



## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date</b>	12 April 2019
<b>Report title</b>	Review of 2018/19 Scrutiny Review Work - Working Groups, Scrutiny Champions, Task & Finish Groups
<b>Accountable Leads</b>	<p><b>Working Groups</b> Budget - Councillor Peter Hughes Governance - Councillor John Cotton Health &amp; Wellbeing - Councillor Cathy Bayton Housing &amp; Land - Councillor Ian Shires Inclusive Growth and Productivity &amp; Skills - Councillor Lisa Trickett</p> <p><b>Scrutiny Champions</b> Leaders Like You - Councillor Jackie Taylor and Councillor Cathy Bayton Air Quality - Councillor Stephen Simkins Transport - Councillor Angus Lees and Councillor Mike Chalk</p> <p><b>Task &amp; Finish Groups</b> Bilston Road Track Replacement - Councillor Stephen Simkins Bus Franchising - Councillor Angus Lees</p>
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### Recommendation(s) for decision:

### Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the progress made during 2018/19 in respect of the working groups, task & finish groups and Scrutiny Champions.

## **Purpose**

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

## **Background**

2. At its meeting held on 16 July, Overview & Scrutiny Committee approved the continuation of five working groups for 2018/19. In addition, the committee also endorsed the appointment of three Scrutiny Champions to have responsibility for the oversight of thematic areas relating to transport, air quality and the implementation of the recommendations of the 'Leaders Like You' report, which was a report published by the West Midlands Combined Authority's Leadership Commission.
3. At its meeting on 4 September 2018, Overview & Scrutiny Committee established a task & finish group, to review the impact that the Bilston Road metro track replacement works had had on nearby businesses and to evaluate the support these businesses had received to mitigate the impact of the works.
4. At its meeting on 25 February, the committee established a bus franchising task & finish group to look further at the comments received around the Mayor choosing not to utilise his bus franchising powers.
5. The report provides an update on the work of each of the working groups, task & finish groups and Scrutiny Champions during the course of the year.

## **WORKING GROUPS**

### **(a) Budget Working Group**

At the initial setting up of the Budget Working Group, members decided that as part of its work, it would maintain overview and scrutinise a major transport investment project throughout its lifecycle, using key milestones as the prompts for scrutiny. A key investment project for the WMCA during the year was considered to be the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension.

On 6 March, the Budget Working Group considered a progress report on delivering the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension, which was subsequently presented to a meeting of the WMCA Investment Board on 11 March. The Director of West Midlands Metro, the Managing Director of Transport for West Midlands and the Metro Finance & Commercial Director attended the meeting.

Councillor Peter Hughes attended Investment Board on 11 March, and raised the following points to help inform their decision:

- Concern had been expressed at the gap between the original estimated cost and the current cost but the reasons for this had been explained, and members were confident that the scheme would be delivered.
- Future project papers seeking funding approval should contain a summary outlining key risks, environmental implications and social value benefits. These should also be added to all procurement contracts.

- The underlying assumptions used in the calculation of the Net Present Value and Benefit:Cost Ratio had been queried and the Metro Finance & Commercial Director had agreed to provide the necessary information.
- The Park & Ride facilities proposed, and the consequential implications for local residents from unofficial solutions, needed to be discussed with local councillors and engagement to take place with local residents. Mitigating such impacts needed to be considered.
- The carriage of cycles on trams should be given further consideration if integrated transport solutions were to be sought. It was accepted that this issue could be addressed through the Local Cycling & Walking workstream.
- The issue of capacity and skills in the labour market was an area of concern and assurances were sought from both the Midland Metro Alliance and Transport for West Midlands.
- Training for careers in light rail construction should be open to former members of the armed forces members as well as ex-offenders.
- The need for a partnership approach to be adopted in respect of media announcements was highlighted, together with awareness raising of the work that the WMCA was responsible for in terms of job creation, provision of additional housing units etc. Local councillors were often best placed to assist with awareness raising.
- The Overview & Scrutiny Committee wished to be involved as an integral part of the development process.

During the course of 2018/19 the Budget Working Group considered;

- Budget proposals for 2019/20
- Regular monitoring of the financial monitoring report
- Undertook an investigation into a major transport project

Councillor Peter Hughes will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

**(b) Governance Working Group**

Councillor John Cotton continues to have regular updates with Tim Martin, Head of Governance, with regard to the governance agenda.

During the course of 2018/19 the Governance Working Group have:

- Engaged with the Centre for Public Scrutiny in relation to the work undertaken with combined authority scrutiny across the region; and
- Reviewed the statutory requirements of the governance model at the West Midlands Combined Authority and delegated powers.

A member from the working group will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

**(c) Health & Wellbeing Working Group**

On 5 March, the working group received a presentation from Dr Stella Botchway, WMCA Consultant in Public Health, on reducing childhood obesity to support healthier lives. The contributions and feedback from the working group had helped to inform an action plan that was to be considered by the Wellbeing Board.

The Wellbeing Board had agreed to develop an approach to supporting system change to achieve healthy weight for more residents across the West Midlands. Along with health and wellbeing partners across the region, the authority will work with partners to support the reduction in obesity.

The working group had proposed six recommendations for endorsement by the Wellbeing Board on 5 April. A strategy to tackle childhood obesity will be submitted to the WMCA Board on 28 June for approval. Councillor Cathy Bayton has been invited to attend the next meeting of the Wellbeing Board to discuss the following recommendations:

- At a regional level the WMCA had an opportunity to influence supermarkets in the redistribution of surplus food to provide a more holistic solution for the community.
- WMCA to lobby Central Government to maximise powers under planning rules to enforce a ban of high fat, salt or sugar adverts within the vicinity of schools, and to identify exclusion zones around schools for fast food outlets.
- In addition to working with local schools, local authorities and Public Health England to design potential uses of devolved funds dedicated to reducing obesity in young people, the WMCA should also work with the academies.
- Membership of the WMCA Obesity Task Force to include:
  - Teachers from primary and secondary schools, including academies
  - Practitioners
  - Clinical Commissioning Groups
- The WMCA to ensure that the composition of the members on the WMCA Obesity Task Force reflects the ethnicity and diversity of the region.
- To explore and better understand the links between obesity and mental health issues.

A meeting of the working group will be held on 16 April, to review a draft of the Health & Wellbeing, Public Service Reform, Inclusion and Cohesion sections of the WMCA Annual Plan for 2019/20.

During the course of 2018/19 the Health & Wellbeing Working Group considered:

- Thrive into Work Programme
- The budget allocation to deliver the Wellbeing workstreams; and
- Childhood Obesity

Councillor Cathy Bayton will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

**(d) Housing & Land Working Group**

On 25 February, Overview & Scrutiny Committee received a report on the Housing Affordability: Update & Proposal to HM Government and a report on the Regional Design Charter: Options and Next Steps.

On 2 April, the working group received an update from the Director of Housing & Regeneration on the progress being made on the Housing & Land portfolio 2018/19. The working group also reviewed a draft of the Housing & Land section of the WMCA Annual Plan for 2019/20. The Director of Housing & Regeneration had agreed, in principle, the introduction of a Housing & Land dashboard, subject to discussions with the Portfolio Lead Member, Councillor Mike Bird.

A copy of the Housing Test Delivery Results 2018 is attached as appendix A.

During the course of 2018/19 the Housing & Land Working Group considered:

- Land Delivery Action Plan
- Undertook an investigation into the methods of construction; and
- Worked in partnership with the Sustainable Housing Action Partnership (SHAP)

Councillor Ian Shires will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

**(e) Inclusive Growth and Productivity & Skills Working Group**

The WMCA will become responsible for the Adult Education Budget (AEB) for its residents from 1 August 2019. Devolved AEB will provide funding for adult skills delivery for residents aged 19 and over of the West Midlands' seven constituent areas. The Department for Education have confirmed the allocation to the WMCA for the 2019/20 academic year will be just under £126m.

During March 2019, the working group had undertaken a review 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 WMCA and local authorities could better drive skills in the region.

Meetings were held with each of the seven constituent local authorities, who were also joined by their Cabinet Member for Education & Skills, to undertake a deep dive with the Director of Productivity & Skills and her team into the Adult Education Budget work for each local authority area. An overview detailing what the Adult Education Budget was spent on during the 2017/18 academic year in relation to local authority residents was circulated in advance of the meetings.

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.

The findings of the working group will be presented to Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 12 April for consideration.

A meeting of the working group will be held on 8 April, to review a draft of the Productivity & Skills and Economic Growth sections of the WMCA Annual Plan 2019/20.

During the course of 2018/19 the Inclusive Growth and Productivity & Skills Working Group considered:

- Local Industrial Strategy; and
- Devolution of the Adult Education Budget

Councillor Lisa Trickett will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

## **SCRUTINY CHAMPIONS**

### **(a) Air Quality - Councillor Stephen Simkins**

On 5 February, Councillor Stephen Simkins met with the Head of Environment and invited the following representatives to join the meeting to discuss the Low Emissions Strategy

- Councillor Philip Davies - Transport Delivery Committee Lead Member for Air Quality, Congestions & Environmental Sustainability
- Ric Bravery - City of Wolverhampton Council Strategic Health Lead
- John Roseblade - City of Wolverhampton Council Head of City Transport

The Low Emissions Strategy will be presented to the Environment Board on 7 June, prior to the WMCA Board on 28 June. The Head of Environment continues to have dialogue with the Scrutiny Officer with regard to how and when pre-decision scrutiny could be undertaken.

A meeting with Councillor Stephen Simkins and Simon Slater, the Head of Environment will be held on 10 April, to review a draft of the environment section of the WMCA Annual Plan 2019/20

Councillor Stephen Simkins will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

### **(b) Leaders Like You - Councillor Cathy Bayton and Councillor Jackie Taylor**

During March and April 2019, Councillor Cathy Bayton and Councillor Jackie Taylor together with Councillor Stephen Simkins and Councillor Liz Clements will undertake a review to understand the progression made on the recommendations of the 'Leaders Like You' report that was published by the WMCA's Leadership Commission in May 2018.

On 14 March, the group met with Meera Sonecha, Policy Advisor and Lucy Gosling, Leadership Commission Delivery Plan Co-ordinator, to agree the purpose and objectives of the group.

The recommendations/themes have been split between the councillors participating in the group to undertake a 'deep-drive' and pull together a number of questions with a view to meeting with Deborah Cadman, Chief Executive on 17 April.

The conclusions and any recommendations arising from the review will be shared with members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Cathy Bayton and Councillor Jackie Taylor will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

**(c) Transport - Councillor Angus Lees**

Councillor Angus Lees and Councillor Mike Chalk continue to receive the agenda and papers for meetings of the Transport Delivery Committee and continue to attend its meetings.

A meeting with Councillor Angus Lees, Councillor Mike Chalk and David Harris, the Transport Strategy & Place Manager will be held on 18 April to review a draft of the transport section of the WMCA Annual Plan 2019/20.

Councillor Angus Lees and Councillor Mike Chalk will provide a verbal update at the meeting (as appropriate) on any more recent developments.

**TASK & FINISH GROUPS**

**(a) Bus Franchising**

At its meeting held on 25 February, Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a bus franchising task & finish group to undertake a further look around the comments received around the Mayor not utilising his bus franchising powers.

On 21 March, the Task & Finish Group received an update from Pete Bond, Director of Integrated Network Services and Jon Hayes, Head of Network Delivery on the current arrangements for bus services in the West Midlands, the Bus Services Act 2017 and the opportunities to improve the bus network.

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) had developed a Vision for Bus in order to clearly articulate how it would create a world leading bus network as part of an integrated transport system, which was approved in November 2018 by the WMCA Board. The vision forms part of a wider, emerging proposal for delivering an integrated transport system, which will be shared with the WMCA Board in May 2019. TfWM would be seeking the approval of the WMCA Board in May to undertake an outline business case that will consider the options outlined in the Bus Services Act including franchising, Bus Alliance and Enhanced Partnerships. The process, risks, opportunities and benefits for each of these options will be looked at as part of the outline business case.

It was agreed that there was need for a further meeting of the group that will be held in early May.

## **(b) Bilston Road Metro Track Replacement Works**

At its meeting on 4 September 2018, Overview & Scrutiny Committee established a task & finish group, comprising Councillor Stephen Simkins, Councillor Ian Shires and Councillor Angus Lees to review the impact that the Bilston Road metro track replacement works had had on nearby businesses and to evaluate the support these businesses had received to mitigate the impact of the works.

During October 2018 and January 2019, the task & finish group met with representatives from Transport for West Midlands, Midland Metro Alliance and nine local businesses located along and adjoining Bilston Road.

Businesses were asked to submit any information that they considered evidenced the pre-works information they received, the consultation process they engaged with, and the support and assistance they received in mitigation during the track replacement works themselves. The Chair provided each local business with an opportunity to provide their perspective of how the track replacement works had impacted them and their business.

The task & finish group also received a comprehensive document pack from the Midland Metro Alliance that included background information, planning approvals and engagement, construction and re-opening details and responses to the issues raised by local businesses during the course of the works.

The conclusions of the task & finish group were reported to Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 25 February. The committee agreed the recommendations outlined in the report and an additional recommendation: WMCA to lobby Government for an amendment to the current legislation to support those businesses affected. It was agreed that these recommendations should be submitted to the Managing Director of Transport for West Midlands for a formal response.

On 28 March, a response to these recommendations was circulated to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the local businesses that participated in the meetings.

### **Financial Implications**

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

### **Legal Implications**

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

### **Equalities Implications**

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

### **Inclusive Growth Implications**

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

**Geographical Area of Report's Implications**

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

**Other Implications**

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