



**West Midlands**  
Combined Authority

## **WMCA Board**

<b>Date</b>	8 November 2019
<b>Report title</b>	WMCA Annual Plan 2019/20: Progress Update / Half Year Review
<b>Portfolio</b>	Andy Street - Mayor for the West Midlands
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<b>Report has been considered by</b>	Strategic Leadership Team - 16 October 2019 Programme Board - 25 October 2019

**Recommendation(s) for action or decision:**

**The WMCA Board is recommended to:**

Note the summary of progress in terms of delivery against the WMCA Annual Plan 2019/20.

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To present a summary of progress against the actions and activity set out in the WMCA Annual Plan 2019/20.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 As part of its business planning and performance management, the WMCA produces an Annual Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to set out the priorities of the WMCA, provide a strategic context for the WMCA as an organisation, and to articulate what is being delivered and planned across each of the portfolios of:

- Transport
- Housing & Land
- Productivity & Skills
- Economy & Innovation
- Environment, Energy, HS2
- Public Service Reform & Social Economy
- Culture & Digital
- Wellbeing
- Inclusive Communities

- 2.2 The development of the Annual Plan 2019/20 was informed by engagement with Portfolio Lead Members, Metropolitan Council Chief Executives and other stakeholders including the WMCA Programme Board and Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee. In February 2019, the O&S Committee endorsed the principles and structure of the Plan, and during April relevant Overview and Scrutiny working groups and champions had an opportunity to comment on draft sections of the Plan.

- 2.3 The Plan was approved and endorsed by the WMCA Board at the Annual General Meeting on 28 June 2019. The Plan articulates a range of activity that reflects the various WMCA roles and additionality including:

- Securing additional funding for the region (e.g. devolved funding from Government to deliver shared priorities)
- Collaborating and delivering on cross-boundary projects and initiatives (e.g. Thrive, Town Centres Programme, Brownfield regeneration, Apprenticeship Levy)
- Developing additional expertise, capacity and resilience in the region (e.g. Inclusive Growth Unit, ODA, Brexit/Economic Contingency planning)
- Strengthening the voice and profile of the region (e.g. investment prospectus)
- Developing regional policy and frameworks for delivery (e.g. Local Industrial Strategy, Single Commissioning Framework, Adult Education Budget)

## **3. Progress against the Plan**

- 3.1 The Plan includes delivery milestones and indicators relating to WMCA activity, and measures that articulate the wider economic and social context and outcomes we are trying to influence, support and enable but are not directly responsible or accountable for.

3.2 Overall there is good progress against the WMCA delivery milestones and activity set out in the Plan. Most milestones have been met or are on target to be met. The **'Progress Summary'** attached as an **Appendix** to this report provides a summary of progress (and slippage) against the actions and delivery milestones set out in the Plan. It serves as a half year position statement.

3.3 For each portfolio there is:

- A reminder of overall aim and long-term ambition
- A reminder of the focus for delivery/activity in 2019/20
- A summary of overall progress and the context for delivery
- A summary of progress against each of the delivery milestones/indicators

3.4 There has been some notable progress, activity and delivery across the portfolios - including:

- **Transport:** Commonwealth Games Transport Plan published for engagement, extended the half fare concession schemes pilot for 16-18 year-olds, Women's Concessionary Travel Scheme was launched in July 2019, continued development of the Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC), launch of a new Better Streets Community Fund with £2m available to help communities improve their streets for cycling and walking, and a £30 million funding package secured to deliver the Vision for Bus objectives.
- **Housing and Land:** Launch of the Single Commissioning Framework (SCF) providing clear criteria and a robust process for how WMCA investment and interventions will be focussed on the delivery of enhanced design quality, higher levels of affordable homes, and modern methods of construction on brownfield sites. The Town Centre Programme and Regional Taskforce have been set up to guide how we repurpose our local centres and are driving development and securing investment. A pipeline of brownfield sites have been invested in, accelerated, or acquired to support housing and employment delivery and key policy documents provided such as regional affordable housing definition and design charter.
- **Productivity and Skills:** The WMCA's £5m Construction Gateway retraining programme is seeing significant success, with 42% of participants going into employment. Over 600 young people have been engaged through 'progression coaches' approach (which is achieving an in-work retention rate of 94%). £4.99m of Regional Apprenticeship Levy funding secured, and more than 100 apprenticeships have been supported.
- **Economy and Innovation:** Local Industrial Strategy launched, and delivery plans in development and feeding into Spending Review / Budget processes. Support to ongoing on regional preparations for Brexit, through deployment of pooled contingency funding, support to the Birmingham Brexit Commission and the WMCA Brexit Economic Contingency Group. Investment Programme resource secured to support the first phase of Innovation Programme development and delivery.

- **Environment, Energy and HS2:** Progress made in developing a climate action plan. Notable delivery on the HS2 Connectivity package, with schemes making significant progress. Additional resource secured from BEIS in developing an Energy Innovation Zone toolkit, with other innovation grant applications awaiting decision.
- **Public Service Reform & Social Economy:** Worked with partners to launch the Regional Violence Prevention Unit (VRU) in September 2019. Ongoing delivery of Housing First. Inclusive Growth toolkit and approach being used with partners in the development of growth corridors.
- **Culture and Digital:** WM5G launched in May 2019, and delivery programme developed. Expressions of interest for the new Cultural Leadership Board, chaired by Coventry City of Culture Chief Executive, were invited in September. The inaugural meeting will be taking place later in the autumn.
- **Wellbeing:** 'Good Gym' is now active in Coventry, Solihull, Birmingham and Warwick. Continued delivery of the Thrive at Work programme which now has 324 businesses engaged and has a total reach of 135,000 employees across the region. WMCA has now been accredited as a bronze recipient within the Armed Forces Covenant.
- **Inclusive Communities:** The Young Combined Authority (YCA) has been established and has started to get involved, helping to shape and inform policy and decisions. The Inclusive Leadership Pledge scheme which initially went live in January 2019 continues to be a priority for the inclusive leadership agenda.

3.5 There has been some minor slippage or changes to some of the delivery milestones. None of these are considered to have major impact or consequences in terms of overall delivery and impact. Delivery milestones not met, or which have changed, include:

- The Connecting Communities Employment Support Pilot was slower to start than originally expected, as providers took time to establish and embed delivery in communities.
- The proposed regional approach to electric vehicle charging was originally earmarked for September 2019. This is now to be included in a report to the WMCA Board proposing a Low Emissions and ULEV Strategy (was due to be November, now January 2020 due to pre-election period restrictions).
- The development of five town centre delivery plans was slower to start than anticipated to ensure the approach was fully endorsed by the new regional town centre taskforce and the focus remained on delivery of tangible projects and investments in the five centres. Town centre delivery and investment plans to be agreed in December, rather than by end of September.
- A childhood obesity plan was presented to the Wellbeing Board earlier this year. Following their recommendation, a 'Healthy Weight Strategy' is in development and was considered by the WMCA Wellbeing Board in October.
- In terms of the Inclusive Communities portfolio, the planned cross-sector HR roundtable event (recommended by the Leadership Commission) is being scheduled for January 2020, rather than November 2019 to allow for joint planning and collaboration with University of Birmingham.

#### **4. The context for delivery**

- 4.1 The progress update also provides a summary of the current regional economic context against which the Annual Plan is being delivered. This shows that there remain good reasons to be optimistic about the future, with many economic fundamentals expected to stay strong and growth in some sectors, such as construction. Business, professional and financial services continue to grow. However, optimism must be tempered by current challenges, and those that we know are ahead – such as the impacts of Brexit not being fully known, and the longstanding challenges of headline productivity, healthy life expectancy and youth unemployment.
- 4.2 There are various wider economic and social outcomes we are trying to influence (but are not directly responsible or accountable for) which are listed in the Annual Plan. These are, in the main, the outcome measures reported in the annual State of the Region Report 2019 which was considered at the WMCA Board Annual General Meeting alongside the Annual Plan 2019/20 and a Review of the Annual Plan 2018/29. Given the data for many of these measures is produced annually, the region's performance against them will be reported in the full year review of the Annual Plan and annual State of the Region Report.

#### **5. Risks to delivery**

- 5.1 The Annual Plan sets out the key risks to delivery. At the time of publishing the Annual Plan these were considered to be:
- External factors and uncertainty: government/political or financial change might not be factored into WMCA plans, which could make delivery ambitions more difficult to achieve.
  - Financial assumptions: a risk that assumptions made in the first Devolution Deal (e.g. assumptions re expected economic growth, local precepts, business rate retention, etc), do not prove to be achievable.
  - Political change: potential national or local change may impact on priorities and the decision-making and resource allocation to support those.
- 5.2 These are still fundamentally the key risks. The WMCA Strategic Risk Register is regularly reviewed by the WMCA Strategic Leadership Team and Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee. It was updated in September in light of the current uncertainties developing from Brexit and the national political situation. The status of the risk relating to External Factors (Risk S11 in the Register) was increased. Following the declaration of a regional carbon emergency by WMCA Board at its June meeting, the risk of achieving the desired carbon reduction by 2041 has been captured on the Register.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The Annual Plan deliverables were developed as part of the Authority's 2019/20 Annual Planning and Budget setting process. The 2019/20 Budget was approved at the WMCA Board on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and contained a summary of the planned delivery that the budget underpins and which the Annual Plan articulates further. The WMCA Board receives a regular Financial Monitoring Report which provides a comprehensive update on financial performance.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications as a direct consequence of this report.

## **8. Equalities Implications**

- 8.1 The Annual Plan document is not in itself a delivery plan or policy. The individual projects and programmes listed in the Annual Plan will be equality impact assessed to ensure key equality considerations are taken into account.

## **9. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 9.1 The Annual Plan sets out activity that contribute to the overall vision of a West Midlands that has a healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous population. At the heart of that vision is an ambition to drive inclusive economic growth.

## **10. Geographical Area of Report's Implications**

- 10.1 The Annual Plan includes information about delivery and performance across the region.

## **11. Other Implications**

- 11.1 None

## **12. Schedule of Background Papers**

WMCA Annual Plan 2019/20  
WMCA Strategic Risk Register

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Annual Plan 2019/20: Progress Summary