

West Midlands Combined Authority Review of the Annual Plan 2018/19



West Midlands
Combined Authority

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Introduction



The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of delivery and progress against the WMCA Annual Plan 2018/19. It forms part of a suite of documents focussed on the Combined Authority and wider regional progress in the last year, and our plans and priorities for 2019/20:

- **WMCA Annual Review of 2018-19:** looking back at delivery and progress against the actions, activity and outcomes we set out in our 2018-19 plan.
- **State of The Region 2019:** summarises the region's performance against a range of economic health and growth indicators, and enables developments in the region's economy and society over the last year to be illustrated.
- **WMCA Annual Plan 2019-20:** sets out our focus and plans for the coming year and associated key performance measures.

Last year's Annual Plan was approved by the WMCA Board Annual General Meeting in June 2018. It outlined how the WMCA (and TfWM) would work with its partners and stakeholders towards delivering its ambitious plans for driving inclusive economic growth in the West Midlands region and building a healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous population.

The Plan was structured on the key strategic priorities and councillor-led portfolios, along with information about our services that enable and support delivery (Corporate Services).

For convenience, this Annual Review document is presented in line with that structure, and uses the following headings:

- Economic Growth and Local Industrial Strategy
- Housing and Regeneration
- Productivity and Skills
- Health and Wellbeing
- Public Service Reform, Inclusion and Cohesion
- Environment
- Transport
- Investment Programme
- Enabling delivery: Investment Programme, Corporate Services and Governance

Executive Summary



Key delivery and progress against the priorities set out in the Annual Plan 2018/19 includes:

Economic Growth

- Developed the West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy
- Supported the region's response and planning for Brexit
- Work progressed to develop the West Midlands Office of Data Analytics (ODA)

Housing and Regeneration

- Secured a £350m Housing Deal with Government
- Worked with partners to accelerate house building: 14,628 new homes (a 21% increase on 2016/17) and a 33% increase in affordable homes completed
- Approved £20million of funding to unlock land for regeneration in five town centres across the region

Productivity and Skills

- Published a Regional Skills Plan in June 2018 and secured the first Skills Deal in the country which £69m of new and planned investment for the region
- Mentored more than 1,500 young people through the Mayor's Mentors programme
- Supported over 400 people through the 'Connecting Communities' employment support programme
- Delivered pre-employment training for 100 local unemployed people through the £5m Construction Gateway project
- Secured Government agreement to a West Midlands Apprenticeship Levy transfer scheme, allowing up to £40m of unspent levy funding to be used to support regional SMEs' take-up of apprenticeships.

Health and Wellbeing

- Developed a Population Intelligence Hub in collaboration with Public Health England and local partners to provide in-depth and timely intelligence on local public health
- Supported the Homelessness Taskforce and started delivery of the Housing First pilot
- Continued delivery of the successful Thrive programme with the development of multiple streams of work including ‘Thrive Into Work Individual Placement Support’ (IPS) and ‘Thrive At Work’

Public Service Reform, Inclusion and Cohesion

- Established the Inclusive Growth Unit in June 2018
- The first iteration of our Inclusive Growth Framework which provides a way to measure inclusive growth was approved by WMCA Board
- The Social Economy Taskforce has been operational throughout 2018/19, and will publish its final report in summer 2019

Environment

- Established an Environment Board, supported by a cross-sector advisory group of internal and external partners.
- Started work to develop a regional Low Emissions Strategy and Action Plan with local authorities, to help identify where working regionally could accelerate local action on air quality and carbon emissions, attract investment, and improve health.
- Regional Energy Strategy approved by WMCA Board in January 2019



Transport

- Extended the half-price Swift travel offer to all young people aged 16-18, on bus, rail and Metro, enabling an extra 100,000 young people to benefit
- Published a Common Approach to Walking & Cycling and the West Midlands Local Cycling & Walking Investment Plan
- Supported the delivery of early Clean Air Zone measures by securing over £6 million to support the retrofit of buses to the highest European clean air standard for buses (Euro VI) across the region
- Transferred the operation of the West Midland Metro Network to Midland Metro Limited (MML) – a wholly owned subsidiary of the WMCA – in June 2018, allowing all future profits to go back into the system.
- Published a Congestion Management Plan, setting out how we will improve capacity and efficiency and manage demand on our transport system
- Continued to develop the future regional Transport Strategy through the development of plans and strategies including: Strategic Vision for Bus and West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy



Economic Growth and Local Industrial Strategy

The West Midlands' growth priorities and ambitions were set out in the 2015 Strategic Economic Plan. The investments and actions the WMCA makes and takes are focussed on delivering this plan, working with our local councils, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and other partners including the West Midlands Growth Company.

Key delivery and progress against our 2018/19 Plan has included:

Local Industrial Strategy

Working with a range of partners, the WMCA has led the development of an evidence based Local Industrial Strategy, focused on boosting productivity, earning power and competitiveness in the region. The strategy, to be launched and implemented during 2019 shows how the region will continue to be a major engine of UK success, working in partnership with the government. The region aims to become the centre of the UK's switch to electric and autonomous vehicles, a global location for getting medicines and healthcare devices from the lab to the patient, and an economy at the heart of radical new approaches to professional services and creative content and design.

Brexit

We have worked with partners, and the Brexit Commission established by Birmingham City Council, to prepare for our exit from the European Union. We have helped to establish a series of technical groups drawn from specialists in the

constituent member authorities and administering a pooled Fund for projects aimed at ensuring services adapt to the new regulatory environment. We have helped to establish and support the Mayor's Brexit Economic Contingency Group, focused on the potential impacts of a "no deal" scenario. In February 2019 we hosted a visit from HM Treasury's senior officials who heard first-hand the concerns of local businesses and how government can help.

Devolution

We have continued dialogue with central government on behalf of the region about additional powers and resources required to further our economic and social ambitions for the region. This included innovative funding mechanisms to support the delivery of the region's economic investment priorities and public service reform. During 2019/20, the focus of this work will be on the informing the Government's Spending Review.

Policy Research and Analysis

Working with partners, our research has helped build the region's case for housing investment, developed our understanding of the drivers of youth unemployment and homelessness in the region (Connecting Communities), and contributed to our successful 5G bid. We have built strong collaborations with the Office for National Statistics and Ordnance Survey, including a new approach to quantifying the impact of the metro on local housing and employment.

What works

Our evaluation work has helped ensure we are quickly learning “what works” through robust evaluation plans for three major trials in the region (on homelessness, community employment support and helping people with health problems into employment). We have also reviewed existing international evidence on “what works” to inform our programme design, for example around employment support.

State of The Region

We published an updated annual economic review, and a series of dashboards providing an overview of performance across each portfolio’s area of policy responsibility. Planned developments include the inclusion of the outputs from the inclusive growth unit work and also inclusion of more perception measures from primary surveys.

Office for Data Analytics (ODA)

We have progressed the work to establish an ODA which will ensure a “single version of the truth” is available to the CA and partners, including on-the-day briefings on the latest statistical intelligence on the region’s economy, labour market, housing, health and wellbeing, and demographics. We have worked with the Office for National Statistics to improve the range and timeliness of sub-national statistics such as population projections and regional economic statistics, with quarterly regional GVA figures expected later this year. We have also provided training for local partners’ analysts in areas they identified as key developmental priorities, including Geographic Information Systems (mapping) and statistical programming.



Housing and Regeneration

We are on track to achieve the delivery of our Housing Deal target of 215,000 new homes by 2031, significantly increasing the proportion of affordable housing and driving new benchmarks of quality and efficiency. With our partners, the WMCA is developing the UK's most successful, innovative and delivery-focused housing and regeneration programme, combining the very best of the public and private sectors. Housing and regeneration are at the forefront of implementing WMCA's inclusive growth mission, recognising the links and joins between housing, skills, transport, health and economic growth.

Key delivery and progress against our 2018/19 Plan includes:

Delivering new homes

The West Midlands saw 14,628 new homes delivered in 2017/18, a 21% increase on the annual total for the year before. The long-term trend for new homes has seen consistent improvement and is ahead of schedule for our target of 16,500 new homes per annum by 2031.

Providing affordable homes

The region also saw a 33 per cent increase in affordable homes completed during the last year. That is nearly three times the national average increase. During 2017/18 a total of 1,837 affordable homes were completed, up from 1,383 in 2016/17.

Setting a strategic investment and delivery strategy

We launched the Investment Prospectus for the West Midlands, showcasing £10bn worth of housing, regeneration, commercial and infrastructure development opportunities. These projects build further on the unprecedented investment being secured for the region's infrastructure and illustrate the scale and range of opportunities in the region.

Attracting new investment

The WMCA secured a £350m Housing Deal with government. This includes a £165m funding package to build the Athletes' Village for the 2022 Commonwealth Games and the infrastructure needed for thousands more new homes. The money will be used to build the village on the site of the former Birmingham City University campus in Perry Barr, and more than 5,000 quality, sustainable homes will be built for local people. The first 1,400 homes will come through the post-event conversion of the Commonwealth Games village. The package will also fund a new rail station and road and bus improvements to help deliver a comprehensive regeneration of the wider Perry Barr area.

Building on brownfield sites

We have invested in brownfield land remediation, tackling sites that have been dormant for years and bringing them back into use. For example, more than 250 new homes will be built in Walsall after the Combined Authority stepped in with funding to unlock disused land for development on the Goscote Lane site.

Revitalising town centres

Working with local councils, the Combined Authority developed a programme to accelerate their plans to revitalise town centres, breathing new life into high streets which have suffered a series of blows in recent years. Almost £20million of funding has been approved to unlock land for regeneration in five town centres: Bilston, St Thomas Quarter in Dudley, Bordesley Green in Birmingham, St Matthews Quarter in Walsall and West Bromwich (East).

One Public Estate

The WMCA Housing and Regeneration team are now leading the region's One Public Estate programme, demonstrating how local and central government can come together to achieve the most from public land assets. There are 27 public sector organisations in the OPE Partnership including local authorities, blue light services, the transport authority, health providers, local economic partnerships and other stakeholders. It is one of the biggest partnerships in the UK.

Building new partnerships

During 2018/19, the WMCA has continued to work with Homes England, the Government body responsible for increasing the number of new homes that are built in England, to bring together investment, expertise and priorities for development on brownfield land. Our joint approach is the first of its kind in the country.





Productivity & Skills

Key delivery and progress against our 2018/19 Plan includes:

Regional Skills Plan

Building on the work of the Productivity and Skills Commission, we published our Regional Skills Plan in June 2018 and secured the first Skills Deal in the country which was agreed with government in July. The Deal included £69m of new and planned investment.

Prepare young people for future life and work

Over 1,500 young people are now being mentored through the Mayor's Mentors programme. Partners in the region have come together to develop a clear action plan to tackle the youth unemployment challenge with an initial focus on Birmingham. WMCA is collaborating closely with Birmingham City Council and the Department for Work and Pensions as well as a range of voluntary sector partners and employers to develop and deliver more targeted support for young unemployed. This includes our Apprenticeship Promise – our commitment that all young people should be able to access good apprenticeship and/or training places; as well as wider collaborative work to ensure that all residents between the ages of 16 and 24 are able to access good quality education, training or work.

Create regional networks of specialist technical education and training

We worked with the Gatsby Charitable Foundation and the Further Education Skills and Productivity Group to support the regional college

network to prepare for the introduction of T-levels by facilitating collaborative activity around investment in capital equipment, development of curriculum and co-ordination of the work experience requirement.

Construction skills

We set up a Construction Skills Taskforce to oversee the development and delivery of the regional Construction Skills Plan – ensuring that we have the right pathways in place to deliver the workforce that the construction industry needs both for traditional build projects and those using modern methods of construction. Our £5m Construction Gateway project is successfully delivering pre-employment training for local unemployed people with a guaranteed interview for a real job opportunity at the end. Through this programme we have trained nearly 100 people to date with 60% having already secured employment.

Digital skills

We set up a Digital Skills Partnership with industry experts to develop and deliver a Digital Skills Plan for the region. We also secured £5m to support a Digital Retraining Scheme targeting both unemployed and in-work residents, to help them develop their digital skills.

Accelerate the take up of good quality apprenticeships across the region

As part of our Skills Deal, we secured government's agreement to a West Midlands levy transfer scheme. This allows us to use up to £40m of unspent apprenticeship levy

funding to support regional SMEs take-up of apprenticeships. £9m of this has been secured to date, and has helped SMEs take on apprentices in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths). Working with government we have set up an Apprenticeship & Technical Education Taskforce through which the region is working in partnership with government to drive up apprenticeships starts and ensure that the region is prepared for the introduction of T-levels.

Helping people into work

Our 'Connecting Communities' employment support programme is now in delivery in nine areas across the combined authority. Over 400 people are being supported through the programme, over half of whom have been out of work for more than two years. Through the programme, local people are supported to secure employment, or increase their income if they are already in work.

Employment support framework

We are working collaboratively with local authorities, DWP, Big Lottery and the voluntary sector to develop an employment support framework that will guide the future co-ordination and commissioning of employment support in the region – ensuring that we are getting best value for local people and that they are getting the support that they really need.

Adult Education Budget

WMCA will take up control of the £126m regional Adult Education Budget (AEB) in August 2019. Delivery agreements are in place for the 2019/20 academic year between WMCA and local colleges and also with local authorities that deliver AEB funded provision. We also tendered for up to £28m worth of provision to meet identified local priorities and to test new innovative approaches to learning.

Strengthening Collaboration

WMCA has worked closely with DfE to shape the development of our Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) which will play a key role in shaping local skills delivery. Our Skills Advisory Board has been set up to undertake the SAP role in strategic planning for post-16 regional skills provision. This is a new and expert partnership between the WMCA, local employers and skills providers engaging directly with the Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions, to drive forward improvements in employment and skills outcomes for the region.



Health & Wellbeing

Key delivery and progress against our 2018/19 Plan includes:

Population Intelligence Hub

We developed an innovative Hub to provide in-depth and timely intelligence on local public health, in collaboration with Public Health England and local partners. Outputs have included a dashboard of key health indicators across the CA area, analysis of Health Life Expectancy in each part of the region, and support to work with people with multiple complex needs (see Public Service Reform section for further details).

Mental Health “Thrive” Programme

The programme resulting from the Mental Health Commission involves multiple streams of work. The “Thrive Into Work” Individual Placement and Support (IPS) trial to help people into work has so far supported over 100 people with mental or physical ill health into jobs. We are reaching over 100,000 employees through the “Thrive At Work” which helps small and medium sized companies to embed wellbeing into their business. Over 25,000 people are benefitting from “mental health first aid” and 150,000 from “every mind matters” initiatives.

Homelessness

We have supported the Homelessness Taskforce and started delivery of the Housing First pilot – with over 50 rough sleepers being housed in the first quarter of 2019.

West Midlands on The Move

We are working with the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee and BCC to mobilise a social movement in the run up to 2022. During 2018/19 we launched the “West Midlands Good Gym” - a community of runners that combine getting fit with doing good. Participants stop off on their runs to do physical tasks for community organisations and to support isolated older people with social visits and one-off tasks they can't do on their own. It's a great way to get fit, meet new people and do some good. The Coventry and Solihull branches of Good Gym were launched in March 2019.

Prevention

Our initial thinking on work with the NHS on preventing disease and ill health has developed into a proposed Radical Prevention Fund, using devolution as a catalyst for innovation in prevention which delivers tangible system and citizen outcome benefits by supporting digital innovation and new ways of supporting prevention across the WM health, care and public services system.

Digital innovation

The West Midlands was selected in September to become the innovative home to the UK's first multi-city 5G test bed. The multi million pound trial of new high speed connectivity will pave the way for the future rollout of 5G across the UK, making the region the first in the UK ready to trial new 5G applications and services at scale. A key focus is on self and remote care, and digital support to addressing social isolation.



Public Service Reform, Inclusion and Cohesion

Key delivery and progress against our 2018/19 Plan includes:

Multiple Complex Needs

We have undertaken detailed research with people with multiple complex needs, to understand causative factors and ways services can be better organised to provide earlier and more effective support. We are now further developing our understanding of the needs of this group to help inform further improvements.

Youth Justice and Adverse Childhood Experiences

Internationally significant research focusing on childhood adversity experienced by those in the criminal justice system in the West Midlands is ongoing. Initial findings suggest high levels of Abuse, Loss, Trauma, Attachment and Resilience (ALTAR) which has directly impacted on our understanding of how services should be organised, to improve outcomes for children and reducing re-offending. Policy options for reforming Youth Justice are under consideration and will continue to be developed in 2019/20.

Inclusive Growth

Our Inclusive Growth Unit was established in June 2018, and has agreed the commencement of the governance structure, priorities and initial activity as well as contributed to the developing framework, toolkit and engagement strategy. The first iteration of our Inclusive Growth Framework was approved by WMCA Board, which provides a way to measure inclusive growth. Four “tests”

have been developed, and will be used by WMCA and partners to consider and enhance how their work delivers inclusive growth. A Toolkit to inform investment decisions has been produced.

The Social Economy Taskforce

The taskforce was operational throughout the year, and has set its core recommendations. It will publish its final report in summer 2019.

Police and Crime

Collaborative activity on key policy areas continue and include a partnership feasibility study into a new safe and secure centre, a whole system approach to women in the criminal justice system and youth justice.

Digital Public Services

The PSR team played a leading role in securing national 5G test-bed status through successful bid to DCMS's Urban Connected Communities programme. This will deliver substantial benefits to citizens, public services and businesses within the West Midlands over the next three years.



Environment

This was a new priority for 2018/19. The year saw rapid progress in setting the direction and capacity of our work, achieving the majority of our goals. We established an Environment Board, supported by a cross-sector advisory group of internal and external partners. In September 2018 they established a one year improvement plan to move us towards our target of being the 'best in class' CA on sustainability by the end of 2020.

Key delivery and progress against our 2018/19 Plan includes:

Established the team

In October 2018 we established our Environment team to support the Board and partners, and to build on the existing progress of our staff managing our estate, and our external partnership work led by Sustainability West Midlands (SWM).

Review of funding and development sites

Our review of our funding systems and development sites revealed the need for a more coordinated approach to integrating sustainability criteria. There is now an improvement programme in place being implemented. Meanwhile our Internal Management System was reaccredited, and continued to deliver savings, such as a 46% carbon reduction, from our buildings energy, waste, water, and business travel over the last 5 years.

Promoting and Communications

We improved our communications through the creation of an Environment section on the corporate website, staff engagement in the development of our new internal strategy, and with Green Alliance and SWM putting on the leading event outside London during the UK's first Green Week. This event looked at how we could produce the UK's first clean and inclusive growth Local Industrial Strategy (LIS).

Natural Capital Investment

In February 2019 the Environment Board agreed our approach to developing a Natural Capital Investment Strategy and Programme, which will be taken forward by the WM Natural Capital Roundtable, HS2 Growth Programme, and partners. We were grateful for the support of the Greater Manchester team in helping us learn from their experiences.

Low Emissions Strategy

During the year we began to develop a regional Low Emissions Strategy and Action Plan with local authorities, to help identify where working regionally could accelerate local action on air quality and carbon emissions, attract investment, and improve health. We hope the good partnership working to date will translate into a cross-region 'clean air team' to deliver the actions. For example partnership working has already resulted in a significant national investment for the University of Birmingham to provide improved air quality monitoring for the region for the next 5 years.

Energy

A regional Energy Strategy was approved in January 2019, and we have hosted and supported the Energy Capital partnership to begin to implement the recommendations in the previous Energy Commission report around Energy Innovation Zones, and coordinated approaches to Electric Vehicle Charging and Housing Retrofit.





Transport for
West Midlands

Transport

Key delivery and progress against our 2018/19 Transport Plan includes:

Improving the customer experience

We have continued to enhance our Swift ticketing offer in the region through a number of initiatives including making sure we charge customers the cheapest price they can pay for the journeys they've made ("value capping"). We've extended the half-price travel offer to all young people aged 16-18, on bus, rail and Metro, enabling an extra 100,000 young people to benefit. Development has continued on a Regional Transport Coordination Centre to provide a multi-agency, multimodal facility giving single view of cross-partner projects and programmes, improve customer information about disruptions and assist with mitigating the impacts of incidents and events, to keep people and businesses moving. We started construction of the Park and Ride expansion at Longbridge station. Working with West Midlands Rail Executive we developed a new service quality monitoring system to drive up standards of cleanliness and customer service.

A common approach to cycling & walking

We have published our Common Approach to Walking & Cycling and the West Midlands Local Cycling & Walking Investment Plan. A second Managing Short Trips initiative for cycling infrastructure in the Black Country is underway. We prepared the new West Midlands Bikeshare scheme which will be rolled out in 2019. The CA

committed up to £23 million towards new and enhanced cycling infrastructure in the region.

Ensuring safety and security on the network

We published a Regional Road Safety Strategy to help reduce the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on our road network and to make it safer and more attractive to make more journeys by sustainable forms of travel. We are consulting on introducing byelaws to manage low level antisocial behaviour on our bus network, working within our safer travel partnership. The Local Transport Policing Plan targets are being delivered through the Safer Travel partnership.

Help improve air quality

We developed and delivered a programme of works to minimise the impacts of congestion on bus routes to support the delivery of early Clean Air Zone measures. We secured over £6 million of funding to support the retrofit of buses to the highest European clean air standard for buses (Euro VI) across the region.

Support bus as the backbone of the West Midlands public transport network

It was a successful third year of the West Midlands Bus Alliance and we are on track to delivering its 50 deliverables for improving bus operations including the rollout of Network Development Plans, speeding up journey times and improving passenger satisfaction. Working with local authority partners and bus operators we introduced the Wolverhampton Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme, following the introduction of the Solihull scheme, using new legislative powers.

Promote bus usage

We saw some increases in bus usage the last year. However, increasing traffic levels and congestion continue to impact on bus service punctuality. Slower buses mean increased journey times and variability, causing reduced access to jobs, leisure and other retail opportunities for people. The Sprint, bus-based rapid transit mode project has progressed, including the development of business cases, allowing the project to advance to the design stage. We started to use powers from the Bus Services Bill, continued to support an integrated network and optimising opportunities for bus growth.

Deliver the best rail services

As a result of the new West Midlands Trains franchise, there have been a number of improvements to local rail services, including some additional carriages and increased services, particularly during evenings and weekends. Key service enhancements include: the Birmingham's Cross City line is now extended to the new Bromsgrove station; the number of off-peak services between Walsall-Cannock-Rugeley and Birmingham-Wolverhampton-Telford-Shrewsbury have increased; more through services are provided from Walsall to Birmingham Airport and London and Coventry to Wolverhampton and onto Liverpool. Business cases for new rail stations have been developed; enabling progression to the design stage including the development of Birmingham's University Station transformation project. Development of the HS2 Connectivity

Package continues so that the benefits of HS2 are maximised in the West Midlands.

Continue to invest in Metro

Passenger numbers on Midland Metro increased to more than eight million in the first 12 months after opening of the Birmingham City Centre extension. Operation of the West Midlands Metro Network was transferred to Midland Metro Limited (MML) – a wholly owned subsidiary of the WMCA – in June 2018, allowing all future profits to go back into the system. A public inquiry for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill compulsory purchase powers was confirmed for March 2019, ahead of the start of main construction works later in 2019. An outline business case was submitted for the East Birmingham and Solihull extension and a decision is awaited from Government on the Birmingham Eastside Transport and Works Act Order application. Construction of the extensions at Centenary Square, Edgbaston, Wednesbury Brierley Hill and Wolverhampton City Centre will continue. The rail / Metro integration at Snow Hill Station is being enhanced through the provision of a third access.

Invest and develop our Key Route Network

We published a Congestion Management Plan, which sets out the ways in which TfWM will improve capacity and efficiency and manage demand on our transport system. A baseline assessment of the Key Route Network has been completed and corridor reports providing details of performance, condition, road traffic accidents



etc. We developed a Highways Investment Plan with partners to provide funding and delivery support on a number of schemes that will improve capacity and safety of the Key Route Network. We are developing a Memorandum of Understanding with High Speed 2, which will lessen the impact of work on this major transport project through the coordination of delivery and the development of a travel demand management programme, including advice and support to residents, businesses and visitors. We delivered behaviour change programmes alongside partners and worked with businesses and communities to lessen the impact of roadworks by stimulating alternative travel choices and encouraging modal shift to sustainable journeys.

Support Inclusive Growth

We developed a Mobility for Inclusion Action Plan – key actions include looking at the role of Demand Responsive Transport and the Future of Ring & Ride. We are supporting delivery of a Spatial Investment and Delivery Plan which sets out overarching housing and employment ambitions, plans for major growth areas and corridors, quality standards for development, and bringing together investment in transport, skills, employment, social infrastructure and housing to drive inclusive growth.

Develop the future West Midlands Transport Strategy

The region has been successful in securing funding to become the innovative home to the UK's first multi-city 5G test bed. The multi million pound trial of new high speed connectivity will pave the way for the future rollout of 5G across the UK, making the region the first in the UK ready to trial new 5G applications and services at scale. This is bolstering the regions reputation as a lead testbed for new technologies such as autonomous vehicles which will transform the way we travel, preventing major accidents, improving traffic flow and reducing energy consumption. Building on this success, the government has awarded £20m to the West Midlands to support the development of a 'Future Mobility Zone' to enable these cutting edge technologies to be embedded into the everyday transport system. Work progressed on developing a new approach to Park & Ride delivery in the region to support better access to the rapid transit and heavy rail network. We published a Strategic Vision for Bus to support its vital role connecting major rail and

Metro investment, connecting communities and towns, and helping to build a healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous region. We worked closely with the West Midlands Rail Executive to develop the West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy.

Ensure readiness for City of Culture and Commonwealth Games (CWG)

We developed an operational plan for managing spectator transport for the Commonwealth Games to ensure businesses function as usual during this demand.

Enabling delivery

Our Investment Programme, Corporate Services and Governance



Investment Programme

A key objective of the Investment Programme is to deliver local infrastructure throughout the West Midlands which is fundamental both to the regeneration of the region and the realisation of the benefits of HS2.

In 2018/19 the WMCA made funding approvals of £156.5 million from the WMCA Investment Programme, bringing the total cumulative funding approvals to £634.2 million as at 31 March 2019. The approvals were made in 2018/19 as projects progressed from initial feasibility and design stages towards delivery stages.

Particularly significant approvals within 2018/19 include:

- Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension Full Business Case – The final business case for the scheme to deliver the project, considered integral to the continued rejuvenation of the Black Country area, was approved. The project is funded from WMCA grant funding and additional borrowing levered off fare box revenue;
- Sprint Bus A45 Airport and A34 Walsall to

Birmingham route Outline Business Cases; and

- UK Central Infrastructure Phase 2 Strategic Outline Case.

As at 31 March 2019, total Investment Programme project expenditure of £352.0 million was incurred, £78.1 million of which was funded by the WMCA Investment Programme.

Construction work is currently ongoing for Metro, Land Remediation and Solihull Sustainable Energy projects.

Corporate Services and Governance

During 2018/19 we commenced a review of some of our key enabling and support functions (Corporate Services) – including HR, ICT, Programme Management Office, Governance Services and Business Support. This work is ongoing and will conclude during 2019/20. In addition to the Review, there was a range of activity throughout 2018/19 to improve and develop and strengthen our organisational capacity and effectiveness, including (overleaf):

Corporate Assurance and Business Continuity

We started work on reviewing the Assurance Framework to ensure it meets our future needs. We have implemented a testing and training programme to test Business Continuity Plans and have ensured effective on call rotas are in place across the WMCA Leadership Team and corporate services.

Procurement

The WMCA Social Value Policy was launched in November 2017. Since its launch, £25m of social value commitments have been made in contracts we have awarded, with £1m already delivered. Commitments include volunteering time to support local community projects, initiatives taken or supported to engage people in health interventions, donations or in-kind contributions to local community projects, supporting young and unemployed people into work (such as CV advice and career mentoring), local school and college visits, and increasing spend through the local supply chain through the contract.

Overview and Scrutiny

We recognise the value and importance of councillor-led scrutiny and challenge, and supported the WMCA's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to build on its work of the previous year in developing a programme that gives a broad oversight to the policies of the WMCA and reviews the effectiveness of its key decisions. The Committee has enhanced the breadth of the pre-decision scrutiny it has undertaken, including a focus on the WMCA Budget 2019/20, the Local Industrial Strategy, transport projects including the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension, the establishment of a Youth Combined Authority, the proposed transfer of the West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner Function, cycling and childhood obesity.

Scrutiny members have also established a number of working groups focussing on topic areas including health & wellbeing, finance, governance, inclusive growth and productivity & skills and housing & land. The Committee also undertook a number of public Mayoral Q&A sessions, where the Mayor has been quizzed on the delivery and impact of WMCA policy in areas as varied as public transport, air quality, housing and other policy related matters. This is an important part of providing public accountability and decision

making transparency. With the support of the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Local Government Association we have started work with the Committee to identify how the scrutiny function can develop and improve further.

Constitution

We started a review of the WMCA Constitution to ensure it continues to meet our future needs. This work will continue into 2019/20.

Employee wellbeing and development

A staff wellbeing survey was carried out in December. An action plan has been put together taking into account staff feedback and the key Thrive Accreditation best practice recommendations. Mental health first aiders have been recruited and a mental health campaign will take place in May during Mental Health Awareness week. A new employee learning and development strategy was developed.

Finance and investment

We have brought forward the timetable for developing the revenue budget and developed key performance indicators for transactional services. We are appointing a new Investment Director role whose role will include leading on developing a Commercial Strategy.

Communications

A new Director of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs joined the WMCA in November 2018. A Strategic Communications Plan is being developed alongside the 2019/20 Annual Plan to ensure that communications objectives align with policy objectives and that appropriate Key Performance Indicators are established.





West Midlands
Combined Authority

May 2019