



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 4 September 2018 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Peter Hughes (Chair)	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Cathy Bayton	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Paul Brown	Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership
Councillor Dean Carroll	Shropshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Mike Chalk	Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Stuart Davis	Joint Coventry/Solihull Representative
Councillor John Glass	Warwickshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Angus Lees	Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton Councils
Councillor Ian Shires (Vice-Chair)	Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton Councils
Councillor Stephen Simkins	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Joe Tildesley	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Lisa Trickett (Vice-Chair)	Birmingham City Council

In Attendance

Councillor Daniel Barker	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor John Cotton	Birmingham City Council
	Redditch Borough Council

Item Title
No.

- 9. Apologies for Absence**
Apologies for absence were received from Mike Lyons, Sarah Windrum and Councillor Ken Wood.
- 10. Minutes - 16 July 2018**
The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July were agreed as a correct record.
- 11. Forward Plans - Overview & Scrutiny Committee and WMCA Board**
The committee considered forward plans of items that were to be reported to future meetings of the WMCA Board and this committee. In respect of a response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's policy document 'Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships', it was agreed that authority be delegated to the Chair, Vice-Chairs and lead members of

the five working groups to agree this committee's contribution to the WMCA's formal response.

12. WMCA Leaders Like You Report - Progress Update

The committee considered a report from Henry Kippin, Director of Public Sector Reform, appraising it of the developments and progress in relation to the work being undertaken to implement the recommendations of the 'Leaders Like You' report that was published by the WMCA's Leadership Commission in May. Councillor Steve Eling, Portfolio Lead for Cohesion & Integration and Public Service Reform, was also in attendance to answer questions on the report.

The Leadership Commission looked at how the region could improve the opportunities for people from communities and groups that were currently underrepresented in the leadership of the West Midlands. It met with groups representing black and other minority ethnic communities, women, LGBT, people with disabilities and underrepresented socio-economic groups to better understand the experiences being faced, and produced a report containing recommendations that sought to address issues of underrepresentation.

Councillor Lisa Trickett noted that many of the recommendations in the report were not directly within the powers of the WMCA to deliver, but were region-wide issues that needed addressing. It was therefore important for the WMCA to be more challenging to organisations that were not able to demonstrate a diverse leadership. Councillor Steve Eling agreed with this and considered that the WMCA was getting better at understanding where it could most effectively provide that challenge. Part of this process would involve maintaining the public profile of these issues.

Councillor Cathy Bayton noted that organisations were now publishing their gender pay gaps, but she had been disappointed by the apparent lack of organisational strategies aimed at reducing the gender pay differentials that had been highlighted. Henry Kippin suggested the committee would benefit from meeting with Julie Nugent, Director of Productivity & Skills, who was leading on the WMCA's Regional Skills Plan that set out how this might be achieved. He also considered that the Mayor had a key role as a regional leader to continue to be a strong advocate for organisations to strive towards pay parity.

The Chair stressed the importance of the WMCA reflecting the diversity of the region that it represented. He urged local authorities to consider carefully the appointments it made annually to the WMCA Board and its committees so that it was able to achieve a better balance in gender and ethnicity within WMCA meetings.

The Chair thanked Councillor Steve Eling and Henry Kippin for their attendance at the meeting and answering the questions from members.

Resolved:

- (1) The WMCA Board be recommended to request that all future reports it

considered included a specific reference within them to any implications regarding inclusive growth considerations.

- (2) Councillor Steve Eling and the Director of Public Service Reform be invited to attend the meeting of the committee on 12 April 2019 to provide a further update on the progress being made with the regional implementation of the recommendations contained within the 'Leaders Like You' report.

13. 'Effectiveness of Overview & Scrutiny Committees' - Government Response to the Communities & Local Government Select Committee's First Report

The committee considered a report from Lyndsey Roberts, Scrutiny Officer, on the report of the Communities & Local Government Select Committee on the 'Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committees' and the Government's response to the report's recommendations.

The Communities & Local Government Select Committee published its report in December 2017 and made seven recommendations to improve the effectiveness of local authority scrutiny. The Government had now published its response to these recommendations, and the report set out this response and the implications for overview and scrutiny within the WMCA.

Councillor John Cotton noted that the Governance Working Group intended to look at how scrutiny within the WMCA maintained its organisational independence, including by ensuring that it was properly resourced. Tim Martin, Head of Governance, undertook to report to the working group how the WMCA had allocated its share of the £12m Government funding made available to mayoral combined authorities to boost capacity.

Councillor Lisa Trickett stressed the value of pre-decision scrutiny, and considered that the West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy should be considered by this committee prior to its submission later in the year to the WMCA Board. The Chair agreed to write to the WMCA's portfolio leads and their support officers to stress the value that pre-decision scrutiny could provide to WMCA Board members as part of the approval process for key strategy documents.

Resolved:

- (1) The Government's response to the Communities & Local Government Select Committee's First Report of Session 2017-19 on the 'Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committees' be noted.
- (2) It be noted that revised scrutiny guidance would be issued by the Government later in the year and that the West Midlands Combined Authority would be required to review its scrutiny function, as appropriate, after the publication of this revised guidance.

14. Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Working Groups - Progress Update

The committee considered a report from Lyndsey Roberts, Scrutiny Officer, on the developments and progress in relation to the work of the five working groups established at the last meeting, and the appointment of three scrutiny champions to have responsibility for the oversight of thematic areas.

Updates were provided by the lead members for each working group as follows:

- Budget - Councillor Peter Hughes
- Governance - Councillor John Cotton
- Health & Wellbeing - Councillor Cathy Bayton
- Housing & Land - Councillor Ian Shires
- Inclusive Growth and Productivity & Skills - Councillor Lisa Trickett

It was also proposed that scrutiny champions be appointed to oversee three workstreams relating to the 'Leaders Like You' Leadership Commission report, transport and air quality.

Resolved:

- (1) The progress in developing the workstreams for the five working groups be noted.
- (2) The following scrutiny champions be appointed to have responsibility for the oversight of specific workstreams as follows:
 - 'Leaders Like You' - Councillor Jackie Taylor
 - Transport - Councillor Angus Lees and Councillor Mike Chalk
 - Air Quality - Councillor Stephen Simkins

15. Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

In accordance with s100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they were likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of the Act.

16. Midland Metro Construction - Proposed Business Support Package

The board considered a report from Phil Hewitt, Director of West Midlands Metro, on details of the Midland Metro Construction - Proposed Business Support Package report that was considered by the WMCA Board at its meeting on 20 July.

The WMCA Board agreed a package of support schemes for business directly affected by the metro construction works undertaken by the WMCA, but asked this committee to give consideration to a number of specific issues contained within the report, namely:

- The number of businesses likely to be covered by the scheme
- The determination of the capping level

- The calculations used for determining support
- The schemes' funding arrangements

The committee received a presentation from Nafees Arif, Finance & Commercial Director of West Midlands Metro, that provided a detailed explanation of the these issues.

Resolved:

- (1) The information provided within the report and presentation on the number of businesses likely to be covered by the business support package, the determination of the capping level, the calculations used for determining support and the schemes' funding arrangements be noted.
- (2) A task & finish group be established, comprising Councillor Angus Lees, Councillor Ian Shires and Councillor Stephen Simkins, to report back to the next meeting of the committee on 26 November on the impact that the Bilston Road metro track replacement works had had on nearby businesses and the support they received by the WMCA to mitigate the impact of the works.

17. Bus Operator Recharging Proposal

The committee considered a report from Pete Bond, Director of Integrated Network Services, that provided further details on the Bus Operator Recharging Proposal report considered by Transport Delivery Committee at its meeting on 16 July.

The report approved funding to allow for a bus station departure charge and roadside information 'holiday' to generate additional investment by all bus operators in Euro VI standard vehicles without any change to policy. This committee had requested further information on the report in respect of:

- Any financial implications of the use of the concessionary fares budget
- The distribution of the investment across all bus operators, particularly the smaller operators
- The rationale for considering the report in private
- Funding arrangements

Pete Bond clarified that the report was considered in private as commercial negotiations were continuing to be held with bus operators about these proposals that might be prejudiced were the report to be in the public domain. Members of the committee noted that transport powers differed in the West Midlands to those of the Mayor of London, and considered whether having similar powers would help deliver the wider air quality improvements that were being sought from bus operators. Pete Bond indicated that work was currently being undertaken to look at the legislative options available under the Bus Services Act 2017 regarding public transport governance, and the Chair requested that a further update on this be provided to the next meeting of the committee on 26 November.

Resolved:

The rationale and financial implications of the Bus Operator Recharging Proposal considered and approved by the Transport Delivery Committee on 16 July be noted.

- 18. Monday 26 November 2018 at 10:00am**
The date of the next meeting was noted.

The meeting ended at 12.50 pm.