

West Midlands Combined Authority – Decisions taken by the WMCA Board on Friday 9 February 2024

Agenda Item No	Item	Decision
1.	Apologies for Absence	Lee Barron (Midlands TUC), Councillor Shaun Davies (Telford & Wrekin), Councillor Susan Juned (Stratford-on-Avon), Councillor Abdul Khan (Coventry) and Councillor Derek Poole (Rugby).
2.	Chair's Remarks	<p>(a) Wayne Brown - Chief Fire Officer, West Midlands Fire Service The Mayor and members paid tribute to Wayne Brown, who had recently died. The board observed a minute's silence in his memory.</p> <p>(b) Transfer of Police & Crime Commissioner Powers The Mayor reported that the Home Secretary had written to him to indicate that he was now satisfied to transfer the functions of the PCC to be exercised by the Mayor following the May elections. The Mayor had replied giving his consent, as required by the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023. An Order would now be laid in Parliament to enable the transfer to take place.</p>
3.	Minutes - 12 January 2024	Agreed as a correct record.
4.	Forward Plan	Noted.
5.	Regional Activity & Delivery Update	A presentation on recent activity of the WMCA and regional trends across the West Midlands was noted.

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6.	Race Equality Week - Update from Race Equalities Taskforce	An update from Sharonjit Clare, Chair of the Race Equalities Taskforce was noted.
7.	State of the Region	<p>(1) The issues and recommendations arising from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee’s consideration of the report was noted.</p> <p>(2) The key messages and recommendations set out within the report was noted.</p> <p>(3) It was noted that the report would form part of the evidence base for the region’s economic development work as part of the regular review of the economic conditions in the West Midlands and forthcoming West Midlands Futures work programme.</p>
8.	WMCA Budget 2024/25	<p>(1) A cash flat transport levy for 2024/25 of £119.4m was approved.</p> <p>(2) The budget requirement for transport delivery 2024/25, totalling £198.3m and comprising three elements was approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) £119.4m to be funded from the existing transport levy mechanism; (ii) use of £73.9m of grant income, including £28.4m of Network Stabilisation Grant; (iii) use of windfall gains from treasury management of £5.0m. <p>(3) The budget requirement for portfolio delivery in 2024/25 of £262.0m comprising</p>

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		<p>of six elements was approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) £142.0m adult education (including Free Courses for Jobs) spending to be funded from adult education budget funding devolved by the Department for Education; (ii) £104.4m to be funded from other grants; (iii) £2.3m 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 2023/24); (v) £0.4m to be funded from non-constituent authority and observer fees (fees to remain at the same level as 2023/24); (vi) use of £8.3m business rates retention income. <p>(4) The Mayoral Office budget for 2024/25 of £7.0m, of which £0.9m to be funded from additional Mayoral Capacity Funding and a further £6.1m to be funded from reserves, was approved.</p> <p>(5) It was noted that there would be no mayoral precept during 2024/25.</p> <p>(6) The first year (2024/25) of the indicative WMCA capital programme, totalling £706.8m, noting the indicative onward programme thereafter, was approved.</p> <p>(7) The planned spend on the Investment Programme over the period was noted.</p>

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		<p>(8) The advice of the Director of Finance & Business Hub in relation to the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves was noted.</p> <p>(9) The WMCA's ongoing commitment to work with the Mayor and Leaders during 2024 to discuss a sustainable funding solution for transport which would meet the scale of ambition for the network was noted.</p> <p>(10) Authority was delegated to the Director of Finance & Business Hub, in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for Finance, to make any final changes that might result from the final Local Government Finance Settlement.</p> <p>(11) Authority was delegated to Executive Directors to progress expenditure within the budget that was in furtherance of WMCA Board-approved local policy.</p> <p>(12) The following policies and strategies, which contained items as required by statute, were approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Treasury Management Policy Statement; (b) Treasury Management Strategy, including the 2024/25 Investment Strategy and criteria for specified and non-specified investments; (c) Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Statement; and (d) Pay Policy Statement.
9.	Employment & Skills Strategy for	The Employment & Skills Strategy 2024-27 was approved, and the approach being

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	Deeper Devolution	adopted through the strategy to ensure the integration of employment and skills across the region was endorsed.
10.	2024/25 Skills Bootcamps Change Request	<p>(1) The receipt of £26,794,280.20 from the Department for Education to enable the extension of the Skills Bootcamps programme to cover the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 was approved.</p> <p>(2) Authority was delegated to the Interim Executive Director for Employment, Skills, Health & Communities, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer, to enter into the appropriate form of agreements and any necessary procurement activity relating to the Skills Bootcamp programme.</p>
11.	Homes for the Future Strategy	<p>(1) Progress with the work to date to develop the Homes for the Future programme for the West Midlands, and the wide-ranging input from the Future Homes Taskforce and local authority partners across the region, among other relevant stakeholders, was noted.</p> <p>(2) The final draft of the Homes for the Future strategy and technical standard was noted.</p> <p>(3) The feedback provided from the Homes for the Future event and consultation responses was noted.</p> <p>(4) The official release of WMCA’s Homes for the Future proposals was endorsed.</p>

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		<p>(5) In light of responses to WMCA’s Homes for the Future consultation, an option to vary the Pre-Manufactured Value requirement, allowing alternative build method statements to accompany bids for WMCA grant where the primary operational and upfront embodied carbon standards were being met, was to be introduced.</p> <p>(6) The release of the Government’s Future Homes Standard consultation was noted.</p> <p>(7) The WMCA’s response to the Government’s ‘<i>The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: 2023 Consultation; Approved Document L - Conservation of Fuel and Power and Minimisation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Volume 2: Buildings other than Dwellings</i>’, which considered the standard in relation to non-domestic dwellings, was noted.</p> <p>(8) The letter from the House of Lords Built Environment Committee that summarised findings from the Government’s modern methods of construction inquiry was noted.</p> <p>(9) The progress on the work to date on the Homes for the Future communications strategy and implementation plan was noted.</p>
12.	Faith Strategic Partnership Board - Faith Covenant	<p>(1) The newsletter from the independent Faith Strategic Partnership Group was noted.</p> <p>(2) The implications and opportunities for the WMCA and its constituent authorities of working with faith communities, particularly relating to the Faith Covenant, was noted.</p>

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13.	Investment Board - 15 January 2024	The minutes were noted.
14.	Housing & Land Delivery Board - 17 January 2024	The minutes were noted.
15.	Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 22 January 2024	The minutes were noted.
16.	Economic Growth Board - 25 January 2024	The minutes were noted.
17.	Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 29 January 2024	The minutes were noted.
18.	Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee - 29 January 2024	The minutes were noted.
19.	Date of Next Meeting	Friday 15 March 2024 at 11.00am.