



West Midlands Combined Authority

Wellbeing Board

Tuesday 8 March 2022 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Chair)	Portfolio Lead for Wellbeing
Councillor Nicolas Barlow	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Kamran Caan	Coventry City Council
Councillor Karen Grinsell	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Julian Gutteridge	Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
Councillor Suzanne Hartwell	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Andrea Simmonds	West Midlands Fire Service
Sarah Marwick	GP Representative
Sean Russell	Universities West Midlands (Coventry)
Mike Wade	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

In Attendance

Angela Aitken	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Mubasshir Ajaz	West Midlands Combined Authority
Lynne Bowers	The Health Creation Alliance
Ed Cox	West Midlands Combined Authority
John Denley	Wolverhampton City Council
Jed Francique	West Midlands Combined Authority
Madeleine Freewood	City of Wolverhampton Council
Stacey Gunther	Public Health England
Simon Hall	West Midlands Combined Authority
Anita Hallbrook	West Midlands Combined Authority
Lisa McNally	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Tatum Matharu	West Midlands Combined Authority
Aqeel Rizvi	West Midlands Combined Authority
Justin Varney	Birmingham City Council

Item Title No.

53. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Craddock, Councillor Hamilton, Councillor Jaspal, Mark Axcell and Pete Wilson.

54. Notification of Substitutes

Andrea Simmonds (West Midlands Fire Service) was nominated as a substitute for Pete Wilson.

55. Chair's Remarks

(i) Roy Wilcox

The Chair reported on the sad news that Roy Wilcox, Thrive at Work Programme Engagement Officer, had recently passed away following a short illness. Roy would be remembered by colleagues and missed by all the team.

(ii) Councillor Paulette Hamilton

The Chair reported that the board had lost its Vice-Chair, Councillor Hamilton, who won the parliamentary by election for Erdington last week. She congratulated Paulette on her achievement and for being the first black MP for Birmingham. The Chair and members reflected on Councillor Hamilton's work in support of wellbeing and in particular with regards to mental health.

(iii) Meetings at Summer Lane

The Chair reported that she would like to hold the next meeting in-person following the lifting of Covid restrictions and sought the views of the board on this matter. The board supported hybrid meetings that would allow people to join the meeting virtually if they were unable attend.

56. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

57. Revisiting Health of the Region Report - Draft Report

The board considered a report from the Strategic Lead for Thrive and Inequalities that sought a review and approval of the 'Revisiting the Health of the Region' (HOTR) draft report prior to its publication and launch of the Health of the Region Data Hub.

The Head of Wellbeing and Prevention, Mubasshir Ajaz, introduced the report that was an interim report on the Health of the Region following the publication of the previous report in November 2020. He advised that it is proposed to move to a three-year cycle for the main report and an interim report at 18 months, with the next main report due in November 2023.

The Strategic Lead for Thrive and Inequalities, Tatum Matharu presented the draft report and asked colleagues to provide any comments from current date up to 19 March before its launch on 26 April. Tatum also provided a demonstration of the GIS Data Hub which captured multiple data sets and the cumulative effects of inequalities.

Dr Justin Varney (DPH Birmingham) expressed concern that the WMCA was replicating information already produced by local authorities and asked that proper engagement be undertaken with Directors of Public Health. In relation to the structure of the report, he considered this should indicate what has happened at the WMCA level but should also celebrate what has been achieved collectively working together across the WMCA. He added that the GIS Data Hub also required a narrative around the numbers to provide the context for the data.

The Head of Wellbeing and Prevention thanked Dr Varney for his useful comments and advised that the GIS Data Hub was an internal tool for use for the WMCA that would be utilised with regards to its fairer, greener and healthier strategy for the region. He reported the draft HOTR report would be submitted formally to Directors of Public Health and the report would not be published until there was an agreed version.

The Chair encouraged everyone to submit their comments on the draft report to Mubasshir and Tatum.

Resolved:

1. The draft 'Revising the Health of the Region' report be noted and
2. Comments be submitted on the draft report prior to its completion and publication.

58. Wellbeing Annual Performance and Forward Planning

The board considered a report of the Head of Wellbeing and Prevention that provided an update against progress to date against the 2021/22 High Level Deliverables. This included a separate update report on the Thrive at Work programme.

The Head of Wellbeing and Prevention, Mubasshir Ajaz, provided an update on the status for each of the deliverables. The board also received more detailed updates from the Strategic Lead for Wellbeing and Prevention, Simon Hall on developing and sustaining a physical activity programme with regional partners and from the Head of Mental Health Partnerships, Jed Francique, who provided an update on the Thrive at Work programme.

In relation to the physical activity programme Justin Varney (DPH Birmingham) and Lisa McNally (DPH Sandwell) considered the board should look to build on the legacy of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games and to share learning and successes.

Councillor Caan noted a deliverable (WM05) had an aim of making the West Midlands an exemplar region for getting more disabled people active and asked for this to be an agenda item at a future meeting to enable the board to learn more and accelerate this work.

In relation to the Thrive at Work Programme that is to be reviewed and refreshed prior to its extension, Justin Varney reported on the need to understand the low take-up levels for the programme by businesses and suggested the Chambers of Commerce be contacted for their insight. He also considered that it would be timely to reboot 'Every Mind Matters' and link this to the Commonwealth Games and the physical activity programme.

Jed Francique advised that he would seek the views of businesses and other stakeholders on Thrive to meet their needs and as part of the refresh would look to make the product meaningful and easy to use.

Sean Russell concurred with the need to undertake a quick needs assessment with businesses / stakeholders and to sign post them to areas of interest.

Resolved:

1. Progress against the 2021/22 High Level Deliverables to date be noted;
2. More detailed reports on the areas of activity identified be considered at future meetings and
3. The update on the Thrive at Work Programme be noted.

59. Levelling Up the United Kingdom. The Levelling Up White Paper, Health and Wellbeing Opportunities

The board considered a paper from the Health and Wellbeing Programme Manager from the WMCA and Office for Health and Disparities that presented the opportunities within the Levelling Up White Paper for the WMCA, WMCA health and wellbeing priorities and the Wellbeing Board.

The Head of Wellbeing and Prevention, Mubasshir Ajaz and the Health and Wellbeing Programme Manager, Stacey Gunther provided an overview of levelling up, outlined the six 'capitals' that will drive levelling up, the twelve focus areas and missions of the four objectives.

The Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Reform, Ed Cox, reported on the work the WMCA is undertaking with regards to levelling up and in particular with regards to health and wellbeing. This included working on the trailblazer devolution deal for health, exploring opportunities created by the Smart City Region and the West Midlands Levelling Up workshop to be held later in the month.

Ed Cox reported on the need for the WMCA to be ambitious and for colleagues to consider what is feasible by way of a devolution deal and put forward their ideas that could feed into the negotiations with government and before the WMCA Board meeting on 10 June. It was noted that the WMCA would not be seeking to take on more powers for health but wanted local authorities, NHS and ICS partners to advocate what they need from a devolution deal.

The board was asked to consider what Government needs to do differently and to put forward specific suggestions or creative ideas that could be tested by the WMCA as part of the trailblazer pilot.

The board discussed the need to influence government to unlock green spaces for physical activity, provide flexibility on legislation with regards to housing and planning policy and the need to access data from other agencies in order to work together.

The Chair asked colleagues to put their ideas forward to Ed, Mubasshir and Stacey and to highlight to the team any other stakeholders that should be involved.

Resolved:

1. The contents of the report be noted and
2. That Board members consider opportunities within the Levelling Up White Paper for the WMCA, WMCA health and wellbeing priorities and Wellbeing Board and inform WMCA colleagues accordingly.

60. Forward Plan

The Head of Wellbeing and Prevention reported that opportunities for mental health and physical activity with regard to the Birmingham Commonwealth Games would be considered at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.45 am.