



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Environment Board

Date	24 October 2019
Report title	Transition of the WMCA HS2 Growth Strategy Environment & Landscape Workstream strategic remit to the WMCA Environment Board
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Report has been considered by	HS2 Operations Board - 9 October 2019

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Environment Board is recommend to:

- (1) To endorse the principle of seeking to transition the Environment & Landscape workstream into the Environment portfolio, as per the transition path taken by the HS2 Jobs & Skills workstream (which was incorporated within the West Midlands Regional Skills Plan/Productivity and Skills Portfolio).
- (2) Support the principle of aligning the operational remit of the Environment & Landscape workstream to existing design groups for HS2 construction and the other HS2 Growth Strategy Programmes.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek 'in principle' support to transition and mainstream the HS2 Environment & Landscape workstream/Board strategic remit into the WMCA Environment portfolio.

2. Background

- 2.1.** The HS2 Growth Strategy was adopted in July 2015. Subsequent to this, the resourced workstreams that make up the implementation plan of the Growth Strategy have continued to develop and mature. As part of the development of the programme, the E&L workstream was established as a 'wrap round' workstream to enhance environmental opportunities the Growth Strategy and HS2 itself would create for the region.
- 2.2.** Since being established this workstream has been successful in coordinating activity and identifying opportunities. However, more recently with changes to the Growth Strategy programme and wider development of WMCA activity it has become apparent there is a requirement to embed the workstream within the WMCA Environment portfolio in order to ensure resources are used effectively, efficiently, to maximum effect and avoid duplication.

3. Environment and Landscape Workstream/Board

3.1. Current remit

Since being established in November 2016, the E&L Board/Workstream has been meeting at least 6 times per year with the remit to work with HS2 Ltd on maximising the opportunities associated with mitigation works; embed best practice by working closely with Growth Strategy Workstreams on their environmental aspirations and to identify pipeline projects (which contribute to the maximising opportunities agenda).

3.2. Issues identified and need for change

To date this workstream has been relatively successful in establishing a strong partnership approach and identifying projects for development. However, it has been reliant on the good working spirit of members to work collaboratively together to achieve the goals as set out in the agreed remit/terms of reference. During this time the workstream's direct resource was a coordination role provided by the WMCA's HS2 Growth Strategy programme team. There has been no direct funding to aid the development of a programme for enhancement work. In addition, the E&L workstream has had limited success in influencing decisions and projects. Therefore, to ensure value is added in the most effective way, the E&L Board agreed there is a need to revisit and revise the scope and remit of the E&L Board/workstream.

3.3. Possible future remit

Subject to more collaborative work being undertaken with members to identify the details, the strategic element of the E&L Board could be transitioned into the scope of the WMCA's Environment Board. This would place HS2 construction and other Growth Strategy programmes within the Clean Growth and Natural Gain priority areas of the WMCA's Environment Portfolio. As the WMCA's Environment portfolio matures, wider project/programme updates and progress towards delivering those priorities would be overseen by the WMCA Environment Board. This could include monitoring metrics and benefits that HS2 and the Growth Strategy are contributing towards delivering through designs and business case approvals. This would become the channel where the strategic overview and progress updates could be discussed and reviewed.

- 3.4.** This would leave the other element of the E&L workstream needing to be addressed. The remit here would be to map out all of the design/officer groups that are developing the programmes for HS2 construction and/or Growth Strategy programme development. There is a need to ensure that design work and Growth Strategy workstreams are working towards the delivery of WMCA environmental priorities. E&L Members would be invited to relevant design groups covering their areas of interest to increase the level of interface of environmental expectations by making sure environmental elements/priorities are embedded from the outset. This approach should ensure that previous E&L Board members can actively influence programmes/projects etc. as they develop in the recognised forums/groups. It is anticipated the supporting officer group to the WMCA Environment Board would have an E&L Board member to be the conduit linking these operational elements to the Environment Board and be the escalation channel if needed.
- 3.5.** Therefore, in line with how the HS2 Jobs & Skills workstream which was transitioned into the WMCA's Productivity and Skills portfolio, it is proposed that the E&L Workstream/Board is permitted to explore how a transition into the WMCA's Environment Portfolio could potentially work.

4. WMCA Environment Board

4.1. Agreeing this approach outlined above would:

- (a) Set a path and agree in principle the transition the E&L Board/Workstream into the WMCA Environment portfolio;
- (b) Consolidate the strategic E&L Workstream remit and mainstream it into the WMCA.

5. Next Steps

This report recommends the principle of the transition of the E&L Workstream into the WMCA's Environment Portfolio. It is anticipated, subject to this being agreed that a transition plan would then be reported back to the Board for agreement.

A key next step will be to identify (a) how we ensure that this agenda is driven forward effectively and the links with HS2 growth board are maintained in practice; and (b) what this practically means in terms of resources and the secretariat function that will be needed.

Officers have committed to taking these steps pending the Environment Board's steer on the over-arching principle.

6. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications of this report.

7. Legal Implications

There are no direct financial implications of this report.

8. Equalities Implications

There are no identified implications of this report

9. Inclusive Growth Implications

Inclusive growth comes from organisations working together to transform peoples' lives by developing new ways of positive change in communities. The WMCA is committed to promoting inclusive growth across the West Midlands so that all residents and communities can benefit from investment and opportunities. Inclusive Growth is directly linked to the need for quality environments for all to benefit from which is what the merging of this workstreams will seek to achieve.

10. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

All of the WMCA constituent member geographies.

11. Other Implications

No other implications have been identified.

12. Schedule of Background Papers

None