



West Midlands Combined Authority

WMCA Board

Friday 13 October 2023 at 11.00 am

Minutes

Constituent Members

Andy Street (Chair)

Councillor Adrian Andrew
Councillor Paul Bradley
Councillor Kerrie Carmichael
Councillor John Cotton
Councillor Ian Courts
Councillor George Duggins
Councillor Steve Evans
Councillor Karen Grinsell
Councillor Patrick Harley
Councillor Peter Hughes
Councillor Stephen Simkins

Mayor of the West Midlands Combined
Authority
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Birmingham City Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Coventry City Council
City of Wolverhampton Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
City of Wolverhampton Council

Non-Constituent Members

Councillor Matthew Dormer
Councillor Derek Poole
Councillor Izzi Seccombe
Councillor Kristofer Wilson

Redditch Borough Council
Rugby Borough Council
Warwickshire County Council
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council

Co-opted Member

Rob Johnson

Midlands Trades Union Congress

Observer Members

Councillor Greg Brackenridge
Simon Foster

West Midlands Fire Authority
West Midlands Police & Crime
Commissioner

In Attendance

Councillor John McNicholas

Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny
Committee

47. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Lee Barron (Midlands Trades Union Congress), Councillor Mike Bird (Walsall), Councillor Ian Davison (Warwick), Councillor Susan Juned (Stratford-on-Avon), Councillor Bob Sleigh (Solihull) and Councillor Sharon Thompson (Birmingham).

48. Chair's Remarks

(a) Israel - Gaza Conflict

The Chair noted the recent events in Israel and Gaza and, on behalf of the board, expressed his deep regret at the loss of life and a profound hope that communities across the West Midlands continued to live in peace during these difficult times. Members of the board paused to allow for a moment of personal reflection on the recent developments.

(b) National Transport Awards - 5 October

The Chair reported that at the recent National Transport Awards, Transport for West Midlands had won Regional Transport Authority of the Year, West Midlands Metro had won UK Tram Operator of the Year, and Kate Evans, Bus Station Supervisor, had won Frontline Employee/Community Champion of the Year. He congratulated all of the winners for their well-deserved recognition.

(c) Emma Bennett, Chief Executive, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

The Chair welcomed Emma Bennett to her first meeting of the board, following her recent appointment as the new Chief Executive of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council.

49. Minutes - 15 September 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

50. Forward Plan

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

51. Regional Activity & Delivery Update

The board received a presentation from the Chief Executive setting out the regional activity in recent months. Following the Government's announcement regarding the cancellation of the HS2 line between Birmingham - Manchester, significant transport investment had been announced, including funding for the Midlands Rail Hub, an additional £100m in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement 1 programme, and £250m transport revenue support for existing network sustainability. She also highlighted the launch of a sector-based Work Academy Programme at the City of Wolverhampton College, 25 new sustainable homes being built in Kingshurst, and the award of a grant to restore water and wildlife habitats at Pitts Wood in Quinton.

Councillor Stephen Simkins stressed the importance of constituent councils understanding fully the regional implications of the decision to cancel the northern leg of HS2, as well as a clear process for considering where any additional funding into the region should be spent. The Chair acknowledged that his discussions with the Government over this issue were, by necessity, conducted at short notice, but that he was mindful during those discussions of what this board had previously agreed. He agreed that a full report on the regional implications of the HS2 announcement would be submitted to the next meeting of the board.

Resolved:

The update be noted.

52. Deeper Devolution Deal Ratification

The board considered a report of the Executive Director for Strategy, Economy & Net Zero seeking the ratification of the deeper devolution deal, which would enable the WMCA, working with local authorities and other partners, to continue its implementation.

The deeper devolution deal contained over 190 commitments across a wide range of policy areas, and the report summarised the contents of the deal, the WMCA's implementation plan and the work being undertaken with local authorities and other partners to deliver it.

Simon Foster expressed his disappointment that the devolution deal did not provide for the further devolution of powers to West Midlands Police to help reduce crime, strengthen criminal justice and improve community safety. The Chair confirmed that, although proposals in these areas were submitted, the Government had chosen not to devolve further powers at this time.

Members of the board recognised that, whilst devolution at a greater scale would have been preferable, the deal did still provide for a significant transfer of powers to the region. The Executive Director for Strategy, Economy & Net Zero confirmed that further discussions were on-going with the Government regarding Levelling Up Zones, and that a full report would be submitted to the next meeting of the board on 17 November.

Resolved:

- (1) The 'trailblazer' deeper devolution deal between the WMCA and the Government be formally ratified.
- (2) The Governance Review and Scheme for devolution to the WMCA of the administration of Bus Service Operators Grant under section 154 (1), (3) and (4) of the Transport Act 2000 be approved for submission to the Secretary of State for Transport.

53. New Stations Package 1: Update

The board considered a report of the Executive Director for Transport for West Midlands on the impact on the West Midlands Rail Programme (New Stations Package 1 Project), following Buckingham Group Contracting Ltd being placed into administration, and the subsequent decision to novate the contract to Kier Integrated Services Ltd.

The City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement rebase paper approved by the board on 15 September 2023 flagged an early warning in relation to New Stations Package 1 and indicated an update would be brought back to the board at a later date. Buckingham Group Contracting Ltd was the principal contractor on the New Stations Package 1 project, to build new rail stations at Willenhall and Darlaston, but was placed into administration on 4 September.

Two options were then considered: whether to novate the existing contract to Kier Integrated Services Ltd, or to terminate the contract and explore an alternative delivery route. The risks and opportunities associated with both options were assessed, and novation was considered to be more cost effective and allow for earlier delivery

Resolved:

- (1) The insolvency and administration proceedings of the principal contractor for the New Stations Package 1 project, Buckingham Group Contracting Ltd be noted.
- (2) The decision made at West Midlands Rail Partnership Board on 28 September 2023 to novate the Package 1 main works contract to Kier Integrated Services Ltd be noted.
- (3) The work underway to re-assess affordability and funding be noted, and the options to be bought back for consideration to a future board.
- (4) It be noted that in the interim period, only work associated with scheme costs that will remain in scope and within the existing budget will continue to be incurred until a resolution to the overall scheme affordability has been reported to and agreed by board.
- (5) The board's continued commitment to complete Package 1 in full and as a single, fully funded programme of work, be noted.

54. Environment & Energy Board - 12 July 2023

The board considered the minutes of the Environment & Energy Board held on 12 July 2023.

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2023 be noted, with the addition of the apologies for absence from Councillor Peter Hughes.

55. Economic Growth Board - 12 July 2023

The board considered the minutes of the Economic Growth Board held on 12 July 2023.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2023 be noted.

56. Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee - 19 July 2023

The board considered the minutes of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee held on 19 July 2023.

Resolved:

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

57. Young Combined Authority - October 2023 Update

The board considered a report of the recent activity of the Young Combined Authority.

Resolved:

The report be noted.

58. Date of Next Meeting

Friday 17 November 2023 at 11.00am

The meeting ended at 12.20pm.