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West Midlands  
Combined Authority

## Wellbeing Board

Tuesday 12 December 2023 at 10.00 am

### Minutes

#### Present

Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Chair)	Portfolio Lead for Wellbeing
Councillor Karen McCarthy (Vice-Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Sean Russell	Universities West Midlands (Coventry)
Rebecca Howell-Jones (Substitute)	Birmingham City Council
Giri Rajaratnam (Substitute)	Office for Health Improvement & Disparities

#### In Attendance

Mubasshir Ajaz	West Midlands Combined Authority
Rachael Clifford	West Midlands Combined Authority
Craig Evans (Secretary)	West Midlands Combined Authority
Helen Frost	West Midlands Combined Authority

#### In Attendance via MS Teams

Julia Cleary	West Midlands Combined Authority
Simon Hall	West Midlands Combined Authority

#### Item Title No.

#### 54. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Axcell (Black Country Integrated Care Board), Councillor Margaret Bell (Warwickshire County Council), Councillor Ian Bevan (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Kamran Caan (Coventry City Council), Councillor Tony Dicccico (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Julian Gutteridge (Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council), Councillor Suzanne Hartwell (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Jasbir Jaspal (City of Wolverhampton Council), Lisa Stalley-Green (Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care Board), Peter Wilson (West Midlands Fire Service), Justin Varney (West Midlands Association of Directors of Public Health Representative) and Mike Wade (Office for Health Improvement & Disparities / NHSE Midlands).

The substitutes attending the meeting on behalf of Mike Wade was Giri Rajaratnam (Office for Health Improvement & Disparities) and for Justin Varney was Rebecca Howell-Jones (Birmingham City Council).

The meeting was inquorate and therefore the decisions contained within the recommendations of the reports would be ratified at the WMCA Board on 12 January 2024.

**55. Chair Remarks (if any)**

The Chair welcomed attendees of the Wellbeing Board to the meeting and encouraged future in person meetings to improve on inqorate meetings to enable attendees the ability in getting to know each other better in person during discussions and to share ideas together.

**56. Minutes - 3 July 2023**

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment of Mike Wade's dual representation which was noted incorrectly as NHS England and to amend to Office for Health Improvement & Disparities / NHSE Midlands.

**57. Governance: Wellbeing Board Development Day**

The board considered a report from the Head of Health & Communities, Mubasshir Ajaz, to note the key discussion points from the Wellbeing Board development session held on 5 October 2023 that was facilitated by the West Midlands Combined Authority's (WMCA's) Governance team to outline the proposed changes to the Wellbeing Board governance and to organise the board in a way which was more meaningful and utilised the considerable leadership qualities of members from local authorities to be able to align itself to the health in all policies approach being promoted from within the Wellbeing Board. The changes included the introduction of new sub-groups and the new Mayor's Health Equity Advisory Council, as well as consideration to on-going Wellbeing Board membership and consideration for hybrid meetings to continue to increase engagement with members.

The Head of Corporate Support & Governance, Julia Cleary, noted the feedback from the development session that focussed on the purpose of the Wellbeing Board to highlight key discussion points and the importance in understanding the added value of the board in which ideas and best practices were shared between local authorities, health organisations and partners for the West Midlands region, improved engagement with communities, consistency of approach, effective leveraging and ensuring that the passion from a local level was not lost.

Furthermore, the establishment of the new Mayor's Health Equity Advisory Council would bring together expert advice feeding into the Wellbeing Board to enable a more strategic approach to be built into the Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference and approved at WMCA Board to support the health in all policies due to an overarching approach and better connection internally with other directorates within the WMCA, as well as external work being carried out at local levels.

Councillor McCarthy noted the importance in member engagement, whether in person or virtually, was vital to the success in the changes, to which the Chair agreed and outlined her preference in at least one or two in person meetings per year as opposed to hybrid meetings.

The Head of Health & Communities noted that in-person meetings would continue to be encouraged, however as proposed within the report to continue to provide a hybrid meeting option to encourage more engagement and to take advantage of broader engagement with the health system through the Mayor's Health Equity Advisory Council and through the sub-groups, led by Wellbeing Board members, which aligned to the health in all policies area. The Chair responded to note that the sub-groups would prove extremely valuable in bridging across the different board meetings.

In response to Councillor McCarthy who noted that as there was no health duty, the context of work needed to focus on the role of the WMCA, particularly as some of the functions around hyper local working within communities still sat with relevant local authorities and health organisations. The Chair agreed and noted that the Wellbeing Board's focus had always been to provide additionality for approval at WMCA Board rather than to reinvent what had already been achieved in member organisations.

The Head of Corporate Support & Governance noted that by submission of items to the Wellbeing Board following sub-group meetings and by updating the Terms of Reference, should improve attendance levels of board members and engagement due to the additionality in making a difference and impact to communities across the West Midlands.

The Head of Health & Communities referred board members to the Terms of Reference within the report to note the proposed Mayor's Equity Advisory Council, Health & Employment Advisory Group, Physical Activity Advisory Group and the Disability Exemplar Working Group. The Chair noted and the board agreed following scrutiny of each sub-group to commence initially with establishing the Disability Exemplar Working Group first as the Terms of Reference neared completion, followed by the Physical Activity Advisory Group and then finally the Health & Employment Advisory Group.

The Strategic Lead for Wellbeing & Prevention, Simon Hall, agreed with the Chair's sequencing of the sub-groups commencement and noted in regard to disability in particular, that the establishment of the Disability Exemplar Working Group would demonstrate the value of work undertaken by the Wellbeing Board over the past couple of years to strengthen disabled systems and voices through a connected multi stakeholder relationship, where there was now a platform to begin to explore those areas around being an exemplar region following identification of key members within the system and to build out with citizens, accompanied by local authority, Office for Health Improvement & Disparities and Integrated Care Board representation to drive that work forward and to report back to the Wellbeing Board.

The Head of Health & Communities introduced the Senior Programme Lead - Commonwealth Games Legacy (Inclusive Communities), Helen Frost, who shared a presentation and provided board members with an overview of the Inclusive Communities Grant Programme of £9million, administered by the Heart of England Community Foundation, which was part of the Commonwealth Games Legacy & Enhancement Funding for sport, physical activity, mental health and wellbeing, and arts, culture and creativity investments that Constituent and Non-Constituent Authorities in the region could apply for.

Following the presentation, the Chair noted that it would be beneficial for the board to have the ability in receiving the locations and projects of the grant allocations across the West Midlands and outcomes over time that the Senior Programme Lead - Commonwealth Games Legacy (Inclusive Communities) confirmed would be presented to the board at a future meeting. The Head of Health & Communities suggested that it would also benefit and prove valuable to board members in the identification of any projects that were funded and aligned to the West Midlands Mental Health Commission findings and recommendations to include within the future Inclusive Communities Grant Programme update to the board.

Resolved:

- (1) The key areas of discussion from the Wellbeing Board development day on 5 October 2023 as provided in the report be reviewed.
- (2) The Terms of Reference for the Mayor's Equity Advisory Council be noted.
- (3) The revised Terms of Reference and governance of the Wellbeing Board which would be approved by the WMCA Board be endorsed.

#### **58. Health of the Region Report 2023**

The board considered a report from the Head of Health and Communities who noted that the Health of the Region 2023 report was due to be published by the WMCA in January 2024 and that his team had been drafting the report and would present the emerging findings to the Wellbeing Board during the meeting.

The report was supplemented by a presentation that was introduced by the Head of Health & Communities and to note that the WMCA had a pivotal role to play in shaping the conditions that create unfair differences in health outcomes for the West Midlands region and provided an update on the key outcomes from the previous Health of the Region 2020 report where Covid-19 highlighted the extent of the region's health inequalities, the WMCA fostered collaboration between partners in the region to address health inequalities and also established a Health of the Region roundtable.

The Senior Delivery Manager – Healthy Communities & Mental Wellbeing, Rachael Clifford, continued the presentation to note the key health issues and impacts for the region following the previous report iteration in 2020 and comparative data used.

The presentation noted that life expectancy in the region had decreased and was falling at a faster rate than the national average, which was further broken down in to the seven Constituent areas within the region that had the greatest impact dependant on where a person lived. The causes of preventable diseases as a contributing factor for the WMCA area were noted as higher levels of being overweight and obesity in adults and children, the lowest levels of physical exercise in England, increased alcohol related deaths and adult smoking rates that had remained unchanged across the region, apart from Wolverhampton that had seen a significant reduction since 2014. The presentation noted the causes of preventable diseases was further exacerbated by an increasing number of children living in poverty and that the WMCA area had some of the highest rates of fuel poverty in the country.

There had however since the previous report been some positive outcomes in that there had been a reduction in the number of 16-17 years not in employment education or training since 2018, that since 2013/14 there had been progress on reducing the gap between those with physical or mental long term health conditions and the overall employment rate, and that since 2013/14 there had been improvements in self-reported wellbeing for the WMCA area.

The presentation further noted the WMCA's role in improving health outcomes to shape the conditions that influence residents' health outcomes across the region, through the WMCA's devolved responsibilities and role as convenor, as advocate, as commissioner and in delivery across its core responsibilities and by leveraging investment in transport, housing, energy, environment, skills, employment and economy to support the existing collaborative approach and effort between NHS and local authority partners who had a statutory focus on clinical inequalities (Core20PLUS5) and the specific needs of their population (Health and Wellbeing Strategies).

The Senior Delivery Manager – Healthy Communities & Mental Wellbeing noted that the Health of the Region report was due for publication in January 2024 with a roundtable scheduled in March 2024 and to use the report to set the context of the health landscape and highlight some of the work that supported good health. The report itself was still in draft form and the Head of Health & Communities encouraged and welcomed further comments from board members prior to finalisation.

The board discussed some of the current and imminent health issues across the West Midlands and noted in particular concern regarding smoking cessation, increase in opioid drugs and obesity rates in children.

The Head of Health & Communities acknowledged the health issues were very concerning; however the responsibility of such health concerns was the responsibility of Integrated Care Boards and local authority public health teams and that the WMCA would continue to play a convening role to identify health issues facing the region, with a focus on influence, collaboration and seeking opportunities for delivering on health improvements through its devolved powers.

The Chair thanked attendees for their valuable contributions and requested for the Governance Services Officer to draft a letter to be sent to all Wellbeing Board members to be given a further week to provide feedback and comments to the Head of Health & Communities on the draft Health of the Region 2023 report, prior to the report being finalised. The Head of Health & Communities further noted the next steps to publication of the report once further comments had been received from board members to note that the report would be submitted to the WMCA Executive Board on 10 January 2024 for approval to WMCA Board in February 2024, as well as to the WMCA's Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Health of the Region 2023 report would then be presented in conjunction with the State of the Region report, which was very much focussed across the inclusive growth fundamentals in each of those areas.

Resolved:

- (1) The outline of the Health of the Region 2023 report be noted.
- (2) The draft of the report that had been shared with members be reviewed, with comments and feedback provided.
- (3) The launch of the final report and to promote its implementation through the role of Wellbeing Board members as local leaders be supported.

**59. High Level Deliverables Update**

The board considered a report from the Head of Health & Communities to provide an update on the progress made against high level deliverables for 2023/24.

Resolved:

- (1) The progress against high level deliverables for 2023/24 be reviewed.
- (2) Brief updates against key delivery programmes aligned to the high level deliverables be noted.

**60. Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 6 March 2024.

[The meeting ended at 12.01pm].