



Environment Board

Monday 10 September 2018 at 2.30 pm

Minutes

Present

Councillor Patrick Harley (Chair)
Councillor David Hosell

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

**Item Title
No.**

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tony Diccio (Solihull), Councillor Jim O'Boyle (Coventry), Councillor Karen Shakespeare (Dudley) and Councillor Waseem Zaffar (Birmingham).

2. Inquorate Meeting

The Governance Services Manager reported that, in accordance with the WMCA's constitution, the meeting was inquorate. The recommendations contained within the minutes would be submitted to the WMCA Board on 9 November 2018 for formal approval and adoption.

3. Terms of Reference and Dates for Meetings September 2018 - June 2019

The board considered a report from Simon Slater, Interim Head of Environment, setting out the terms of reference and the dates of future meetings for the Environment Board.

At its meeting on 8 September 2017, the WMCA Board agreed its environment priorities and the ambition to become a 'best in class' combined authority in its approach to sustainability over the next two years. At its meeting on 20 July 2018, it approved the establishment of an Environment Board to take oversight and drive forward its environmental agenda. The report set out the terms of reference of the board, along with the dates of meetings for the remainder of 2018/19.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The terms of reference for the Environment Board be approved.
- (2) Future meetings of the Environment Board be held on 1 February 2019 and 1 June 2019.

4. WMCA Environment Board Action Plan September 2018/19

The board considered a report from Simon Slater, Interim Head of Environment, setting out the progress to date and future action plan of the Environment Board.

A set of environmental priorities were developed from the policies contained within the Strategic Economic Plan, the Mayor's Renewal Plan, stakeholder consultation and established good practice activity. These priorities had been developed into an Environment Action Plan, which was approved by the WMCA Board at its meeting on 20 July 2018.

Simon Slater reported that the Action Plan set out the nine workstreams that would be progressed over the next 12 months, along with when progress made against these would be reported in to meetings of this board. A key role for this board would be to monitor the delivery of the Action Plan. Councillor David Hosell stressed the value of setting out delivery targets against which progress could be measured at future board meetings.

The Chair noted that this was a new area for a number of members and therefore it was important for board members to get up to speed with the work of the environment portfolio.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

The Environment Board Action Plan for September 2018/19 be approved.

5. Update on Developing a West Midlands Low Emission Strategy

The board considered a report from Simon Slater, Interim Head of Environment, on the work undertaken to date developing a West Midlands Low Emission Strategy and seeking approval to begin strategy development.

Informal consultation with internal and external stakeholders had demonstrated a clear appetite for the West Midlands to develop a strategic approach to air quality and a low emissions strategy, similar to the approach undertaken by Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and London. This would ensure the region took a co-ordinated approach to reducing the negative economic and health effects of poor air quality. It was intended that a draft Low Emissions Strategy and Action Plan would be considered by this board at its meeting on 1 February 2019, followed by its submission for approval by the WMCA Board at its meeting on 8 March 2019.

Patrick White, Director of Industrial Strategy, reported that the development of a WMCA Low Emission Strategy would complement the work being undertaken by constituent authorities and would avoid duplication. Councillor David Hosell noted the positive impact that a bus rapid transit network across the region could have, and welcomed the work being taken forward in this regard by Transport for West Midlands. The Chair reported that the WMCA should also be looking at best practice within combined authorities across the country in developing its Low Emissions Strategy.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

The scope and direction of the development of a West Midlands Low

Emission Strategy be approved.

6. Local Industrial Strategy Update

The board received a verbal update from Patrick White, Director of Industrial Strategy, on the development of a West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy. The region would be one of the first two in the country to develop such a strategy, which was expected to be consulted upon during October for submission to the WMCA Board for approval early in 2019. Patrick White provided further detail on the local opportunities that could be realised through the development of a Local Industrial Strategy. He expected the strategy would guide future central government investment decisions made within the region.

Councillor David Hosell enquired as to the involvement of the universities sector in this work. Patrick White explained that significant work was being done with the universities in the region, who had all shown a willingness to be involved in the production and delivery of the strategy.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

The update briefing be noted.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Friday 1 February 2019 at 1.00pm

The meeting ended at 4.05 pm.