



Public Service Reform Board

Thursday 10 September 2020 at 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present

Councillor Maria Crompton (Chair)	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Louise Miles	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Karen Grinsell	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Brigid Jones	Birmingham City Council
Laura Caulfield	Higher Education
Tom McNeil	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Lina Martino	Public Health England

In Attendance

Jean Templeton	Homelessness Taskforce
Ed Cox	West Midlands Combined Authority
Carl Craney	West Midlands Combined Authority
Annie Kehoe	West Midlands Combined Authority
Claire Dhami	West Midlands Combined Authority
Anna Humphreys	West Midlands Combined Authority
Tanya Patel	West Midlands Combined Authority
Claire Spencer	West Midlands Combined Authority

Item Title
No.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Jenny Wood (ADAS), Henrietta Brealey and Paul Faulkner (Birmingham Chamber of Commerce), Paul Jennings (Birmingham and Solihull CCG), Councillor Ian Brookfield (City of Wolverhampton Council), Catherine Morgan (HE representative), Jayne Kemp (NHS), Nick Page (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council), Sue Ibbotson (Public Health England), Councillor Izzie Seccombe (Warwickshire County Council) and Vanessa Jardine (West Midlands Police).

2. Nomination of substitutes

Rachel O'Connor had been nominated as a substitute for Paul Jennings (Birmingham and Solihull CCG), (Councillor Louise Miles had been nominated as a substitute for Councillor Ian Brookfield (City of Wolverhampton Council) and Lina Martins had been nominated as a substitute for Sue Ibbotson (Public Health England).

3. Declarations of Interest

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

4. Chair's Remarks (if any)

The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to this, her first meeting as Chair of the Public Services Reform Board. She advised that it was also the first meeting of the Board to be attended by Ed Cox, WMCA Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform. She reported that due to time pressures, it would only be possible to consider one report at this meeting and invited the Board to determine which report should be selected. Ed Cox suggested that the report on 'Emerging PSR Directorate Strategy' would be useful in providing context to the Board and that if time allowed, the item on 'Recovery Coordination Group Community Recovery Priorities' could also be considered.

The Chair and Ed Cox also gave a brief resume of their respective roles and careers.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. Matters Arising

With reference to Minute No. 18, Ed Cox updated the Board on progress with the Design Charter and advised that meetings continued to be held with the Design Collective with detailed guidance and case studies being presented to the Housing and Land Delivery Board. He explained how the Design Charter would link to other WMCA workstreams with an operating manual being compiled and an on-line portal being created.

Councillor Brigid Jones expressed reservations on the relationship between the Design Charter and local authorities own individual planning policies. Ed Cox reported that this issue had been discussed at the Design Collective and it had been acknowledged that the sovereignty of local authorities was a key issue with no intention or pursuing a Design Panel to arbitrate between the two.

7. Presentation: Emerging PSR Directorate Strategy

The Board received a PowerPoint presentation from Ed Cox on the 'Emerging PSR Directorate Strategy' which outlined the Directorate's role as part of the WMCA and on the work undertaken to date.

Tom McNeill referred to the constraints on carbon reduction and advised on the steps being taken by West Midlands Police to take social value and carbon reduction together and that Consultants were to be appointed shortly to assist with this work. He suggested that an opportunity existed for the respective Teams at the WMCA and WMP to collaborate on this workstream. He also advised that the initiative on Health Prevention was supported and was mirrored in the Devolution submission made to Government.

Councillor Brigid Jones sought to distinguish between 'hard' and 'soft' governance and the roles and responsibilities of: i) The WMCA; ii) Local authorities working in collaboration with the WMCA; and iii) Local Authorities acting alone. She commented that much of the work would fall to individual local authorities but that there would be opportunities to align and co-ordinate work with other partners. Rachel O'Connor suggested that there was a need to work through which footprints were most appropriate and to evaluate what improvements could be made.

Ed Cox welcomed the support offered to date and the commitment to joint working. He outlined the '4th delivery programme for PSR Reform' and commented on the negative views expressed in relation to what had been achieved from the Devolution Deals. He advised that this was unfair inasmuch as specific measurable targets had either not been set or funding commitments had not been offered. He assured the Board that, in fact, considerable progress had been made on the PSR agenda. He reported on the challenges going forward and on the need to build trust and develop a shared vision.

Councillor Brigid Jones commented that building trust and achieving consensus would only be possible if the local authorities and public sector organisations all bought in to the principles under consideration. Councillor Karen Grinsell advised that in the STP trust had been built but that this did not happen quickly. She queried whether the challenges were understood at all levels of the various organisations. Ed Cox acknowledged the challenges faced and assured the Board that while discussions were held with the upper levels of organisations, that his Team did engage at different levels.

Laura Caulfield suggested that an opportunity existed to learn from the experience on the work undertaken on social economy and the Covid-19 recovery as this had led to trust being developed at various levels of partner organisations. The Chair welcomed this suggestion and commented that examples of good practice could be considered at future meetings.

Resolved:

1. That the presentation be received and noted;
2. That arrangements be made for a special meeting to consider this matter and the outstanding Agenda items.

8. Recovery Coordination Group Community Recovery Priorities

Resolved:

That consideration of this matter be deferred.

9. Presentation: Inclusive Growth in practice and next steps

Resolved:

That consideration of this matter be deferred.

10. Update on the Homelessness Taskforce

Resolved:

That consideration of this matter be deferred.

11. Update on Punishing Abuse Research

Resolved:

That consideration of this matter be deferred.

The meeting ended at 2.54 pm.