



**WMCA Board**

**Friday 15 September 2023 at 11.00 am**

**Minutes**

**Constituent Members**

Andy Street (Chair)	Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority
Councillor Bob Sleight (Vice-Chair)	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Mike Bird	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Paul Bradley	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor John Cotton	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Ian Courts	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor George Duggins	Coventry City Council
Councillor Steve Evans	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Patrick Harley	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Peter Hughes	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Stephen Simkins	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Sharon Thompson	Birmingham City Council

**Non-Constituent Members**

Councillor Matthew Dormer	Redditch Borough Council
Councillor Susan Juned	Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Councillor Derek Poole	Rugby Borough Council
Councillor Izzi Seccombe	Warwickshire County Council
Councillor Kristofer Wilson	Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council

**In Attendance**

Councillor Cathy Bayton	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Councillor John McNicholas	Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**34. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kerrie Carmichael (Sandwell), Councillor Shaun Davies (Telford & Wrekin), Simon Foster (West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner) and Councillor Bob Piper (Sandwell).

**35. Chair's Remarks**

**(a) Councillor Steve Evans, City of Wolverhampton Council**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Steve Evans to his first meeting of the WMCA Board following his recent appointment by the City of Wolverhampton Council.

**(b) Councillor Stephen Simkins, Portfolio Lead for Economy & Innovation**

The Chair report that he had appointed Councillor Stephen Simkins as the Portfolio Lead for Economy & Innovation. This position also had responsibility for chairing meetings of the Economic Growth Board.

**36. Minutes - 21 July 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

**37. Forward Plan**

The forward plan of items to be reported to future meetings of the board was noted.

**38. Regional Activity & Delivery Update**

The board received a presentation from the Chief Executive setting out the regional activity in recent months. Business Growth West Midlands had been launched in Coventry on 12 September, attracting over 1,000 businesses, along with £22m being invested by the WMCA in helping 10,000 learners to work in the region's engineering and manufacturing sector. In respect of regional trends, data was provided on the region's export goods value, foreign direct investment projects, and the current unemployment rate.

Following Birmingham City Council issuing a s.114 notice recently, Councillor John Cotton indicated that this was a matter the council was working through to resolve satisfactorily, and that Birmingham remained an attractive location for businesses.

Resolved:

The update be noted.

**39. Financial Monitoring Report 2023/24**

The board considered a report of the Executive Director of Finance & Business Hub providing an update on the WMCA's finances as at 31 July 2023, an update on the medium-term financial strategy and the risks facing the organisation. The report provided details of the 2022/23 treasury activities and highlighted compliance with policy and strategy previously approved in relation to treasury management.

The Executive Director for Finance & Business Hub noted Birmingham City Council's recent s.114 notice and indicated that she had sought assurances that those schemes funded by the WMCA but run by Birmingham City Council would be protected. She was awaiting the publication of the city council's recovery plan to assess any further implications for the WMCA.

The Chair noted that the WMCA had been asked to review a number of housing schemes where inflation costs had made the schemes challenging for developers to deliver. He undertook to ensure that members of the board would be kept apprised of the outcomes of these project reviews.

Councillor Peter Hughes suggested that the Ring & Ride service could be partnered with other transport services such as community and hospital transport in order to strengthen its viability. Councillor Mike Bird welcomed this suggestion and indicated that it would be included within the review of the Ring & Ride service currently being undertaken.

Resolved:

- (1) The financial position as at 31 July 2023 be noted.
- (2) The latest full year forecast for 2023/24 be noted.
- (3) The new grant awards to the WMCA be noted.
- (4) The update on the Medium Term Financial Plan be noted.
- (5) It be noted that the principal contractor for the delivery of rail stations in Darlaston and Willenhall filed an administration notice on 17 August 2023 and, whilst WMCA was working to limit any adverse exposure, cost increases and schedule delays were likely to occur, and further updates would be brought to the board as the revised delivery arrangements became clear.
- (6) The update on bus funding be noted, including the approved change required from BSIP and ZEBRA.
- (7) An increase in the number of directors to be appointed to the Board of Midland Metro Ltd from four to five be approved.
- (8) The process of recruitment of two independent directors to the Midland Metro Ltd Board was delegated to the Chief Executive, one of whom would be appointed Chair of the Midland Metro Ltd Board, with the final appointment to be referred to the board for noting.
- (9) The recharge of 2023/24 Business Rates Growth monies be noted.
- (10) The Treasury and Prudential indicators for the period ending 30 June 2023 (Quarter 1) be noted.
- (11) An increase of £25.5m in the loan limit of an existing Commercial Investment Fund loan to support the continued development of the Holbrook Lane industrial development in Coventry be approved.

#### **40. Business Energy Advice Service**

The board considered a report of the Executive Director of Strategy, Integration & Net Zero on pilot funding to support a regional decarbonisation advice and a grants programme for businesses.

Councillor Stephen Simkins stressed the value of assessing the effectiveness of this project, and Councillor Bob Sleigh confirmed that it was a pilot and would hopefully demonstrate the region's ability to deliver on a larger scale. Councillor Ian Courts noted the importance of the project as part of the region's net zero plans and as a demonstration of the practical steps needed to tackle climate change.

Resolved:

- (1) £24,609,772 of pilot funding to support a regional decarbonisation advice and grants programme for businesses be approved, jointly funded by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, providing circa £9m revenue funding for energy assessment audits and roadmaps for Small & Medium Enterprises in both the industrial and commercial sectors across the International Territorial Level 1 area of the West Midlands, alongside £5m capital funding for energy reduction grants and an additional £10.5m for grants from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities that would be provided in the WMCA area.
- (2) It be noted that the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero / Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy business case had been approved by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero Investment Committee and by Treasury, and that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities had confirmed that it would use the same business case for its funding stream, that timelines for release of that funding were still to be determined, and that Ministerial sign off on the Section 31 letter was expected in the following week.
- (3) The delegation of contracting and payments to the Director of Employment, Skills, Health & Communities, the WMCA's s.151 Officer and the Director of Law & Governance or Chief Executive to accept the funding awarded from the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities be approved, subject to their review of the finalised terms and conditions of this funding, and that these conditions would not be materially different to those expected, and in particular should contain conditions acceptable to the WMCA in respect of condition precedent, clawback and eligible expenditure.

#### **41. Refreshed Regional Road Safety Strategy**

The board considered a report of the Executive Director, Transport for West Midlands on the finalisation of the refreshed Regional Road Safety Strategy 2023-30 and its adoption and launch for implementation across the region.

The Chief Executive of the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner welcomed the strategy as an important step in developing a strategic approach to bringing about road safety improvements. The Police & Crime Commissioner hoped that speeding fines would be devolved to the region, which had the support of over 90% of the public.

Resolved:

- (1) The refreshed Regional Road Safety Strategy 2023-30 be adopted.
- (2) It be agreed to launch the refreshed Regional Road Safety Strategy 2023-30 following this board meeting.

**42. City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Re-base Proposal**

The board considered a report of the Executive Director, Transport for West Midlands on an update the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, specifically regarding a re-baselining exercise that had been undertaken across the programme, at the request of the Department for Transport, in order to reflect inflationary construction cost pressures.

Resolved:

- (1) The proposed re-base of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme, as per the Department for Transport's invitation to all Mayoral Combined Authorities in receipt of City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement funding, to reflect inflationary scheme cost pressures, be approved.
- (2) It be noted that the net overprogramming value of £160.2m (15%) remained unchanged from the value agreed by the WMCA Board on 9 June 2023.
- (3) The intention to undertake a 'City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement stock take' once commitments reached c.£900m to allow the WMCA and sponsors to accurately quantify the precise overprogramming value and re-confirm the regional appetite for spending City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement 2 funding at risk in line with soft contingency principles previously agreed, be noted.
- (4) The requirements of the Department for Transport set out within the report be noted.
- (5) The approval timeline be noted.
- (6) It be noted that the WMCA / Transport for West Midlands continued to manage on-going cost pressures on major transport infrastructure projects outside the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme, as reported to WMCA Board on 9 June 2023.
- (7) An early warning on Rail Package 1 (Willenhall and Darlaston stations) due to the main contractor for the project going into administration be noted.

**43. Appointment of Combined Authority Returning Officer**

The board considered a report of the Director of Law & Governance to enable the WMCA to appoint a Combined Authority Returning Officer in respect of the Combined Authority Mayoral election on 2 May 2024.

Resolved:

Julie Newman, Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer at Coventry City Council be appointed as the West Midlands Combined Authority Returning Officer.

**44. Economic Growth Board - Updated Terms of Reference**

The board considered a report of the Director of Law & Governance to ratify and agree the revised terms of reference for the Economic Growth Board following its consideration of the report on the 12 July 2023.

Resolved:

The changes to the Terms of Reference for Economic Growth Board be approved.

**45. Investment Board - 19 June 2023**

The board considered the minutes of the Investment Board held on 19 June 2023.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2023 be noted.

**46. Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 3 July 2023**

The board considered the minutes of the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 3 July 2023.

Councillor John McNicholas stressed the importance of members of the committee attending meetings, particularly representatives from non-constituent authorities, who had an important perspective to give.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2023 be noted.

**45. Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 10 July 2023**

The board considered the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 10 July 2023.

Councillor Cathy Bayton indicated that the focus of the committee during the year would be on the delivery and outcomes achieved, measured against the WMCA's aims and objectives.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2023 be noted.

**46. Date of Next Meeting**

Friday 13 October 2023 at 11.00am

The meeting ended at 11.55am.