



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date	25 February 2019
Report title	Overview and Scrutiny Working Groups - Progress Update
Accountable Leads	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
Accountable Employee	Lyndsey Roberts, Scrutiny Officer email: lyndsey.roberts@wmca.org.uk tel: (0121) 214 7501

Recommendation(s) for decision:

Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the progress being made in respect of the working groups.

Purpose

1. To appraise Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the developments and progress in relation to the work of the five working groups.

Background

2. At its meeting held on 16 July, Overview & Scrutiny Committee approved the continuation of five working groups for 2018/19, the terms of reference and membership for each of the groups. The report provides an update on the work of each group since the last meeting of the committee.

Budget Working Group

3. On 12 December 2018, members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held a Mayoral Q&A session on the proposed budget 2019/20. Members acknowledged that the West Midlands Combined Authority had commenced its budget discussions with constituent authorities much earlier this year to allow sufficient time for open discussion and the development of proposals. However, a change to the scheduled timetable of meetings with the Metropolitan Leaders had meant that the proposed draft budget 2019/20 had yet to be finalised and as a consequence could not be shared with Overview & Scrutiny Committee prior to the Mayoral Q&A session.
4. On 8 January, the Interim Director of Finance attended a meeting of the Budget Working Group to provide the detail of the draft budget proposals. The Portfolio Lead for Finance & Investments had been invited to attend the meeting but was unfortunately unable to due to diary availability.
5. The Chair agreed to raise a number of points at WMCA Board on 11 January, and these were in relation to the following areas:
 - Health & Wellbeing Budget
 - Budget Consultation Timing
 - Commonwealth Games - Athletes Village/CA Stipulations
 - Medium Term Efficiency Programme - Pre-Decision Scrutiny
 - Proposed Efficiency Savings - Mayoral Office
 - Commonwealth Games - Lobbying Government to finalise the financial budget
6. On 4 February, the Budget Working Group met to discuss a report on the WMCA Gender Pay Gap, the 16 - 18 Concession Scheme and to undertake a final review of the WMCA Budget 2019/20, which was subsequently approved at the WMCA Board on 11 February.
7. During discussion, the working group recognised that a lot of good and positive things are happening within the combined authority and this will become increasingly evident in the coming years. However, in the short term the working group questioned whether the WMCA was doing enough to publicise the difference it is making to residents' lives. The WMCA needs to demonstrate to the public and other stakeholders how it is adding value, and so proper consideration needs to be given as to how it does this in an effective but cost efficient way.

8. As part of the scope of the Budget Working Group members had asked to review a “major project”, for example Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension. A meeting of the Budget Working Group will be held on 6 March to review the final business case for the scheme. The Director of West Midlands Metro, the Managing Director of TfWM and the Metro Finance & Commercial Director have been invited to attend.
9. It is intended that the Chair will attend Investment Board on 11 March to share any comments/views of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group to help the Investment Board inform their decision of the full business case.
10. Councillor Peter Hughes will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

Governance Working Group

11. Since the last update to Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Governance Working Group met on 13 December 2018 and 23 January.
12. On 13 December, Ed Hammond, a Director of Centre for Public Scrutiny that leads on programmes, projects and policy developments relating to promoting and improving scrutiny and governance in local government, participated in the Governance Working Group and outlined the key learning from the Centre for Public Scrutiny in the work that they have done with combined authority scrutiny across the country. Key points included:
 - Frustration from scrutiny members not feeling productive, in that they are given opportunity to comment but not “plugged in”.
 - Logistics - all combined authorities have problems with quoracy.
13. The working group also received a presentation from Tim Martin, Head of Governance that included information on the establishment of the WMCA, its vision and priorities, mayoral powers, portfolio responsibility areas, how we take decisions collaboratively, the range of committee’s and boards and the WMCA Budget.
14. At its meeting held on 23 January, the Working Group reviewed information on what the statutory requirements of the governance model are and received a summary of delegated powers.
15. A member from the working group will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

Health & Wellbeing Working Group

16. On 22 January, the Health & Wellbeing Working Group held a meeting with Sean Russell, the Director of Implementation for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Radical Prevention. Sean Russell had been invited to attend the working group to discuss and answer questions on the Thrive into Work Programme.
17. At the initial setting up of the Health & Wellbeing Working Group, members decided that, as part of its work it would maintain an overview of obesity in the West Midlands, which was also agreed by Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Portfolio Lead for Wellbeing.

18. The Wellbeing Board has signed off an approach to childhood obesity (including a junk food ban on parts of the TfWM network) which will be considered by WMCA Board in March 2019 as part of a regional action plan worked up in partnership with Public Health England. The Health & Wellbeing Working Group will meet on 5 March and has invited Sean Russell to discuss and answer questions in respect of this report.
19. Councillor Cathy Bayton will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

Housing & Land Working Group

20. On 25 February, Overview & Scrutiny Committee will receive a report on the Housing Affordability: Update & Proposal to H M Government and a report on the Regional Design Charter: Options and Next Steps.
21. Councillor Ian Shires continues to have regular briefings with Gareth Bradford, Director for Housing and Regeneration with regard to the housing and land agenda.
22. Councillor Ian Shires will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

Inclusive Growth and Productivity & Skills Working Group

23. Councillor Lisa Trickett met with Julie Nugent, Director of Productivity & Skills, to discuss the Adult Education Budget.
24. It is proposed that a review should be undertaken by members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to understand the current picture in relation to Adult Education funds; new focus shaped through local influence and devolution; and to review ways in which the West Midlands Combined Authority and local authorities can better drive skills in the region. The objectives of this review are:
 - To understand the current picture for Adult Education Budget - reflecting historic and national funding priorities.
 - To understand the opportunity for devolution to better shape provision locally.
 - To ascertain individual member views on future opportunities to improve local skills provision.
25. It is intended that a meeting will be held with Overview & Scrutiny Committee members from each of the seven constituent local authorities, who would also be joined by their Cabinet Member for Education & Skills, to undertake a deep dive with the Director of Productivity & Skills into the Adult Education Budget work for each local authority area.
26. This review will be undertaken during March and April 2019. Devolution of the Adult Education Budget will be implemented from August 2019 and the impact of this will be evaluated by the WMCA Skills Advisory Board.
27. Councillor Lisa Trickett will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

Financial Implications

28. There are no direct financial implications arising out of the recommendations contained within this report.

Legal Implications

29. There are no direct legal implications arising out of the recommendations contained within this report.

Equalities Implications

30. There are no direct equalities implications arising out of the recommendations contained within this report.

Inclusive Growth Implications

31. There are no inclusive growth implications arising out of the recommendations contained within this report.

Geographical Area of Report's Implications

32. There are no geographical implications arising out of the recommendations contained within this report.

Other Implications

33. There are no further specific implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.