



West Midlands  
Combined Authority

## Wellbeing Board

<b>Date</b>	12 December 2023
<b>Report title</b>	Health of the Region Report 2023
<b>Portfolio Lead</b>	Wellbeing – Councillor Izzi Seccombe
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### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

#### The Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

1. Note the outline of the Health of the Region 2023 report as set out in this paper.
2. Review the draft of the report that has been shared with members and provide comments and feedback.
3. Support the launch of the final report and promote its implementation through your role as local leaders.

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Health of the Region 2023 report is due to be published by the WMCA in January 2024. The Health and Communities team are drafting this report and will be presenting emerging findings to the board at this meeting. This paper will outline some of the findings and next steps for discussion by the board.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. The Health of the Region report published in November 2020, highlighted persistent and widening health inequalities within the West Midlands Combined Authority region and set out a recovery journey intent on tackling these health inequalities. It identified the virtuous circle between good health, wellbeing, and a prosperous and growing region, highlighting the role of an inclusive economy as a key lever for delivering better health and wellbeing outcomes for the West Midlands.
- 2.2. It established a collaborative focus to lay the foundations for improved health and reduced inequalities. Working with partners on more than 50 commitments to action, there has been considerable effort to address the key challenges of reducing inequalities for racialised communities, widening access to health and care services, enabling people powered health and focusing on shaping the conditions which promote good health.
- 2.3. Despite joint effort and collaboration, the picture of health inequalities in the West Midlands Combined Authority region has not changed significantly since our last report. The data shows us that people living in the West Midlands Combined Authority region continue to die earlier than the average for England and life expectancy is declining. This has a direct impact on economic growth and productivity in the region, as the economy needs a healthy community to thrive and vice versa.
- 2.4. This highlights the need for a system wide approach and one that addresses some of the root causes of these health inequalities, which relate to where people live, where they work, how much they earn, how easily they can travel, etc. These wider social determinants of health are where the West Midlands Combined Authority has a key role to play in supporting better health.
- 2.5. This report will focus specifically on this assertion and the role of the West Midlands Combined Authority.

## 3. Health of the Region 2023 Content

- 3.1. The Health of the Region report will be divided into three sections to describe the role of West Midlands Combined Authority in relation to improving health in the region.
  - 3.1.1. The first part of the report will describe the **health of the people who live in the West Midlands Combined Authority** area, specifically in relation to health inequalities that were highlighted in the 2020 report and those linked to the wider determinants of health. It will use local and national intelligence data to identify where change is needed, for example poor deprivation scores, lower life expectancy, infant mortality and mortality from preventable causes, levels of obesity (including childhood obesity) and overall poorer health outcomes, and how existing inequalities have been exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic, especially for certain groups. This part will also show the underlying causes behind the poorer outcomes and inequalities, which lie in upstream factors, like the wider determinants of health like housing and employment as well as structural inequalities.
  - 3.1.2. The second part will discuss **how the West Midlands Combined Authority has undertaken work that supports better outcomes in health across** all we do. This part will embed case studies from all parts of the West Midlands Combined Authority which highlight the current work and potential to impact on health through initiatives within housing, transport, skills and employment, economy, environment and energy.

- 3.1.3. The final part will set out **priority areas for action** within the West Midlands Combined Authority work, using logic models to illustrate the outcomes that directly or indirectly impact on health. This will serve as both a measurement of our impact on health outcomes, but also application of a systematic effort to implement a Health in All Policies approach for the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 3.1.4. The final part will also include elements from the governance discussion by the Wellbeing Board (separate agenda item), that will enable action and member leadership in driving this renewed focus on Health in All Policies.
- 3.2. A draft of this report has been shared with board members for review and comment, but it is not available for public viewership yet.
- 3.3. It is proposed that board members provide all their feedback directly to the Health & Communities team via email by 18 December 2023. The report will then be finalised and set for publication early in the new year, with a launch possibly to coincide with the Health of the Region Roundtable (scheduled currently for 24 January 2024).

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications although the report will potentially lead to West Midlands Combined Authority investment in the future, which will need to follow West Midlands Combined Authority governance processes.

#### **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

#### **6. Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 The focus on inequalities is aligned to the inclusive growth purpose and direction.

#### **7. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 7.1 The focus on inequalities is aligned to the inclusive growth purpose and direction.

#### **8. Geographical Area of Report's Implications**

- 8.1 The focus is agreeing on common priorities with geographical areas and strengthening the collaborative work across the West Midlands to deliver long lasting and sustainable change.

#### **9. Other Implications**

- 9.1 None

#### **10. Schedule of Background Papers**

- 10.1 None