West Midlands Combined Authority

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 2 September 2019 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Lisa Trickett (Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Lynnette Kelly (Vice-Chair)	Coventry and Solihull Local Authorities
Councillor Ahmad Bostan	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Richard Brown	Coventry City Council
Councillor Mike Chalk	Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Peter Fowler	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Angus Lees	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Kate Wild	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

In Attendance

Councillor Richard Worrall	Transport Delivery Committee

Item No.	Title

80. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lucy Seymour-Smith (Birmingham City Council), Councillor Cathy Bayton (Association of Black Country Authorities, Councillor Dr Simon Peaple (Staffordshire Non-Constituent Authorities) Councillor Stephen Simkins (Association of Black Country Authorities), Sarah Windrum (Coventry & Warwickshire LEP) and Paul Brown (Black Country LEP).

81. Inquorate Meeting

Tim Martin, Head of Governance, Clerk and Monitoring Officer, indicated that this meeting was inquorate and therefore decisions taken at the meeting would be submitted to the WMCA Board of 13 September 2019 for formal approval.

82. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15 July 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

83. Matters Arising

(a) Mayor's Social Media Post

Councillor Ahmad Bostan noted a social media post by the Mayor regarding recent developments within Kashmir. He felt that the comments could have gone further and highlighted the human rights abuses that he considered were being ignored by the UK government. Councillor Ahmad Bostan confirmed that he would raise these concerns with the Mayor directly, and Tim Martin, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer, undertook to ensure the Mayor's Office was informed of this.

(b) Member Attendance

Members expressed their disappointment on the meeting being inquorate again and noted that although apologies had been submitted, no substitutes were in attendance with the exception of the Staffordshire non-constituent authorities' representative and Councillor Richard Worrall representing Transport Delivery Committee. The Chair confirmed that she would contact members reminding them of the importance of attending meetings.

(c) Meeting Location

It was noted that the next meeting would be taking place in Coventry, after which a review of meeting locations away from Birmingham would be undertaken to determine the best location for future meetings.

(d) Action Plan

The chair requested that the outstanding action relating to further information on the inputs, outputs and scalability of the Thrive Programme and the evaluation work undertaken be supplied to committee ahead of the Mayor's Question Time event on 9 October 2019.

84. WM5G Update - Presentation

The committee received a presentation from Henry Kippin, Director of Public Service Reform, on WM5G, outlining the developments and delivery of the programme, the objectives and the impact of 5G technology throughout the West Midlands.

The Chair sought clarity on what investments could be considered 'real', secured and guaranteed to materialise. Councillor Richard Brown highlighted the need for this programme to receive political backing and to showcase what 5G could deliver to the region. Members sought further information on the measures and metrics being used to seek the outcomes and achievement of the programme within three years, to which Henry Kippin, Director of Public Service agreed to circulate to members. Councillor Ahmad Bostan sought further information on the projection of the three year programme on jobs created across the region for both the public and private sectors as a result of 5G. The committee were also keen to understand the blockages and barriers to delivery and what local authorities could do to unlocking those. Other concerns raised by committee related to potential health concerns, data security implications and the impact of delivery due to Brexit.

The Chair noted that this update provided the committee with the positives of this programme, and showed that the brokerage/facilitation role being undertaken by WMCA evidenced the benefits at working at the local and regional level.

It was agreed that the appointed Scrutiny Champion would have responsibility for following up on issues raised by members and further progression of the programme would be reported to a future meeting.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

(1) That the presentation be noted.

85. Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme and Governance

The committee considered a report from Tim Martin, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer, outlining the appointments of scrutiny champions for 2019/20 and the areas to be considered suitable for undertaking scrutiny reviews.

It was noted that responses from all members were required before the appointments of scrutiny champions could be made. Members were reminded to submit their preferences to Lyndsey Roberts, Scrutiny Officer, as soon as possible.

In addition, responses received from members had identified transport and the Investment Programme as key areas for scrutiny review during the forthcoming year.

It was recommended to the WMCA Board that:

(1) Councillor Richard Brown be appointed as the Scrutiny Champion for Culture & Digital, to shadow the work of the WMCA's Portfolio Lead and to lead on the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee this area.

(2) Further scrutiny champions be appointed in due course.

(3) Areas of priority for the work programme for 2019/20 be identified as transport and investments.

86. Arrangements for Mayoral Question Time Event: Policy

The committee considered a report from Tim Martin, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer, outlining the arrangements for the forthcoming Mayoral Q&A session on 9 October that would focus on the WMCA's policies.

This Q&A session would be structured around the committee's three core themes (accountability, connectivity and investment) with questions focusing on the key challenges for the WMCA. The chair hoped that this session would allow for dialogue between members and the Mayor and to then conclude with the consideration of any recommendations to be submitted to the WMCA Board.

Recommended to the WMCA Board;

(1) The arrangements for the Mayoral Q&A event on the impact of the WMCA's policies, being held on 9 October 2019, be noted.

87. Centre for Public Scrutiny Review - Action Plan

The committee considered a report from Tim Martin, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer, on the plan for implementing the recommended actions that arouse out of the review of Overview & Scrutiny Committee conducted by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

It was agreed that the action plan would be reviewed by members at each committee.

Recommended to the WMCA Board that:

(1) The progress made to date in implementing the recommendations contained within the Centre for Public Scrutiny's review of the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee be noted.

(2) The work planned to be undertaken before the next meeting of the committee be noted.

88. Forward Plan

The committee considered forward plan of items that were to be reported to future meetings of this committee and the WMCA Board.

Councillor Richard Worrall indicated that an update was being considered by the WMCA Board relating to the Women's Concessionary Travel Scheme and requested that it be drawn to members' attention that Diamond Bus had chosen not to participate in this scheme on the bus services that it operated.

89. Tuesday 22 October 2019 at 10.00am

The date of the next meeting was noted.

The meeting ended at 12.00 pm.