The Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee to approve any subsequent minor changes to individual appointments made to the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee.
- (5) The timetable of meetings for 2020/21 be noted.

60. Forward Plan

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

A briefing note that outlined the work programme for the forthcoming year would be circulated to the committee prior to its next meeting.

- 61. Date of Next Meeting**
Monday 7 September 2020 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 11.45 am.