



West Midlands Combined Authority

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 25 February 2019 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Peter Hughes (Chair)
Councillor Mike Chalk

Councillor Stuart Davis
Councillor Peter Fowler
Councillor Angus Lees

Councillor Ian Shires (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Stephen Simkins
Councillor Joe Tildesley
Councillor Vera Waters

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local
Authorities

Joint Coventry/Solihull Representative
Birmingham City Council

Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and
Wolverhampton Councils

Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and
Wolverhampton Councils

City of Wolverhampton Council

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

In Attendance

Councillor Daniel Barker

Gareth Bradford

Councillor Mike Bird
Councillor Rose Burley
Deborah Cadman

Paul Clarke
Councillor Joe Clifford
Councillor Julian Grubb

Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and
Wolverhampton Councils

Director of Housing & Regeneration,
West Midlands Combined Authority

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Chief Executive of West Midlands
Combined Authority

West Midlands Combined Authority

Coventry City Council

Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local
Authorities

Chair of Transport Delivery Committee

Item Title No.

44. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cathy Bayton (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council), Paul Brown (Black Country LEP), Councillor Dean Carroll (Shropshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities), Councillor Tariq Khan (Coventry City Council), Councillor Tony Johnson (Staffordshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities) and Sarah Windrum (Coventry & Warwickshire LEP).

45. Inquorate Meeting

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.

46. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2019

Further to the previous minutes the Chair raised the following points:

- Committee/Board Forward Plans and reports: the Chair encouraged members to submit any queries or questions on forward plan items, which would be fed back to Officers, and could allow amendments to the report to be submitted to the WMCA Board.
- Conversations were being undertaken to progress the work relating to the review of WMCA scrutiny with LGA/CFPS.
- The 2019/20 budget, agreed by the WMCA Board on 8 February, included additional resources for scrutiny.
- A bus franchising Task & Finish Group was to be set up, with the following members to be included in the group: Councillor Ian Shires, Councillor Mike Chalk, Councillor Kath Hartley, Councillor Liz Clements, Councillor Stephen Simkins and Councillor Angus Lees, with the latter acting as chair of the task & finish group.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 16 January 2019 were confirmed as a correct record subject to an amendment to the minutes reflecting that Councillor Daniel Barker was in attendance.

47. Papers considered by Housing & Land Delivery Board 21 February 2019

The committee received an update from Councillor Mike Bird, Housing & Land Portfolio Lead, and the Director of Housing & Regeneration. The report outlined the key roles of WMCA relating to housing and regeneration, commitments in the WMCA Land Delivery Plan, Key Performance Indicators and the plan for 2019/20. The committee also considered the reports on Housing Affordability and Regional Design Charter approved by the Housing & Land Delivery Board on 21 February 2019.

Councillor Angus Lees enquired about the West Midlands Investment Prospectus, and the Director of Housing & Regeneration explained that this piece of work was commissioned by the Housing & Land Delivery Board and Investment Board to identify major opportunities within the region for residential and commercial real estate development. With regard to affordable and social housing the Director also highlighted that the WMCA was responsible for supporting these provisions although policies lay within the remit of local authorities. Although planning committees within local authorities were the responsible bodies for ensuring that new houses were fit for purpose in terms of being carbon neutral, committee members highlighted their concerns regarding this.

Resolved that:

- (1) The committee's comments be reported to the WMCA Board for noting.

48. Update on Consultation for the Proposed Transfer of West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner Functions

The committee received a report with an update on the consultation process for the proposed transfer of West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner functions addressing a number of issues previously raised by the committee.

It was noted that the number of responses received under the Stage One consultation was a total of 6,059. Councillor Joe Tildesley expressed disappointment at the low number of responses when compared to both the population of the region and the high level of crime activity within the West Midlands. He also pointed out that the report did not reflect previous discussions and did not include what he, and other members considered to be a tacit agreement for scrutiny to be involved in a more rigorous role in scrutinising both the Police & Crime Panel and the Mayor. The Monitoring Officer agreed that this was indeed an omission within the report.

The committee requested further information surrounding the demographics of those who responded to the consultation and how the needs of those with learning disabilities were met. Councillor Sweetman referenced point 3.29 of the report and asked what input the committee had had to this point. The Chair highlighted that the committee had been involved in reviewing the outcome of the consultation stages prior to approval at the WMCA Board on the 22 March and also in reviewing the Stage One consultation questions. It was agreed therefore that the committee would receive a private and confidential copy of the draft report to enable them to feedback on the report.

It was recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The contents of the report be noted.
- (2) The comments made by committee be noted.
- (3) WMCA reinforce the power of scrutiny of both police and fire when they are devolved to the position of the Mayor/WMCA Board, also build in the robust nature of the scrutiny function into any future devolution deal, and ensure that scrutiny had the same parity of esteem as the executive.

49. Response to Overview & Scrutiny Committee Recommendations to WMCA Board on 11 January 2019

The committee received a report providing a formal response to the recommendations made by the committee following the Mayor's Q&A session held on 12 December 2018.

The committee requested proposals/timescales of where they fit into the budget consultation process for future annual budgets in preparation for the Municipal Year. It was also requested that Environmental, Sustainability and Social Value implications be included within board reports and embedded within policies. Committee felt that more could be done to better improve engagement with the public and suggested that future committees could be held around constituent authorities' venues.

It was recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The contents of the report be noted.
- (2) The comments made me committee be noted.
- (3) An explanation on Marmot Objectives and how these fit into the Combined Authorities plans to be presented at a future meeting.

50. Development of the WMCA Annual Plan 2019/20

The committee received a report outlining the developments of the WMCA Annual Plan for 2019/20 and sought the committee's feedback and endorsement of the principles and features used to develop the Plan.

Further to discussions around ensuring that there is a strategic push around inward investment into the region the Chief Executive indicated that the Annual Plan on the opportunities in the economy and how the Combined Authority will translate those opportunities into regional investment.

It was agreed that the drafts of the individual portfolio areas of the Annual Business Plan would be shared and discussed with the relevant working groups in advance of it becoming part of the full document.

It was recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The contents of the report be noted.
- (2) The comments made by committee be noted.

51. Conclusions of the Bilston Road Task & Finish Group

The committee considered a report from Councillor Stephen Simkins outlining the conclusions of the Bilston Road Task & Finish Group. Members of the Task & Finish Group considered the evidence and comments made by the traders along Bilston Road and representatives from the Midland Metro Alliance and Transport for West Midlands and reached a number of recommendations.

The committee accepted the 11 recommendations made within the report and agreed that a formal response was required by the Managing Director of Transport for West Midlands.

It was recommended to the WMCA Board that:

- (1) The contents of the report be noted.

(2) The recommendations outlined within the report to be submitted to the Managing Director of Transport for West Midlands for formal response by the 21 March 2019.

(3) WMCA to lobby Central Government for an amendment to the current legislation to support those businesses affected by maintenance works.

52. Overview & Scrutiny Working Groups - Progress Update

The committee considered a report outlining the progress made in response of the five working groups.

It was recommended to the WMCA Board that:

(1) The contents of the report be noted.

53. Scrutiny Champions - Progress Update

The committee considered a report outlining the progress made in response of the work being undertaken by the Scrutiny Champions.

It was recommended to the WMCA Board that:

(1) The contents of the report be noted.

54. Forward Plans

The committee received and noted the items to be considered by the following committee / boards:

- WMCA Board
- Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee
- Environment Board
- Investment Board
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Public Service Reform
- Transport Delivery Committee

It was recommended to the WMCA Board that:

(1) Item on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee forward plan be noted.

55. Friday 12 April 2019

The date of the next meeting was noted.

The meeting ended at 1.15 pm.