



Public Service Reform Board

Thursday 5 March 2020 at 1.00 pm

Minutes

Present

Councillor Yvonne Davies (Chair)
Councillor Karen Grinsell
Councillor Brigid Jones
Laura Caulfield
Laura Collins
Paul Jennings

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Birmingham City Council
Higher Education
City of Wolverhampton Council
Chief Executive NHS Birmingham &
Solihull CCG

In Attendance

Deborah Cadman OBE
Claire Dhami
Julie Nugent
Claire Spencer
Neelam Sunder
Louise Wyman
Jean Templeton

West Midlands Combined Authority
West Midlands Combined Authority
West Midlands Combined Authority
West Midlands Combined Authority
West Midlands Combined Authority
West Midlands Combined Authority
Homelessness Taskforce

Item Title
No.

10. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bird (Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Ian Brookfield (City of Wolverhampton Council), Councillor George Duggins (Coventry City Council), Councillor Sebastian Lowe (Rugby Borough Council), Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Warwickshire County Council), Henrietta Brealey (Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce), Sue Ibbotson (Public Health England), Catherine Mangan (Higher Education), Sarah Middleton (Black Country Consortium), Jatinder Sharma (Further Education) and Phil Loach (West Midlands Fire Service).

11. Nomination of Substitutes

Laura Collins for Councillor Brookfield (City of Wolverhampton Council).

12. Declarations of Interest

No declaration of interests were made relative to items under consideration at the meeting.

13. Chair's Remarks

The Chief Executive of the WMCA, Deborah Cadman, noted the low turn-out/lack of engagement at the meeting given the last meeting was held 6 months ago and reported of the need to re-establish this board.

Colleagues in attendance concurred with the Chief Executive and considered there was a need to 'refresh'/ re-instate the purpose of board for the new municipal year.

14. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

15. Designing Out Homelessness: Key Updates from the Homelessness Taskforce

The Board considered a report of the Programme Manager for Homelessness that provided an update on the recent delivery and future plans of the Homelessness Taskforce.

The Independent Chair of the Homelessness Taskforce, Jean Templeton and the Programme Manager for the Homelessness, Neelam Sunder were in attendance to present the report.

The report provided updates with regards to the five key objectives of the Taskforce: Affordable, Accessible Accommodation; Tackling Welfare-Related Poverty; Access to Good Employment ;Information, Advice and Guidance; and Integrated Prevention.

In relation to the Affordable, Accessible Accommodation, objective the Board fully supported the 'Recovery Tenancies' Pilot being led by Black Country Housing Group that was exploring methods of avoiding eviction from social housing for families in rent arrears and reported of the need for a joined-up process across the West Midlands that would allow local authorities to cooperate effectively with each other.

The Board applauded the West Midlands becoming the first region to create its own definition of affordable housing which is linked to incomes instead of market values, for homes developed with WMCA resources and reported of the need to ensure the WMCA and local authorities communicate with their Planning Teams to convey the right messages at the right time.

With regards to Integrated Prevention, the Board noted the importance of early intervention; the challenges being faced at a local and regional level and the need for welfare reform at a national level based around people's real life experiences.

The Chair conveyed her thanks and appreciation for the excellent work being undertaken.

Resolved:

1. That the update on the activities of the Homelessness Taskforce since the last meeting of the Public Service Reform Board be noted and
2. That the adoption of an affordability definition for new homes that is linked to income and enables the creation of innovative, specialist social housing be welcomed.

16. Inclusive Growth & Social Economy -update and next steps

The Board considered a report of the Acting Head of Inclusive of Growth and Public Service Reform that updated them on the activities of the Applied Inclusive Growth Team since the last meeting of the Board in September 2019.

The Acting Head of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform, Claire Spencer, outlined the report and key areas of work ,this included Inclusive Growth Corridors, WM2041- an inclusive response to the climate change emergency and the social economy taskforce.

The Chair reported that she had an issue with the uneven geographical spread of wealth and investment in the region and recognised whilst it would be difficult to address the balance, enquired as to whether there was some way of identifying those areas within the WMCA that are being left behind with regards to investment so that this issue could be tackled.

The Chief Executive reported that the public health statistics and inequalities would be looked at again as part of this Board when its remit is re-established to consider how everyone benefits and reported of the need to consider this as a specific project to ensure people are not disadvantaged.

The Board noted the key role the WMCA could play in mapping and aligning policies across local authority areas so that everyone could work together.

Resolved:

1. That the activity that has taken place over the last six months be noted;
2. That feedback on the next steps for the Applied Inclusive Growth Team, Inclusive Growth Unit and other associated work be noted and
3. That the development areas identified for the team to work on be noted and taken forward.

17. The West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit

The Board considered a report of the Head of Public Service Reform and Prevention that provided updates on the establishment and progress of the regional, collaborative approach to prevent and reduce place based violence and vulnerability and exploitation prevention and reduction in the West Midlands following its inception in September 2019.

The Head of Public Service Reform and Prevention, Claire Dhami, outlined progress on the 2019/20 West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit Delivery Plan including the six strands of the strategy and next steps.

It was noted that the Home Office have confirmed funding for 2020/21 at the same level as this year, which would be subject to an application process and would follow a public health pipeline that would seek to focus on inclusive education, training and employment, sport and culture, health and criminal justice.

The Chair congratulated the Head of Public Service Reform and Prevention and the Team for the achievements to date and urged them to continue with the good work.

Resolved:

1. That progress to date of a regional approach to violence, vulnerability and exploitation and the establishment of the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit and plans for the forthcoming application be noted;
2. That the synergies between the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit and this Board be noted and
3. That regular updates from the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit, specifically on areas where this Board could better support and help embed its work within the WMCA be agreed.

18. Design Charter

Louise Wyman, Design and Inclusive Growth Lead WMCA, presented details of the West Midlands Design Charter that been launched recently. It was noted that there were 12 themes of the charter that were sub-divided into 6 key headings; character and regional ambition (place based) ; connectivity and mobility (digital and transport), future readiness (climate resilience) health and wellbeing (active communities), engagement and stewardship and, delivery.

It was noted that the Design Charter had been approved by the WMCA's Housing and Land Delivery Board.

The Design and Inclusive Growth Lead thanked those local authorities that have adopted the Design Charter and reported that Stratford Upon Avon District Council had incorporated the Design Charter with its planning process.

In relation to the implementation strategy for taking forward the Design Charter including appointing regional design champions for each local authority, the Chair reported of the need for the Board to receive a report on the Design Charter at its next meeting to fully understand it before members endorse any further action.

Resolved: That a report on the Design Charter be submitted to the next meeting.

19. Workshop on future priorities for Public Service Reform

The Acting Head of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform, Claire Spencer, led a discussion with members on priority areas they considered the board should be focusing on in the future.

The suggestions included pilots for council tax, mapping resources/ best practice, behaviour change and innovation/technology around health and budgets.

The Acting Head of Inclusive Growth, Claire Spencer thanked colleagues for their contributions.

Resolved : That the feedback on the future priorities for the Board be noted and taken forward.

The meeting ended at 3.00 pm.