

West Midlands Combined Authority – Decisions taken by the WMCA Board on Friday 17 November 2023

Agenda Item No	Item	Decision
1.	Apologies for Absence	Lee Barron (Midlands TUC), Councillor Kerrie Carmichael (Sandwell), Councillor Lezley Picton (Shropshire), Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Warwickshire) and Councillor Sharon Thompson (Birmingham).
2.	Minutes - 13 October 2023	Agreed as a correct record.
3.	Forward Plan	Noted.
4.	Regional Activity & Delivery Update	The update on recent regional activity was noted.
5.	WMCA Financial Monitoring Report - November 2023	<p>(1) The financial position as at 30 September 2023 was noted.</p> <p>(2) The early warning of a further projected overspend of £1.5m on the Metro Wolverhampton City Centre Extension project was noted, and the proposed funding solution and potential budget increase of £1.5m was approved.</p> <p>(3) The new grant awards to the WMCA were noted.</p> <p>(4) The updated financial planning position for the period 2024/25 to 2028/29 was noted.</p> <p>(5) The updated position on the Sustainable Warmth competition was noted.</p>

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		<p>(6) The Treasury and Prudential Indicators for the period ending September 2023 (Quarter 2) was noted.</p> <p>(7) The outcome of the annual review of the Single Assurance Framework, undertaken in accordance with the requirements mandated by Government, was noted.</p> <p>(8) The performance to date of the West Midlands 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot was noted.</p> <p>(9) The Memorandum of Understanding with the Government regarding the offer of 10-year, 100% Business Rate Retention for the West Midlands, in accordance with the Trailblazing Devolution Deal, was approved.</p> <p>(10) Authority was delegated to the Section 151 Officer (following consultation with the relevant portfolio holder) to accept grants awarded to the WMCA between 17 November 2023 and the January 2024 WMCA Board meeting, subject to the terms and conditions of those grants being acceptable to the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and the relevant Executive Director, and the relevant Single Assurance Framework process being followed.</p>
6.	European Athletics Championships	A letter to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport regarding the region’s support for the European Athletics Championships 2026 being hosted by Birmingham, and confirming that work was being undertaken to ensure there was no new or additional risk to the WMCA and other constituent authorities, be agreed and sent.

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7.	West Midlands Investment Zone and Levelling Up Zones Update	<p>(1) The overall proposition for business rate retention and tax incentive sites to be included in the West Midlands Investment Zone and for those ‘Growth Zone sites’ that would be included for Business Rate Retention within Levelling Up Zones was approved.</p> <p>(2) The establishment and responsibilities of a Joint Committee to govern the implementation of the West Midlands Investment Zone, its terms of reference and that Warwickshire County Council, as a non-constituent authority, be given full voting rights on the Investment Zone Joint Committee, was approved.</p> <p>(3) The work in progress regarding the finance and funding plan that would underpin delivery of the Investment Zone and Levelling Up Zones sites and the key actions and principles to guide its further development was noted.</p>
8.	Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan	<p>(1) The draft Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan was endorsed.</p> <p>(2) The regional approach to tackling air quality and the Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan, outlined in detail in the Air Quality Framework, was endorsed.</p> <p>(3) Stretch targets which were more ambitious in terms of timescales and pollutant concentration targets than the Government’s air quality targets, and which were closer to World Health Organisation targets for NO² and PM^{2.5}, as recommendation by the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee, were adopted as part of the development of the Regional Air Quality Framework.</p>

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9.	WMCA Homelessness Taskforce: Update and Key Priorities	<p>(1) It was noted that the homelessness being experienced by vulnerable citizens across the WMCA region was actively inhibiting the ability to create a more prosperous, fairer and INclusive region for all, and that the Homelessness Taskforce had been one of the means by which the WMCA and its partners had collaborated to address this.</p> <p>(2) The means by which the WMCA and its partners could align efforts to accelerate progress towards the joint aim of designing out homelessness in all its manifestations, including by continuing to embed homelessness prevention into the mainstream strategies, processes, and programmes of the WMCA through cross-directorate activity and endorsing the Taskforce’s adoption of a broader focus on all forms of homelessness was noted.</p> <p>(3) The Homelessness Taskforce’s identified priorities for 2023/24 and beyond, including specific actions to commission a suitably experienced and qualified organisation to help investigate and articulate an evidenced-based economic case, and to consider how to jointly lobby Government to improve the current Local Housing Allowance model, was endorsed.</p>
10.	Update on HS2 Announcements and Network North Funding	<p>(1) The recent Government announcements in relation to the cancellation of parts of HS2 as a national project and the reallocation of funding as specified in the Network North document published following the Prime Minister’s speech at the Conservative Party Conference in October 2023 was noted.</p> <p>(2) It was noted that programmes and projects utilising this funding would follow the</p>

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		<p>existing governance routes and would come back to the WMCA Board for decisions over £20m and the Investment Board for decisions below that amount.</p> <p>(3) It was noted that an assessment of the economic impacts for the region associated with these changes was being commissioned to help inform any future investment programmes and refresh of existing business cases that were predicated on the arrival of the full HS2 scheme and which would be subject to a future report to the board.</p>
11.	Birmingham Eastside Extension	<p>(1) It was noted that sections of the Birmingham Eastside Metro Extension had been successfully delivered in Lower Bull Street (section 1), as well as certain elements between Lower Bull Street and Moor Street Queensway (section 2), which included utility diversions and the demolition of a number of buildings, and that works were due to be completed in Digbeth (section 5) by the end of 2023.</p> <p>(2) The change to the delivery schedule for the Birmingham Eastside Extension scheme, which paused metro works whilst Curzon Street station was built following a signed Memorandum of Understanding between HS2 and the Department for Transport and as previously reported to the board, was noted, and it was noted that the Birmingham Eastside Extension schedule could also be impacted by further potential changes to the HS2 programme arising from the recent decision by the Government to cancel the northern parts of the scheme, further detail of which was awaited.</p> <p>(3) It was noted that this pause in delivery, and any potential further changes to the HS2 programme, would have an impact on costs due to inflation as previously reported and prolongation of the delivery to the full scheme as a consequence of</p>

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		<p>HS2 works.</p> <p>(4) It was noted that the WMCA Board remained committed to completing the full scheme and that work was ongoing with HS2 and Birmingham City Council to finalise designs for both the Curzon Street Station and any resultant changes to the base metro design, and this work would need to be completed in order to produce the full scheme scope and costs including reimbursement from HS2 for the financial impact of delays, and be subject of a further report to board next early next year.</p> <p>(5) It was noted that three options had been considered to assess the opportunity to release some early connectivity benefits whilst the scheme was paused as referred to in previous board reports (March and June 2023).</p> <p>(6) Option 3 to undertake an interim scheme terminating at a temporary stop alongside Moor Street Queensway at a current cost estimate of £245m, which included all works completed to date, was approved.</p> <p>(7) It was noted that the additional funding required of £17m to complete this interim scheme would be provided through the overprogramming of City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and provided for within the additional headroom provided following the Network North announcements reported in a separate paper to the board.</p> <p>(8) The work commencing to progress both development and construction of option 3 was approved, subject to an agreed design and construction methodology with Birmingham City Council as the Planning and Highway Authority, being contained within the £245m estimate and following a value for money assessment and a successful outcome through the single assurance framework.</p>

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		<p>(9) It was noted that a comprehensive report would be brought to a future meeting of the board within the next six months, subject to all information available from delivery partners, setting out costs, funding strategy and the programme to complete the Birmingham Eastside Extension in full, including remaining works to sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the scheme, and this report would include a revised full business case, including a value for money assessment that would require evaluation through the single assurance framework.</p>
12.	New Stations Package 1: Project Costs Update	<p>(1) The cost pressures associated with the New Stations Package 1 project were noted.</p> <p>(2) The proposed funding solution to extend the over programming of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement 1 was approved.</p> <p>(3) The Section 151 Officer was given the delegated authority to amend the project budget by up to £15.43m, subject to satisfactory assurances being received by the Executive Director for Transport for West Midlands with respect to the anticipated final cost.</p>
13.	Investment Board - 24 July 2023	The minutes were noted.
14.	Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 4 September 2023	The minutes were noted.

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15.	Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 4 September 2023	The minutes were noted.
16.	Economic Growth Board - 22 September 2023	The minutes were noted.
17.	Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee - 4 October 2023	The minutes were noted.
18.	Investment Board - 16 October 2023	The minutes were noted.
19.	Housing & Land Delivery Board - 18 October 2023	The minutes were noted.
20.	Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 19 October 2023	The minutes were noted.
21.	Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 30 October 2023	The minutes were noted.
22.	Transport Delivery Overview &	The minutes were noted.

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Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
	Scrutiny Committee - 30 October 2023	
23.	Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 6 November 2023	The minutes were noted.
24.	Date of Next Meeting	Friday 12 January 2024 at 11.00am.