



West Midlands Combined Authority

Environment Board

Thursday 27 February 2020 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Ian Courts (Chair)

Portfolio Lead for Environment, Energy & HS2

Councillor Ian Kettle

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Councillor Andy Mackiewicz

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Councillor Barbara McGarrity

City of Wolverhampton Council

Councillor Waseem Zaffar

Birmingham City Council

In attendance

Councillor Peter Fowler

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Item No. Title

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Oliver Butler (Walsall).

2. Chair's Remarks

(a) United Nations Climate Change Conference 2020

The Chair noted that the COP26 conference was due to be held in Glasgow in November and was hopeful that the WMCA would be represented at the event to showcase the work of the West Midlands in helping to achieve local, regional and national CO₂ emission targets.

(b) Environment Bill 2020

The Chair reported that the Environment Bill 2020 was due to receive its second reading in the House of Commons shortly. He expected a report to be considered at a future meeting would consider the implications of this legislation and how it might impact on the work of the board.

3. Minutes - 24 October 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

4. #WM2041 - Progress on Engagement and Dissemination

The board considered a report from the Head of Environment providing an update on the consultations, actions and next steps in relation to the #WM2041 climate change action plan.

Following its launch on 23 January, a public consultation was engaging businesses, networks and individuals to ensure the action plan was as robust and comprehensive as it was able to make it. A two-week social media campaign was also being undertaken, along with in-depth focus group work with smaller groups.

Early responses from the consultation had indicated that people felt reducing road traffic should be the top priority to tackle climate change, and there was a strong desire for regional and local government to take a lead on this. Councillor Waseem Zafar suggested that this showed the importance of local authorities working together in a co-ordinated manner, and the Head of Environment confirmed that a new Low Carbon Officers Group had been established across the region for this purpose.

The Chair indicated that he would like to see the region have a strong presence at the United Nations Climate Change Conference being held in November in Glasgow to demonstrate what the West Midlands was doing to tackle climate change and to provide the leadership to encourage others to make changes.

Resolved:

- (1) The update on the #WM2041 climate change action plan be noted.
- (2) The follow-on work around citizen engagement and investment case be noted.

5. HS2 - Environment and Climate Change Elements

The board considered a report from the Head of Environment on the opportunities to collaborate with large infrastructure projects that were coming to the region to support the delivery of these projects. The board also received a presentation from Peter Miller, Environment & Town Planning Director, HS2 Ltd on the role HS2 could play in realising cleaner and greener places for people to live in and wildlife to thrive.

HS2 was meeting with stakeholder groups along the route to help deliver additional environmental benefits. Across the WMCA area, mitigation works had already been completed and included 19 habitat creation sites, four bat houses, 40 ponds, and over 77,000 trees planted. A £40m Community Environment Fund was available, with £7.5m for the West Midlands area to help support environmental projects.

Resolved:

- (1) The Environment & Town Planning Director, HS2 Ltd and the Head of Environment, HS2 Ltd be thanked for their informative presentation on HS2's sustainability plans.

6. Ideas and Initiatives

The board discussed a number of different subjects it would wish to consider at its future meetings. The Chair stressed the value of a number of 'quick win' projects that demonstrated how progress could be made and encouraged further thought in this regard. Members also considered housing-related matters to be a key consideration, including the role the use of photovoltaic tiles on roofs.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 25 June 2020 at 10.00am

The meeting ended at 12.05 pm.