

West Midlands Combined Authority – Decisions taken by the WMCA Board on Friday 13 January 2023

Agenda Item No	Item	Decision
1.	Apologies for Absence	Apologies for absence were received from Anita Bhalla (Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP), Councillor Greg Brackenridge (West Midlands Fire Authority), Councillor Tony Jefferson (Stratford-on-Avon), Councillor Abdul Khan (Coventry), Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Warwickshire), Councillor Kristofer Wilson (Nuneaton & Bedworth) and Sarah Windrum (Coventry & Warwickshire LEP).
2.	Chair's Remarks	<p>The Chair noted that this was the last meeting for Kim Bromley-Derry (Sandwell), Helen Paterson (Walsall) and Martin Reeves (Coventry) before they undertook new roles.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Helen Edwards (Director of Law & Governance) to her first meeting.</p>
3.	Minutes - 16 December 2022	Agreed as a correct record.
4.	Forward Plan	The plan was noted.
5.	Regional Activity & Delivery Update	The update was noted.
6.	WMCA Draft Budget 2023/24	(1) The draft 2023/24 WMCA consolidated revenue budget was approved for consultation, which included:

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Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The budget requirement for transport delivery in 2023/24 comprising three elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) £119.4m to be funded from the existing transport levy mechanism; (ii) Use of £4.7m business rates retention income; (iii) Transfer from earmarked reserves of £9.2m. (b) The budget requirement for portfolio delivery in 2023/24 of £170.4m comprising of six elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) £140.6m Adult Education (including level 3) spending to be funded from Adult Education Budget funding devolved by the Department for Education; (ii) £16.1m to be funded from devolution deal grants; (iii) £1.3m to be funded from other income, notably investments; (iv) £4.6m to be funded from constituent authority fees (fees to remain at the same level as 2022/23); (v) £0.4m to be funded from non-constituent authority and observer fees (fees to remain at the same level as 2022/23); (vi) Use of £7.3m business rates retention income.

West Midlands Combined Authority – Decisions taken by the WMCA Board on Friday 13 January 2023

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		<p>(2) The Mayoral office budget for 2023/24 of £0.9m, to be funded from additional Mayoral Capacity Funding, was approved for consultation and scrutiny.</p> <p>(3) The draft 2023/24 capital programme of £805.1m was approved for consultation.</p> <p>(4) The planned spend on the Investment Programme over the period was noted.</p> <p>(5) It was agreed to review the Mayor’s budget and set out in a report to the Mayor whether it was approved in its current form, including any recommendations, before 8 February 2022.</p> <p>(6) It was noted that there would be no Mayoral precept during 2023/24.</p> <p>(7) The WMCA’s on-going commitment to work with the Mayor and Leaders to discuss future funding for the WMCA during 2023, including the need to review local choice transport policies, was noted.</p> <p>(8) The matters identified by Overview & Scrutiny Committee that arose out of the Mayoral Q&A on 15 December 2022 was noted.</p> <p>(9) Authority was delegated to the Executive Director of Finance & Business Hub and the Executive Director of Economic Delivery, Skills & Communities to accept any funds awarded for the careers enterprise and LEP integration into the WMCA.</p>
7.	Financial Monitoring Report 2022/23	(1) The financial position as at 30 November 2022 was noted.

West Midlands Combined Authority – Decisions taken by the WMCA Board on Friday 13 January 2023

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>(2) The latest full year forecast for 2022/23 was noted.</p> <p>(3) The Bus Service Improvement Plan funding update and receipt of the first payment of £18.4m was noted.</p> <p>(4) The grant award of £0.32m from Innovate UK (part of the UK Research & Innovation) for Innovation Accelerator was noted.</p> <p>(5) It was noted that the Government had now approved the WMCA’s plans for investment of the £88m UK Shared Prosperity Fund, covering the three years to 2025.</p> <p>(6) Authority was delegated to the s151 Officer, in conjunction with the Executive Director of Economic Delivery, Skills & Communities and the Monitoring Officer, to accept any funds awarded as a result of the Bootcamp Wave 4 bid and to enter into the various funding agreements and contracts required to enable delivery of the programme.</p> <p>(7) The Adult Education Budget rate uplift of 10% that had recently been approved by the Executive Director of Finance & Business Hub (s151 Officer) in accordance with WMCA’s approved scheme of delegation, and that the rate uplift could be contained within the existing approved budget for 2022/23, was noted.</p>
8.	Trailblazer Devolution Deal Update	The update was noted.

West Midlands Combined Authority – Decisions taken by the WMCA Board on Friday 13 January 2023

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9.	Very Light Rail Regional Package Strategic Outline Business Case	<p>(1) The Very Light Rail Regional Package strategic outline business case, at a total cost of £36.8m following the assurance work which had taken place, including endorsement of the case by Investment Board, was approved.</p> <p>(2) It was agreed that the WMCA submit the business case to the Department for Transport (which was expected to result in the Department for Transport relaxing the retained status for this element of the programme).</p> <p>(3) Funding was approved for draw-down within phase 1 of the business case delivery as follows (subject to the necessary Department for Transport consents):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs totalling £8.988m for Coventry City Council, being the sum required to complete Phase One of the Very Light Rail project. • Costs totalling £1.20m for Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council. • Costs totalling £600,000 being the sum required to complete the initial works to be undertaken by Transport for West Midlands. <p>(4) The financial conditions to apply to the capital grant as agreed between officers of the WMCA, Coventry City Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and Transport for West Midlands were endorsed.</p>
10.	Wellbeing Board - 5 December 2022	The minutes were approved.
11.	Environment & Energy Board - 7	The minutes were approved.

West Midlands Combined Authority – Decisions taken by the WMCA Board on Friday 13 January 2023

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
	December 2022	
12.	Investment Board - 12 December 2022	The minutes were noted.
13.	Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 15 December 2022	The minutes were approved.
14.	Young Combined Authority Update - January 2023	The report was noted.
15.	Exclusion of the Public and Press	The public and press were excluded for the remainder of the meeting.
16.	LEP Integration: Submission of West Midlands LEP Integration Plan	<p>(1) Authority was delegated to the Executive Director of Economic Delivery, Skills & Communities, in consultation with the Leaders of constituent authorities and on the advice of the Statutory Officers, to finalise and submit the West Midlands Integration Plan by 27 January 2023, including the transition plans of the Black Country, Coventry & Warwickshire and Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEPs.</p> <p>(2) The integration of LEP roles and functions into the WMCA (subject to confirmation of Government funding) and based upon the operating models co-designed with local authorities was approved.</p> <p>(3) The arrangements for the continuing ‘business voice’ on committees and boards</p>

West Midlands Combined Authority – Decisions taken by the WMCA Board on Friday 13 January 2023

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		<p>of the WMCA was approved.</p> <p>(4) The transfer to WMCA of those staff from the LEPs entitled to transfer under TUPE was agreed, and the Chief Executive as Head of the Paid Service was approved to determine the staff to transfer.</p> <p>(5) It was agreed that Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, Birmingham City Council and Coventry City Council as the Accountable Bodies for the Black Country LEP, the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP and the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP respectively, should be responsible for the on-going delivery and monitoring of LEP legacy programmes, including the Black Country Enterprise Zone and the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Enterprise Zone, and the WMCA would be accountable for providing assurance that the Accountable Bodies remained responsible for all future monitoring and reporting activities.</p> <p>(6) Following feedback from Government, the Monitoring Officer was authorised to make any minor administrative changes to the WMCA’s constitution that were necessary pursuant to the integration and winding up of the LEPs.</p>
17.	West Midlands Innovation Accelerator	<p>(1) The recommendations of the West Midlands Innovation Board’s Selection Panel for the allocation of £33m for five projects to form the West Midlands Innovation Accelerator to be delivered between April 2023 and March 2025 was endorsed.</p> <p>(2) It was noted that the Innovation Accelerator projects were subject to final due diligence by Innovate UK and Treasury approval of the final business case in January covering all three regional Innovation Accelerators, meaning final funding confirmation and disclosure of projects was under strict embargo until</p>

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Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>the end of January.</p> <p>(3) The steps were agreed to exploit the wider strategic potential of the Innovation Accelerator by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the Economic Growth Board and Innovation Board played a core role in connecting Innovation Accelerator projects with associated work on business support, skills, inward investment and land development/infrastructure. • Further developing the relationships with Innovate UK and UK Research & Innovation to maximise investment in research and development across the West Midlands. As well as having a quality-assured pipeline of projects to go, there was also opportunity to use Innovate UK's commitment to a co-designed action plan to proactively level-up innovation capacity and capability across the region, particularly in the Black Country which saw fewer proposals.
18.	Date of Next Meeting	Friday 10 February 2023 at 11.00am.