



West Midlands Combined Authority

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 9 March 2020 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Lisa Trickett (Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Cathy Bayton (Vice-Chair)	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Ahmad Bostan	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Mike Chalk	Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Angus Lees	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Dr. Simon People	Staffordshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Sarah Windrum	Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership

In Attendance

Dan Essex	West Midlands Combined Authority
Laurence Goldberg	West Midlands 5G
Clare Hatton	West Midlands Combined Authority
Chris Holmes	West Midlands 5G
Lesley Holt	West Midlands 5G
Linda Horne	West Midlands Combined Authority
David Kinshott	West Midlands 5G
Aisha Masood	Young Combined Authority Board
Julie Nugent	West Midlands Combined Authority
Tim Martin	West Midlands Combined Authority
Lyndsey Roberts	West Midlands Combined Authority

Item Title No.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Paul Brown (Black Country LEP), Councillor Richard Brown (Coventry), Councillor Chris Cade (Warwickshire Non-Constituent authorities), Mike Lyons (Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP) and Councillor Stephen Simkins (Association of Black Country Authorities).

2. 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 on 20 March 2020 for formal approval.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 December 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Councillor Keith Linnecor

The Chair noted the funeral being held later in the day for Councillor Keith Linnecor, who was a longstanding member of the Transport Delivery Committee from Birmingham City Council who died on 13 February. She paid tribute to Councillor Linnecor's many years of public service and his commitment to improving public transport services across the region.

5. Matters Arising

Scrutiny Review into the Effectiveness of Transport Delivery Committee in Overseeing the Delivery of WMCA Transport Policies

Further to the request of Councillor Cathy Bayton, the Monitoring Officer advised the committee that the Portfolio Lead for Transport was currently considering a response to the recommendations contained within the scrutiny review, and he understood that a response would be provided before the WMCA Board next meet on 20 March 2020.

Mayoral Question Time: Budget – Response to recommendations presented to the WMCA Board on 17 January 2020

The committee noted the response received from the Mayor in respect of the issues it had identified following the Budget Q&A on 18 December 2019. However, there was some concern that the response did not fully address the issues raised and lacked detail about the specific actions that would be taken in response to these issues.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the constitutional aspect of the Mayoral Q&A process had now been discharged following the receipt of the Mayor's response to the committee's concerns. Whilst the committee accepted this procedural guidance, members were keen that the Chair brought their views to the attention of the WMCA Board when it met on 20 March with a view to ensuring that these points are not lost in future dialogue.

6. West Midlands 5G Presentation

The committee received a presentation from Chris Holmes, David Kinshott, Laurence Goldberg and Lesley Holt from the West Midlands 5G team which outlined the 5G pilot project in the West Midlands, the benefits it would deliver, delivery progress to date, funding arrangements and those who would be able to benefit from the roll out of 5G across the region.

In regard to SME's taking advantage of 5G, the committee were informed that discussions with partners on accelerators were being undertaken and different levels of engagement were being undertaken to ensure SMEs and larger organisations were exposed to the same opportunities. Sarah Windrum highlighted the need to establish awareness of the difference between the 5G offer to consumers and 5G for commercial organisations. Councillor Mike Chalk noted limitations in the roll out of 5G within Non-Constituent authorities and enquired how long it would take for 5G to reach the whole region.

The WM5G Infrastructure Acceleration Consultant explained that the pilot programme was limited within its scope and it would be for commercial operators to deliver 5G access to all residents across the West Midlands region.

In order to access the benefits of 5G it was noted that new consumer hardware would be required, and members stressed the importance of ensuring disadvantaged communities and other harder to reach groups would be able to access and benefit from 5G, avoiding increasing the region's inequality gap. Members were disappointed that the Portfolio Lead for Culture & Digital had not been able to attend the meeting and give his opinion on how to address increasing evidence of a 'digital divide'.

Resolved:

WM5G be thanked for its informative presentation.

7. Single Assurance Framework Project

The committee received a report from the Monitoring Officer providing them with an overview of the Single Assurance Framework Project. The committee noted the drivers for change as outlined in the report and the intent of the project to develop the Single Assurance Framework which would provide a single set of systems, processes and protocols designed to provide evidence-based and independent assessment of the governance, risk management and control processes for the WMCA.

Councillor Cathy Bayton highlighted the need to ensure that appropriate, suitable and transparent approval processes were in place for Investment Programme approvals. The Director of Finance indicated that currently there was a cap on the Investment Programme and discussions were being held with local authority leaders on the future prioritisation of the Investment Programme through the development of a new criteria.

Resolved:

The report be noted.

8. Scrutiny Review: The effectiveness of the WMCA's governance arrangements in delivering the policy objectives of the WMCA

The Chair informed the committee that the scrutiny review group looking into the effectiveness of the WMCA's governance arrangements in delivering the policy objectives of the WMCA had now concluded. Deliberation on the key items to take forward into the recommendations were being agreed within members of the review group and would be shared with members once finalised. It was intended that the final report would be submitted to the Senior Leadership Team for consideration and would be shared with the Mayor following the election on 7 May.

Resolved:

The update on the scrutiny review be noted.

9. Mayoral Q&A: Connectivity - 13 February 2020

The committee considered a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer outlining the issues arising out of the Mayoral Q&A session on connectivity held on 13 February. The report noted a number of broad conclusions arising out of the responses received from the during the Q&A session. The conclusions outlined in the report were approved by members of the committee and would be taken forward for submission to the WMCA Board on 20 March 2020.

Recommended to the WMCA Board that:

The conclusions of the committee following the Mayoral Q&A on connectivity set out in the report be considered.

10. Adult Education Budget - Update on Recommendations

The committee received a report from the Director of Productivity & Skills providing an update on the progress with the delivery of the devolved Adult Education Budget, including progress with the recommendations previously made by the Scrutiny Working Group.

The committee were pleased with the progress made to date. Councillor Angus Lees welcomed measuring the outcomes of employment and the move towards procurement of providers within the local area. Councillor Ahmad Boston requested further information on the developments of Adult Education Budget in supporting learners with additional needs. Councillor Cathy Bayton suggested that further work needed to be undertaken on the 'learning for learning's sake' agenda which data showed could help slow the onset of dementia. She also highlighted concerns with the lack of monitoring for those being home schooled.

Resolved:

The update on delivery of the Adult Education Budget, including progress with the recommendations previously made by the Scrutiny Working Group, be noted.

11. Forward Plan

The committee noted a forward plan of items that were to be reported to the WMCA Board.

12. Date of Next Meeting

To be advised following the WMCA Board AGM on 5 June 2020.

The meeting ended at 12.00 pm.