



West Midlands Combined Authority

Environment Board

Friday 8 February 2019 at 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present

Councillor Qadar Zada (Chair)

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Item No.	Title
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8.	Apologies for Absence
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Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tony Diccico (Solihull), Councillor David Hosell (Sandwell), Councillor Jim O'Boyle (Coventry) and Councillor Waseem Zaffar (Birmingham).

9.	Inquorate Meeting
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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 22 March 2019 for formal approval and adoption.

10.	Minutes - 10 September 2018
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The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

11.	Environment Board Action Plan - Update on Progress
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The board considered a report from Simon Slater, Head of Environment, providing high level progress on the delivery of the Environment Board Action Plan relating to air quality, clean growth, green infrastructure and green buildings.

At its meeting on 10 September 2018, this board agreed the annual Action Plan which set out the how the WMCA would integrate environmental issues within its leadership, strategies and delivery. The report set out in more detail the progress that had been made in delivering the workplan during the last six months, along with the action that was proposed to be undertaken up to June this year.

The Chair requested that future progress reports should particularly focus on air quality, green infrastructure and clean growth, demonstrating progress being made by local authorities within the region and what the WMCA was doing to add value to this work. He considered it more beneficial to focus on delivering noticeable progress in a smaller number of workstreams, rather than spread resources too thinly across too many different areas.

Simon Slater undertook to update the Chair mid-March as to the progress being made.

Recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) Progress on the Environment Board Action Plan and forward plan be noted.

12. Environment Board Action Plan - Update on Regional Targets

The board considered a report from Simon Slater, Head of Environment, containing a dashboard of regional indicators and targets linked to the monitoring of the Environment Board Action Plan and the immediate priorities of air quality, clean growth, green infrastructure and green buildings.

At its last meeting, the board requested that a stocktake of existing environmental targets was undertaken and set against existing action plan priorities. This had enabled a dashboard of targets to be produced, which would be reported on to the board on an annual basis.

The Chair enquired as to whether the targets contained within the Action Plan were realistically achievable, or were likely to be too aspirational. Simon Slater explained that where there were no existing targets, a number of the new targets were based on the best performing combined authorities. There would also be further work on updating the carbon reduction target, based on the latest evidence.

Recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The approach on regional environment indicators and targets linked to the Environment Board Action Plan priorities to be 'best in class' be approved.
- (2) It be agreed that a further update and further quantification of the impact these targets would have on increasing healthy lives and jobs be submitted to a future meeting of the Environment Board.

13. Update on Developing a Low Emissions Strategy - Air Quality and Carbon Emissions

The board considered a report from Simon Slater, Head of Environment, on the progress made to date in delivering the clean growth and air quality priorities contained within the Environment Board Action Plan.

A steering group had been established to finalise the development and implementation plan relating to air quality and low emissions issues. This group contained representatives from constituent councils along with representatives from industry, public health and Transport for West Midlands. It was now expected to submit an air quality and carbon emissions strategy and action plan to this board in June, followed by submission for formal approval by the WMCA Board in July.

In respect of air quality priorities, the Chair considered that any individual local authority scheme should include measures to mitigate against its impact on neighbouring authorities. He considered it helpful if the WMCA could provide oversight of air quality strategies across the region so as to seek to ensure that there was close alignment throughout the West Midlands.

Recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The progress on the development of the Low Emissions Strategy and Action Plan be noted.

14. Developing a West Midlands Natural Capital Investment Strategy and Programme

The board considered a report from Simon Slater, Head of Environment, setting out the proposed approach to the development of a Natural Capital Investment Strategy and programme.

'Natural capital' was defined as the elements of nature that directly or indirectly produced value to people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions. The total benefit that humans gained from the natural environment was valued to be worth \$124.8 trillion per year, twice as much as the global aggregate GDP.

Following discussions at the West Midlands Natural Capital Roundtable, it was proposed that the WMCA would develop a strategic approach to help co-ordinate existing activity within the region, highlight its attractiveness to investors and to promote the impact of this activity. This would culminate with a final strategy and programme being submitted for approval to this board in September.

Recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The approach of developing a West Midlands Natural Capital Investment Strategy and Programme be approved.

15. Friday 7 June 2019 at 1.00pm

The date of the next meeting was noted.

The meeting ended at 2.50 pm.