

Economic Growth Board

Date	6 March 2024
Report title	Business Commission West Midlands
Portfolio Lead	Councillor Stephen Simpkins
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Accountable Employee	Ed Cox, Executive Director for Strategy, Economy & Net Zero, West Midlands Combined Authority Email: Ed.Cox@wmca.org.uk
Report has been considered by	n/a

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Economic Growth Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the update that will be provided by the Chamber of Commerce representatives and discuss any of the outcomes that EGB would like to interrogate further.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Economic Growth Board on the outcomes and recommendations of the Business Commission West Midlands (BCWM).

2. Background

- 2.1 The Business Commission West Midlands (BCWM) has been convened by the three West Midlands Chambers of Commerce (comprising The Greater Birmingham, Coventry & Warwickshire and, Black Country Chambers of Commerce) to deliver a roadmap for business growth in the West Midlands.
- 2.2 The aim of the commission is to examine the opportunities for regional business and identify the actions needed to act on them. It has been exploring the region's businesses' priorities and appetite for growth, identifying opportunities, challenges, and providing

strategic recommendations for local, regional and national stakeholders as well as providing a mechanism for a coherent regional business voice.

2.3 The main objectives of the Business Commission West Midlands are as follows:

- To Identify trends in businesses' priorities and appetite for growth.
- To outline key areas of change identified by local businesses as required to enable further business growth.
- To outline key areas perceived as strengths of the regional business environment by local businesses.
- To map the existing initiatives, interventions and actors aimed at enabling business growth in the region.
- To recommend policy changes, initiatives, areas for further research or other interventions required locally, regionally or nationally to better enable business growth.

2.4 The Commission was overseen and steered by an independent panel of Commissioners who are leading representatives of the region's business community and supported by an advisory panel of academic experts. The chair of the Commissioners is Mark Taylor, Midlands managing partner at accountancy and business advisory firm RSM.

The Commissioners include:

- Sandra Wallace, joint managing director, DLA Piper and Birmingham chair of TheCityUK
- Declan Allen, managing director, HORIBA MIRA
- Carmen Watson, chair, Pertemps
- Jason Wouhra OBE, CEO, Lioncroft Wholesale Ltd
- Jeanette McFarland, chief operating officer, Assa Abloy Opening Solutions
- Melissa Snover, founder, Rem3dy Health
- Dan Barlow, CEO, Kagool
- Eleanor Deeley, joint managing director, Deeley Group
- Deb Leary OBE, founder, Forensic Pathways
- Vicki Wilkes, director, Darvick Ltd

2.5 Between November and December 2023, 132 businesses contributed evidence to the Commission alongside 8 public sector organisations and 10 membership organisations or cluster groups.

2.6 Henrietta Brearley, the Chief Executive of the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce will provide EGB with the latest position on the headline recommendations ahead of the Commissions formal launch event on the 19th March.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this paper. However, the Business Commission West Midlands outcomes may guide or influence future WMCA strategy or delivery in certain areas and the financial implications of those will follow governance routes and demonstrate value for money.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this paper. However, the Business Commission West Midlands outcomes may guide or influence future WMCA strategy or delivery in certain areas and the legal implications of those will be dealt in further reports as necessary.

5. Single Assurance Framework Implications

- 5.1 There are no immediate Single Assurance Framework implications arising from this report.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1 There are no immediate equalities implications arising from this report. The Business Commission West Midlands final report and recommendations may guide or influence future WMCA strategy or delivery in certain areas and the equalities implications of those will be dealt in further reports as necessary.

7. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 7.1 There are no immediate inclusive growth implications arising from this report. The Business Commission West Midlands final report and recommendations may guide or influence future WMCA strategy or delivery in certain areas and the equalities implications of those will be dealt in further reports as necessary.

8. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 8.1 The report covers the primary WMCA economic geographic area covered by Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Warwickshire.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 NA

10. Schedule of Background Papers

- 10.1 NA