

WMCA Annual Delivery 2020/21: Mid-Year Review

Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to provide a half year summary of delivery and progress against 2020/21 WMCA portfolio activity. Ordinarily these 'High Level Deliverables' for each portfolio would be included in a published Annual Plan. However the WMCA Board (5th June 2020) endorsed the decision to not publish a plan for 2020/21 due to the onset of COVID-19 and the need to review and reprioritise WMCA delivery, enabling and influencing activity to ensure it supports the region's recovery.

This document enables the WMCA Board and other stakeholders to review the progress of portfolio activities that deliver, enable and support our inclusive economic growth aspirations and realise the vision of a healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous region. It also provides an opportunity to summarise how the context of COVID-19 and the region's recovery from it has changed the environment within which the Combined Authority is operating and how it has impacted on portfolio activity delivered and planned.

Portfolio progress

Most milestones and targets are being met, despite the onset of COVID-19 and there has been some notable progress, achievements and delivery across all portfolios including:

Transport

- COVID-19 and the climate emergency are shaping delivery of the Local Transport Plan.
- Successful restart and safe management of the transport system post lockdown
- Supported the safe return of children to school.
- Secured and coordinated funding to support recovery including the Emergency Active Travel Fund and the UK's first eScooter pilot on public highways.

Housing & Land

- The West Midlands is well ahead of trajectory on the 215,000 homes target of the Housing Deal, delivering 16,928 new homes in 2019.
- The West Midlands is ahead of trajectory on the 8,000 homes target of the £100m Land Fund and will exceed the housing starts trajectory set by HMG on Land Fund sites in 2021 and 2022.
- The West Midlands has effectively deployed devolved land funds - directly acquiring, assembling and remediating land where there is clear market failure.
- The West Midlands has a strong pipeline of sites ready and waiting for the next tranche of Land Fund to be released.

Productivity & Skills

- Achieved the Mayor's Mentors project target, meaning 10,000 young people across the West Midlands have benefited from mentoring interventions.
- Successfully completed the £5m Construction Gateway programme.
- A further £1.5m Government funding to scale-up the £5m Digital Retraining Fund.
- Continuing to see apprenticeship starts despite the onset of COVID-19.
- Secured an additional £5.3m into our Adult Education Budget in response to the crisis.

Economy and Innovation

- The 'Recharge the West Midlands' proposition helped prioritise local investment and shape an ambitious submission to Government's Spending Review.
- West Midlands intelligence teams have informed policy decisions through intelligence products such as the 'State of the Region' report (presented to WMCA Board in July).
- Create Central and the Creative Scale-Up programme have provided specialist support to important growth sectors.
- The West Midlands Innovation Programme is now operational and seeks to boost demand-led innovation by businesses.

Environment, Energy & HS2

- WSP Global appointed to develop the first Five Year Plan in support of WM2041.
- There is increasing visibility of WM2041 amongst a diverse set of stakeholders who are keen to support our ambitions for net zero.
- £350k funding secured to enable Energy Capital to establish an implementation plan for the Fuel Poverty and Regional Retrofit programme.
- Energy infrastructure strategy to support ULEV/ transport decarbonisation underway.

Public Service Reform & Social Economy

- New project initiated in Homelessness Prevention focusing on Rough sleepers.
- Established a £20K spot purchase fund with Royal British Legion to support veterans at risk of homelessness.
- Through a successful collaboration with Solihull MBC we have worked together to build an outcomes framework.
- Advising and supporting East Birmingham Board to co-design with Birmingham City Council to ensure it is focused on inclusion and collaborative delivery.
- Developed rich insight from civil society, public services and a range of partners into the incredible innovation, enterprise and flexibility undertaken during the pandemic.

Culture & Digital

- Worked with the region's Culture Response Unit to coordinate information about support and guidance to cultural organisations.
- The Cultural Leadership Board are now focussing on supporting the cultural sector post-COVID-19 and ensuring that culture is at the heart of the region's recovery.
- COVID-19 emphasised the importance of digital connectivity in our region and gave a new focus to the refresh of our digital strategy.
- WM5G is continuing to deliver against the Infrastructure Acceleration targets and have successfully renegotiated dates with Telefonica to offset delays associated with COVID-19 and have secured approval for £10m of funding.

Wellbeing

- IPS Trial recruitment at 75% despite COVID-19 and additional funding secured till June 2021.
- Regional Health Impact of COVID-19 Task and Finish Group established and interim report published.
- Thrive at Work Awards Night held with 400 businesses now engaged.
- Population Intelligence Hub established and delivering Health of Region Report.

Inclusive Communities

- Enabled the Young Combined Authority to provide challenge and insight from the 16-25 year olds.
- Repurposed planned activity, in response to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on disadvantaged communities.

- ‘Relaunched’ the Leadership Commission to identify key aims for improving economic opportunities for underrepresented groups.
- Championed the WMCA’s equalities, diversity and inclusion agenda, and the development of further actions to improve diversity and inclusion outcomes.

Regional Economic Context

The ‘State of the Region’¹ report provides a thorough analysis of the region’s economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It describes how, in the past 12 months, the West Midlands region broke through the £100bn GVA barrier and had been bucking the national trend on a host of economic indicators, such as enterprise and employment growth. All this was powered by a young workforce, increasing its skills and moving to the region. However, underlying this growth there were significant issues with inequality, poverty, youth unemployment, low skills, poor health and school performance.

Since the turn of the year, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been severe. First quarter UK GDP fell dropped 20% compared to last year, manufacturing PMI hit an all-time low, but bounced back over summer, furlough hit 619k people across the 3 LEP area. The overall claimant count has gone up by just under 50% (from 115k to 214k) and youth claimants have doubled (22k to 43k). Sectors where we have previously seen growth and expansion are now hardest hit, such as construction and the expanding higher education sector which makes our 3 cities, Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton vulnerable. WMREDI (with support of and in collaboration with the Office for Data Analytics and wider partners) continue to produce weekly Economic Monitors², which are shared and discussed with the Economic Impact Group and local authority/LEP economy directors.

Economic models consistently show the West Midlands to be hit hardest by the economic crisis, shrinking by around 10%. This is because of our industrial and demographic mix, with some local economies among the most vulnerable in the UK (e.g. Stratford upon Avon, Tamworth and Dudley), reliance on key exporting sectors such as automotive and the large university base. Those same models also show relatively strong regional growth in 2021, but this depends on assumptions about health conditions, future market demand and international trade agreements and the impact of a second lockdown. The point is that the stakes are high everywhere, but particularly so in the West Midlands.

¹ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/4290/state-of-the-region-2020-final-full-report.pdf>

² <https://blog.bham.ac.uk/cityredi/west-midlands-weekly-economic-impact-monitor-30th-october-2020/>

Portfolio delivery and progress

This section details the progress against portfolio activities that deliver, enable and support our inclusive economic growth aspirations.

Transport

Progress Summary: Transport		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to progress delivery of our local transport plan – with major schemes moving forward including starting the delivery of the Metro Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Extension and the development of new rail stations, SPRINT and Metro extensions have met key stages. Set out proposals to review the Local Transport Plan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Climate Emergency. Successfully managed the restart and safe management of the transport system after lockdown through the newly supported Transport Cell working closely with our partners. Worked with bus operators to manage changes to the bus network and ensure stops and interchanges were ready for social distancing; developed a data portal provide intelligence to support decision making; developed a communications and marketing campaign to provide up to date and trustworthy travel information. Supported the return to school across the region to ensure that children could access schools safely. Secured funding for and co-ordinated the delivery of transport investment to support the recovery including the Emergency Active Travel Fund and the UK's first eScooter pilot on public highways. 		
Update on High Level Deliverables		
Customer Services	Create a system for easy to use and affordable payments to access the transport system – customer information	Good progress but the COVID-19 pandemic has created problems which has affected some areas of delivery.
	Create a system for easy to use and affordable payments to access the transport system -payment	Significant progress has been made and the impacts of the COVID-19 have been managed through the various projects.
Development & Delivery	Deliver our Cycling Charter & making streets more walkable	Key highlights include appointment of West Midlands Bikeshare scheme and launch in October, development of Starley cycle network and delivery of a number of walking and cycling measures through the Emergency Active Travel Fund.
	Deliver a step change in our Mass Transit Network to unlock growth and tackle climate change	Good progress being made with intention to publish Notice to Proceed in October
	Management of the TfWM Capital Programme	The programme continues to be reviewed in respect to financial pressures.
	Increase the efficiency and performance of transport delivery in the West Midlands	Governance in place for each delivery programme but further work to be undertaken to standardise approaches
	Commonwealth Games Active Travel Legacy	The Cycling and Walking Legacy Task and Finish Group has been established.
Integrated Transport Network	Make our transport assets more affordable by increasing commercial revenues	Currently working with Clear Channel to understand income levels for the remainder of the contract following constraints caused by COVID-19.
	Delivering our bus vision to support growth, inclusion and reduced car dependency	TfWM has worked closely with the Bus Alliance to ensure that the bus network has continued to provide a safe and essential service. Work continues on future delivery models for bus services and Demand Responsive Services in the West Midlands taking account of the implications of the pandemic and seeking to take advantage of additional devolution and regulatory reform.
	Reduce emissions from bus travel	Impact of pandemic is likely to mean that c95%, not 100% of all buses will achieve Euro VI by April 2021.
	Enhance infrastructure and customer experience at our bus stations and major interchanges	COVID-19 pandemic has required additional measures to support social distancing.
	Ensure strategic and operational Health and Safety aims and key deliverables are communicated and embedded throughout the WMCA	WMCA processes were reviewed and updated to respond to CV19 and which adheres to government guidance and the response to CV19 in respect of H&S is continuously under review and additional measures have been embedded in our practice.

	Develop park & ride to support better access to the Integrated Transport System	Additional capacity at Bradley Lane and Longbridge has opened.
	Develop park & ride to support other Key Deliverables	
Rail	Enhance the capacity of our rail network for a better connected region	The impact of the pandemic on rail travel is not yet understood. A review of the West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy is underway.
	Use rail franchising to support and engage on rail development	Rail franchising is no longer being pursued by the Government. WMCA and WMRE will continue to seek to ensure that reforms of the rail industry deliver in the interests of the region.
	Continue to improve the quality and capacity of our rail stations and interchanges	Feasibility Studies ongoing into a number of proposals including 'One Station' in central Birmingham and a new station at Aldridge.
	Develop a single rail network vision & devolution case to support a growing West Midlands	Rail franchising is no longer being pursued by the Government. WMCA and WMRE will continue to seek to ensure that reforms of the rail industry deliver in the interests of the region.
Metro	Improve our financial performance of our Metro to support growth of the network	Improvements to payment systems have been progressed. Off-tram ticketing arrangements will be considered by WMCA Board in November.
	Extend our Metro Network to better serve more people and businesses	Progress with delivery of Birmingham city centre, Wolverhampton city centre and Wednesbury & Brierley Hill Metro extensions have progressed. The Full Business Case for the Birmingham city centre eastside extension to Curzon Street has been approved.
Network Resilience	Manage the West Midlands Transport Network and improving coordination with the Regional Transport Co-ordination Centre	The RTCC has remained operational throughout the pandemic, providing a critical service to manage the transport network. TfWM continues support Authorities through the wider integration of CCTV systems into the RTCC.
	Keep the transport networks safe and secure	A new Safer Travel Plan is in delivery by the Safer Travel Partnership. The Strategic Road Safety Partnership is now active, with an independent chair appointed and officer resources being recruited.
	Keep travellers informed and find new ways of keeping the West Midlands Moving through travel demand management	TfWM have supported businesses and education institutions throughout the return to work/school. As well as supporting LA's, HE and HS2 with ongoing construction works and raising the awareness to travellers.
	Plan and develop the Transport Operations Plan for the Commonwealth Games for visitors (Spectators and Workforce) to the region	The Transport Operations Plan remains on schedule and additional resources have been recruited.
	Mitigating the impacts of transport investment programmes on the West Midlands Networks	TfWM have implemented a toolkit of highways interventions to improve the efficiency of the highway network.
	Developing and enhancing the performance of the KRN to tackle congestion	Evidence work is progressing to develop the KRN Action Plans with Local Authorities and explore/test how future interventions/measures will improve the KRN.
Policy, Strategy & Innovation	Maintain and refresh the West Midlands Statutory Transport Plan(s) and policies	A report was approved at the July WMCA Board setting out they key issues any new plan would need to address. A revised plan will not be adopted in 2021.
	Embed transport policy & strategy in the plans and programmes of the wider WMCA & partners to support integrated development planning	Working closely with Local Authority and WMCA colleagues, progress has been made to develop a draft developer guide and provide technical analysis & data for inclusive growth corridor plans.
	Continue to develop and maintain a robust common data environment for transport	The Data Insight Service is exceeding expected targets and is taking on additional analysis beyond original scope. TfWM is working closely with Local Authorities to understand future needs of the service and how funding agreements can be secured.

	Develop and maintain a deep understanding of the needs, attitudes and perceptions of people who use our transport system	A series of COVID-19 tracking surveys have been undertaken and have provided valuable insight into current and future transport behaviour.
	Analyse the transport system to provide deep insight, recommend actions and produce robust and funded evidenced based business cases for schemes and programmes	Future transport model options are progressing well. Ongoing scenario planning work is providing insight into the impacts on COVID-19 on transport system and how it could impact the future.
	Coordinate and deliver a globally significant transport innovation programme	A number of test bed facilities will go fully live in early 2021. Working is progressing with partners to maximise the opportunities from ULEV's charging infrastructure and 5G.

Housing & Land

Progress Summary: Housing & Land	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The West Midlands is well ahead of trajectory on the 215,000 homes target of the Housing Deal, delivering 16,928 new homes in 2019. The West Midlands is ahead of trajectory on the 8,000 homes target of the £100m Land Fund and will exceed the housing starts trajectory set by HMG on Land Fund sites in 2021 and 2022. The West Midlands has effectively deployed devolved land funds - directly acquiring, assembling and remediating land where there is clear market failure. The West Midlands has a strong pipeline of sites ready and waiting for the next tranche of Land Fund to be released. 	
Update on High Level Deliverables	
Brownfield Investment & Acquisition Programme	This is an ongoing programme of investment into schemes/developments through a range of funding pots. As such there is no "completion date" or target as such
Town Centre Regeneration Programme	Part of the wider Brownfield acquisition and interventions programme, as per HLD1 above
Land and Transport Delivery Programme	Part of the wider Brownfield acquisition and interventions programme, as per HLD1 above
Inclusive Growth Corridor Programme	Ongoing development of Corridor Programme for Walsall to Wolverhampton; Sandwell to Dudley (for which Delivery & Investment Plans are being prepared); and Greater Icknield to Smethwick for which a Development Framework & Delivery Strategy is being prepared. All work undertaken in collaboration with local authorities.
Local Plans	Local Plans' progress is monitored as part of the CA/HMG Housing Deal. The CA has no direct role or ability to influence delivery of Plans but can assist with support where requested. This is an ongoing process, completed only when all plans have been adopted by local authorities. As such there is no "completion date" or target as such.
Affordable Housing Policy and Delivery Programme	MoU agreed for Joint Venture Affordable Housing Delivery Vehicle. Regional Affordable Definition Agreed January 2020. Business Case to HMG for devolved Regional Affordable Housing funds included in CSR representation.
Town Centre Policy Programme	TC Recovery Plan in development as part of H&L Economic Recovery Plan Development and Investment Plans for 5 Town Centres being prepared. Ongoing programme of specific interventions. Town Centre Taskforce workshops held with 2 local authorities in Sep 2020. The Town Centre Programme is an ongoing process extending to support other town centres across the region. As such there is no "completion date" or target as such.
Town Deals	Town Investment Plans are being submitted by Town Boards for each location. WMCA represented on most boards, contributing to discussions and providing support on preparation of these Town Investment Plans. HMG decisions awaited on outstanding Cohort 1 submissions. All Town Investment Plans submitted by January 2021. Thereafter Towns which have been offered a Deal by HMG will work up detailed business cases to support submissions for Town Deals. Continuing discussions with HMG thereafter.
West Midlands Investment and Developer Frameworks	Delivery 70% 2020-21 & 30% Q1 2021-22. Investment Prospectus being revised for MIPIM 2021. Commissioned Partnerships established with 2x Developers. 2x further agreements in pipeline. Single Commissioning Framework promotional campaign in development.
Housing Deal	Housing Deal Land Fund Tranche 1 deployed on schedule. Further Tranches forthcoming. Outstanding HIF funding (£85m) being pursued through further business cases to HMG.
One Public Estate	The OPE programme is being reviewed as part of the H&L Covid19 Recovery work to form part of a wider Public Land approach led by the CA and its partners. This will be an ongoing & medium-term programme of work that will form a key element of the directorate approach in future years. OPE Phase 8 & Land Release Fund programme announced for November 2020 submission. WMCA & partners developing application.
AMC Programme	AMC Business Case delivered for HMG submission July 2020 & ongoing dialogue with officials. AMC Expert Advisory Panel established. AMC routemap being finalised.

National Development	This is an ongoing programme of and the deliverable is engagement with key stakeholders on a weekly basis. This includes a range of private sector, local public services and central government partners.
Design Charter	Completed January 2020.

Productivity & Skills

Progress Summary: Productivity & Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have achieved our Mayor's Mentors project target, ahead of schedule, meaning 10,000 young people across the West Midlands have benefited from mentoring interventions. We are now integrating learnings right across our wider Young People programme. We have successfully drawn our £5m Construction Gateway programme to a close, having trained over 2,000 people and moved around half of these learners straight into sustained employment, despite the challenging jobs market. Our innovations in digital retraining – specifically our 'bootcamp' model – have gained national recognition, and we have been awarded a further £1.5m Government funding to scale-up our £5m Digital Retraining Fund provision. Despite understandable concerns around redundancies due to the current Covid19 crisis, we are continuing to see apprenticeship starts, and we welcomed our 1000th WM Levy Transfer funded apprentice this summer. We have secured an additional £5.3m into our Adult Education Budget in response to the crisis, which will support Sector-based Work Academy Programmes and targeted 'high value' level 2 and 3 courses for adults without employment or employment training opportunities. 	
Update on High Level Deliverables	
Prepare our young people for future life and work	Online youth employment platform launched (October) that brings together the full range of opportunities available for young people across the region. This will be a critical resource at this time – when young people will undoubtedly be hit hardest by the economic crisis – and we will be working to supplement this with an integrated work experience platform by the end of the year.
Create regional networks of specialist technical education and training	We are extending our digital retraining provision, having secured additional funding. We will continue to fund provision that supports inclusion for a range of different communities across the region.
Accelerate the take up of good quality apprenticeships across the region	We have now secured over £18m of our £20m WM Apprenticeship Levy Transfer target for this year. We are expecting apprenticeship provision to be challenging, given the climate, but we will continue to champion and support this.
Support inclusive growth by more people the skills to get and sustain good jobs and careers	Our Connecting Communities (employment support pilot) programme delivery has understandably been impacted by Covid19. In light of this, we have negotiated contract flexibilities with DWP and are working with contractors to support online engagement as current circumstances dictate.
Continue to test, develop and embed new approaches to commissioning and delivering provision funded through the Adult Education Budget	Entering a new academic year, we are now working towards our second year of devolved Adult Education Budget priorities. We are continuing to re-balance provision towards technical and higher-level courses and we are now amplifying Sector-based Work Academy Programmes and related 'sector gateway' provision, leading to tangible job outcomes for West Midlands residents.
Promote the concept of skills ecosystem for the region	We are continuing to work closely with Local Authorities, JCP, colleges and local providers and other partners to develop a comprehensive understanding of, and signposting across, local skills provision. We have, for example, taken a focused, place-based approach in East Birmingham to address specific skills gaps and support local people into local jobs.
Additional work to be undertaken in submitting proposal to government and other funders	We are continually working to secure funding against our recovery proposals and related business cases, subject to moving Government timetables.

Economy & Innovation

Progress Summary: Economy and Innovation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The region has come together to secure measures that make our economy more resilient to the economic shock from the pandemic and end of the Transition Period. This has seen weekly meetings of the economic impact group and more frequent SED Board activity to understand from business and civic leaders the effects of economic shock and develop practical solutions. • The long-term Local Industrial Strategy pinpoints the region's assets and long-term sector strengths, and these have been embedded in economic recovery planning. For example, the 'Recharge the West Midlands' proposition helped prioritise local investment and shape an ambitious submission to Government's spending review. With Government expected update to the nation Industrial Strategy, the region's partners have also committed to refresh the region's economic strategy to guide an economic recovery that meets our net zero carbon aim and further embeds inclusive growth by, for example, using the foundational economy to improve living standards of the low paid. • Through the Office for Data Analytics and working in conjunction with WM-Redi and LEPs, the region has produced excellent analysis to inform policy decisions. This includes the State of the Region report, weekly Monitors and a monthly dashboard on the health of the region's economy. • Create Central and the Creative Scale-Up programme have provided specialist support to important growth sectors. This has resulted in a full executive team established - externally funded and directed by the screen industries – to secure investment and develop more inclusive screen industries. The Scale Up programme has now 4 cohorts of more resilient and growing businesses, which have been helped to survive, develop their growth plans and secure new investment. • The West Midlands Innovation Programme, which runs to November 2022 to boost demand-led innovation by businesses, is now in operation. The programme's processes have been established and project approvals and funding are starting to really incentivise sectors and industries to introduce new products and processes. 	
Update on High Level Deliverables	
Economic Resilience: Enable and coordinate cross-organisational and cross-partner working that builds economic resilience in the West Midlands	Established new resilience activity to address the impact of COVID-19, including publishing the 'Recharge the West Midlands' investment case and continue to prepare for Brexit.
Local Industrial Strategy Delivery: work with partners to secure and implement the priority projects and programmes	The Local Industrial Strategy will evolve to address the pandemic's effect on businesses and local economies, and the likely update to the national Industrial Strategy. This will result in refresh of economic vision and strategy, with core processes to be tailored to that refresh.
Increase demand led business innovation in the wider economy, enabled by the Innovation Board and delivery of phase one of the West Midlands Innovation programme	The Innovation Lead has now been appointed and the region is also now leading on MIT REAP UK and Made Smarter work to strengthen innovation ecosystem on behalf of the region.
Through the ODA provide integrated intelligence to support decision making in the region on a range of issues	WMREDI, Black Country Consortium and the Strategic Hub are developing outline of tools and toolkits for evaluations. The State of the Sub Region report has also been developed and delivered.
Create Central – mobilise the industry led board to convert 3 years of consultation into a clear plan for action that will secure substantial resource and investment into the sector	Progressed the Create Central governance review, agreed joint partnership approach and single pipeline for scale-up and secured the BFI projects.
Creative Scale up pilot – to identify and deliver a programme of activity to support business growth and improve their investability	2 Cohorts have already been supported on the Programme with another 2 to run. Trainers and mentors have been recruited onto the programme.

Environment & Energy, HS2

Progress Summary: Environment, Energy & HS2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WSP appointed to develop the first Five Year Plan in support of WM2041. This will give a clear indication of carbon savings against investment required. Increasing visibility of WM2041 amongst a diversity of stakeholders (from local authorities, national government and business) who are keen to work with us and support our ambitions for net zero. A clear pipeline of programmes and projects that are being delivered to address climate change in the WMCA area. £350k funding secured to enable Energy Capital to establish an implementation plan for the Fuel Poverty and Regional Retrofit programme. Work has been commissioned and 6 supporting working groups established. A further £0.9m leveraged into the region to fill existing gaps in fuel poverty support provision going to Act on Energy. Energy infrastructure strategy to support ULEV/ transport decarbonisation underway. Evidence base completed by Cenex. Integration into TfWM programme deepening. Delivery of the Regional Energy Strategy progressing well. Energy Transition project approved by the SED Board and is under development with Western Power Distribution. Smart local energy system innovation projects funded by Innovate UK are progressing well and learning outcomes are informing our national positioning on energy devolution. Progress is being made on positioning the West Midlands for energy devolution, with a positioning piece recently commissioned for the Mayor. £2m secured towards Repowering the Black Country industrial decarbonisation programme. 	
Update on High Level Deliverables	
Support the development of the evidence base for the WMCA 2041 zero emissions target	WSP have been commissioned to produce the first five-year plan (2021 – 2026) as part of the WM2041 work. This plan will provide a robust evidence base for the programmes that will need to be implemented, and the costs for doing so. There will also be a section on the implications for jobs and skills in relation to the transition to net zero. All directorates at the WMCA are being involved in this process and we are working with the constituent local authorities and the LEPs.
Develop the first five-year plan for WM2041 to provide clarity on the actions, projects and programmes that will need to be put in place from 2021 - 2026 [this will be the first of four five-year plans]	
Build and deliver on priorities within UK's first clean growth Local Industrial Strategy	We are working with business to support the implementation of the WM2041 programme – we are developing a business pledge as well as running a clean innovation challenge (with 5G) to support growth and collaboration in the journey to net zero. We are also working with the GBSLEP as they build out the Low Carbon Sector Action Plan. The Circular Economy Taskforce and Routemap (finalised by spring 2021) will also give good indication of business opportunities through resource efficiency.
Ensure the energy infrastructure of the region supports a competitive industrial base, clean growth and social inclusion.	<p>Energy Capital have joined a renewed Environment Board, defined as the Energy and Environment Board. The WMCA Director of PSR and Inclusive Growth now sits on the Board and is seeking internal funding to secure Energy Capital as part of the #WM2041 delivery team.</p> <p>Energy Capital is working with PSR team and Strategy and Policy team to build the case for energy devolution. Details being pulled together to submit to the BEIS minister in November 2020.</p> <p>We are working on the #WM2041 delivery plan to agree TfWM priorities for transport decarbonisation. We are developing a strategy to direct funding and resources to ensure energy infrastructure is capable of supporting smooth and cost-effective decarbonisation (including Energy Transition project). EV working groups with LA's have been established. An ultra-rapid charging hub model has been developed for which we are seeking funding. ULEV working groups are looking into various aspects of strategy development including policy and data and we have connected with Midlands Connect on developing an alternative fuel strategy.</p>
Decarbonise WMCA	The Environment Team is working to develop a carbon literacy programme for WMCA staff. We are working with the Carbon Literacy Project on this. WMCA assets, and their potential, are also being considered by the five-year planning process.

Support partners to deliver HS2	Marc Liddeth (Environment Agency) nominated as Chair for a revised Environment and Landscape Board.
Support the sustainability work and legacy for the Commonwealth Games (CWG)	The Environment Team contributes to the CWG Sustainability Forum as well as a dedicated group supported by central government. We are collaborating with DCMS on a behaviour change programme and await the publication of the CWG net zero plan.
Develop the work around natural capital across the region, convening and supporting different organisations for delivery	This is focusing on a number of different areas: 1) New Economics Foundation have developed a study on access to green space across the WMCA area, which will support targeting of community green grants; 2) an MoU has been signed with the West Midlands National Park and we are supporting initial project delivery; and, 3) the tree planting platform (the Virtual Forest) has been redesigned and will be launched during tree planting week. We are working with multiple national, regional and local stakeholders on these programmes. There was a significant natural capital ask as part of the CSR bid to Government.
WM2041 communications and behaviour change	There is now a WM2041 communication strategy in place, with funding to develop the design and visuals to support the programme. We are about to undertake soft market testing with organisations specialising in behaviour change in relation to climate. There is also alignment with the CWG legacy programme. WMCA is also a founding partner of the global 'Count Us In' initiative.
Develop and implement a fuel poverty and regional retrofit programme	<p>The Fuel Poverty Task Force reported in March 2020 with the Warm Homes Saves Lives report.</p> <p>Secured new funding from the Innovation Board. Fuel Poverty and Regional Retrofit programme partnerships established to bring together partners from across the region to develop an implementation plan, secure further investment and develop skills and training opportunities associated with an upscale in fuel poverty support and quality retrofit rates.</p> <p>New funding secured to deliver a social housing decarbonisation pilot using BEIS funding through the Midlands Energy Hub. Project is underway.</p>

Public Service Reform & Social Economy

Progress Summary: Public Service Reform & Social Economy	
<p>The portfolio has had to adapt its priorities in light of the pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New project initiated in Homelessness Prevention focusing on Rough sleepers where 214 unique individuals have been supported to retain or enter tenancies between June and September 2020. • Established a £20K spot purchase fund with Royal British Legion to support veterans at risk of homelessness. • Through a successful collaboration with Solihull MBC we have worked together to build an outcomes framework for a new development, defining the overarching outcomes, as well as providing a benchmark that elements of the development proposal can be assessed against. This has supported the decision making process around the housing element and discussions around how the buildings and service offer can be designed to tackle health inequalities in the area. • Advising and supporting East Birmingham Board to co-design with Birmingham City Council to ensure it is focused on inclusion and collaborative delivery. • Developed rich insight from civil society, public services and a range of partners into the incredible innovation, enterprise and flexibility undertaken during the pandemic and the system level improvements and community recovery priorities required going forwards. 	
Update on High Level Deliverables	
Strengthen and grow our approach to Applied Inclusive Growth by embedding WMCA's Inclusive Growth assets into the WMCA's governance, Single Assurance Framework and procurement procedures including its Economic Recovery activity	We have successfully embedded inclusive growth principles into the new Strategic Assurance Framework (SAF) and governance processes. We have analysed a number of business cases submitted as part of the economic recovery process and comprehensive spending review activity against the inclusive growth framework and made appropriate recommendations.
Commence delivery of the recommendations from the Social Economy Taskforce.	The Social Economy taskforce report was successfully launched and well received. We are about to award a tender to move this into the next phase with a 10-year plan and anticipate key deliverables identified therein.
Develop the 'Commitment to Collaborate' across public services to help demand management and preventative outcomes for rough sleepers.	Currently being developed by BVSC, expected to be completed by December 2020.
Collaboration to Support Radical Prevention	Process commenced
On-going work to support to the development of the Violence Reduction Unit and other joint initiatives with the OPCC	Active engagement and collaboration in place. Board and exec group meeting regularly and consultation and joint development of policy and strategy in place.
Develop a proposal for a West Midlands Future Fund	Initial proposal is worked up, but needs to be reworked to incorporate a broader set of themes and programmes. Given that this would be an external body, there will need to be significant partnership work ahead of establishing it.
Demonstrate Inclusive Growth in Action through exemplar projects in key inclusive growth corridors	Currently working in two corridors, with three sets of partners. Progress is good, but partnerships take ongoing work, and the door is open to further work. Positive, tangible results demonstrated in one corridor.
Digital inclusion programme as part of Digital Strategy refresh	Initial discussions held with BEP and the Birmingham Child Poverty Action Group. Discussion paper produced by Applied IG team, currently contributing to the development of the Digital Strategy.
Community recovery programme including insights from public service responses to COVID 19 and refresh of public service reform activity	Approach agreed end of July 2020, community recovery priorities and principles analysis complete and draft community recovery prospectus due November 2020.

Culture & Digital

Progress Summary: Culture & Digital	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 has hit the cultural sector particularly hard, with significant numbers of jobs lost, organisations closed, and seasons or performances cancelled. Recognising this impact, we worked closely with the regions Culture Response Unit to coordinate information about support and guidance to cultural organisations, and make the case to Government for additional resource. • The Cultural Leadership Board are now focussing on supporting the cultural sector post-COVID-19, and ensuring that culture is at the heart of the region's recovery. Working with the Cultural Officers Group, which brings together culture leads from each LA, they have scoped research on culture in the region to establish baselines and focus investment, designed a programme to support cultural and creative social enterprises, and shaped our investment asks to Government as part of the CSR and 'Recharge the West Midlands' document. • COVID-19 also highlighted the importance of digital connectivity in our region, and gave a new focus to the refresh of our digital strategy. We have established a digital strategy group, appointed leading industry figures and academics to an external advisory group, and will bring a Digital Strategy to January Board, enabling us to make the case for investment in Spring 2020. • WM5G – is continuing to deliver against the Infrastructure Acceleration targets and have successfully renegotiated dates with Telefonica to offset delays associated with COVID-19 and have secured approval for £10m of funding. 	
Update on High Level Deliverables	
<p>Support the deployment of c£100m funding (government, private sector and regional contributions) to an emerging 5G mobile network for the region.</p>	<p>There are three workstreams underpinning this work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure Acceleration - continue to deliver against targets and remain on track for the next phase of delivery, the fibre and shared infrastructure work. • Application Accelerator/s - successfully re-negotiated dates with Telefonica due to COVID-19 implications and offset the impact of the delay with on-line events, successfully delivered the 1st two engagements. • Transport - successfully signed of the full business case and secured approval for £10m of funding. Awarded use case competitions on time and on track for the next set of competitions and roll out of the sensor network trail.
<p>Develop our capacity to support digital public services across the region</p>	<p>Digital Strategy steering group and External Advisory Group have been established, scope for work has been agreed, and interviews have taken place with Local Authorities to understand areas where CA could add value to digital activity. Digital Strategy on track for January WMCA Board.</p>
<p>To support delivery of the Cultural Leadership Board's ambition to maximise the contribution of culture to enhance quality of life for our citizens.</p>	<p>Cultural Leadership Board has been established and scoped research on the cultural sector in the region, shaped a programme to support Cultural and Creative Social Enterprises, and influenced cultural proposals in the 'Recharge the West Midlands' submissions and Comprehensive Spending Review representation.</p>

Wellbeing

Progress Summary: Wellbeing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPS Trial recruitment at 75% despite COVID-19 and additional funding secured till Jun-21 • Physical Activity strategy presented to Wellbeing Board • RHIC Task and Finish Group established and interim report published • Thrive at Work Awards Night held with 400 businesses now engaged • Population Intelligence Hub established and delivering Health of Region Report 	
Update on High Level Deliverables	
Refresh of Thrive Action Plan and Physical Activity strategy	Both programmes have had refreshed draft strategies presented at Well Being Board
Develop and deliver a childhood obesity strategy for the West Midlands	Programme paused by Well Being Board in January 2020
Develop and deliver an innovative new funding mechanism, the Radical Prevention Fund	In its Comprehensive Spending Review submission, WMCA has requested £11.3m in funds from central government for the Radical Health Prevention Fund. An additional £18.5m has been requested for linked work, including social prescribing, supporting and preventing multiple and complex needs, proposals under the Regional Health Impact of Covid-19, and digital diagnostic and treatment hub.
Host a population intelligence hub within the Inclusive Growth Unit which provides holistic, real time data on the region's health and socioeconomic outcomes	Hub established and delivering important RHIC work and Health of the Region report.
Supporting place-based health and care	Place-based health and a focus on wider determinants is part of the Regional health Impact of COVID-19 (RHIC) recommendations which will be taken forward post report publishing.
Regional Health Impact of Covid19 Task-and-Finish Group and Health of the Region Report	RHIC interim report published and draft of final report presented to Well Being Board in October.

Inclusive Communities

Progress Summary: Inclusive Communities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabled the Young Combined authority to provide challenge and insight from the 16-25-year olds within WMCA policy development and worked with the YCA members to develop an operating model that will enable greater impact and outreach in the future. • Repurposed planned activity, in response to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on disadvantaged communities, to oversee the renewal of West Midlands Leadership Commission activity which will provide critical friend challenge to the WMCA. • Supported the Leadership Commission to identify key aims for improving economic opportunities for underrepresented groups: improving diversity at board level, providing practical examples of how organisations can change, and systematically improving equalities, diversity and inclusion outcomes. The Commission identified five themes of activity within a report to WMCA Board in September 2020. • Championed the WMCA's equalities, diversity and inclusion agenda, and the development of further actions to improve diversity and inclusion outcomes. Updates have been shared with WMCA Board in July and September 2020, and include work on a programme of Equality Impact Assessments for key delivery portfolios. • Supported unplanned activity which has demonstrated the value of engaging citizens in policy development – e.g. engaging the Citizens Panel and Young Combined Authority to help inform the RCG's priorities for community recovery from COVID-19. 	
Update on High Level Deliverables	
Young Combined Authority	The Young Combined Authority (YCA) has contributed to the development of WMCA policy development, such as informing the RCG's community recovery priorities for COVID-19 and challenging the WMCA on Black Lives Matter. The YCA operating model has also been reconfigured to increase the capacity for insight and challenge from the under 25's in policy development, via a more focused YCA Board (in place) and the development of a new YCA Community for wider engagement (Winter 2020 launch). As part of this, the YCA Board has established 'Leads' who can build closer working relationships with WMCA officers and Portfolio Lead members.

Inclusive Leadership initiatives	<p>The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 has highlighted the inequalities experienced by some communities across the West Midlands.</p> <p>In response, the Portfolio has repurposed its planned deliverables to oversee the renewal of the West Midlands Leadership Commission, which will provide critical friend challenge so that inclusion and diversity is better embedded in how we plan, decide and deliver.</p> <p>The Commission has identified key priorities for improving economic opportunities for underrepresented groups, along with a set of five areas of indicative activity:</p>
Campaigning and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme: improving diversity at board level - Theme: practical examples of how organisations can achieve change - Theme: systematically improve equalities, diversity and inclusion outcomes - Activity: unequal representation on boardrooms - Activity: diversity in the workplace - Activity: social inclusion, including work with faith communities - Activity: supporting Regional Health Inequalities from COVID-19 taskforce - Activity: economic inequality, including women and young people.
Coordinate activity across portfolios	<p>The Portfolio has championed the WMCA's equalities, diversity and inclusion agenda, supporting current work and the development of specific activities which will enable WMCA to plan, decide and deliver in a more inclusive way.</p> <p>This year has demonstrated the value of engaging citizens in policy development – through the engagement of a Citizens Panel and the YCA in shaping the RCG's community recovery priorities. The intention is to build on this by mapping and identifying gaps in WMCA's access to lived experience.</p>

Enabling our Delivery

The portfolio activity set out in the sections above, is enabled by our governance and decision-making, budget and financial resources, including investment decisions, and our strategic support functions. This section summarises some of the key organisational developments and activity during the last six months that have supported our portfolio delivery and supported the region to plan its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Governance and decision-making

Following the initial decision to impose lockdown it was impossible to maintain the normal public meeting arrangements for WMCA Boards and Committees and a number of meetings were cancelled. Inevitably some decisions were simply postponed however in some cases reliance was placed on the Chief Executive's delegated power to take urgent action in the interests of the authority. A mechanism was put in place to ensure that any key decisions that had to be taken in this way had the informal approval of Board members.

Following the introduction of Regulations to enable local authorities (including WMCA) to hold formal meetings by remote attendance we were able to re-start our normal meeting arrangement through the medium of video conferencing. There have since been a substantial number of meetings held in this way including WMCA Board meetings, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Investment Board and a number of thematic Boards. The meetings are subject to the same formalities as before in terms of freedom of information, the publication of agendas and the ability of the public to observe the meetings (via webcasting).

A report to Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (8th September 2020) reviewed the impact of COVID-19 on the corporate governance procedures of the Combined Authority and presents the revised Strategic Risk Register:

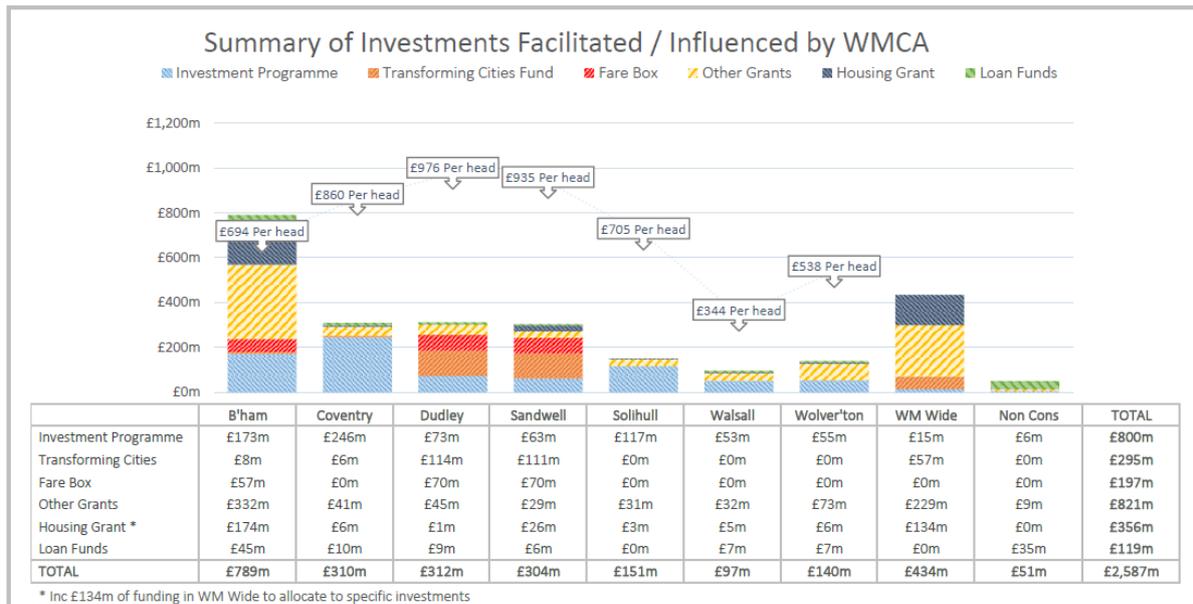
<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s4583/Review%20of%20Governance%20Procedures%20and%20Risk%20Impacts%20of%20the%20COVID%2019%20Pandemic%20Report.pdf>

Financial management

The financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental impact on the Combined Authority's finances. The day to day financial position has been closely monitored through the WMCA Executive team, Finance and Investments Portfolio Holder and regularly reported to the WMCA Board. An initial high-level forecast of the anticipated position for the current year reported to WMCA Board on 24 July 2020 indicated a significant budget deficit for the year of £11.1m. Work has been undertaken to refine the latest forecast taking into consideration the additional government grants awarded and reforecasting income streams based on the latest available information. This work has enabled an improved forecast budget deficit for the year of £2.0m -reported to the WMCA Board in September 2020. A programme of productivity and efficiency savings has now been developed to deliver organisational operating savings along with a fundamental business transformation review also underway, to deliver efficiencies into the next financial year and beyond

A report to the WMCA Board on 18th September 2020 set out the latest financial outturn position: <https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s4633/Report.pdf>

The diagram below are shows a per capita breakdown of investments facilitated and/or influenced by WMCA since the first Devolution Deal.



Organisational development and improvement: Business Transformation

The Business Transformation programme commenced in March this year, with the aim of creating a clear and consistent operating model that would drive greater efficiency and impact. There are 8 key workstreams identified – which will support the WMCA to achieve its vision and to work as one high performing organisation with the right processes, systems and capability in place.

Good progress has been made to date around: reviewing the organisation design, supported by key principles; developing and implementing our Digital and Data strategy; improving business processes and policies, creating a new individual performance management regime that is linked to our organisational performance measures; redefining our values and behaviours and hardwiring these into our people processes.

Investment Programme

At the end of October the Investment Programme had invested in more than 60 interventions across the WMCA region. It has committed £777m of the currently available £801m at its disposal. The projects are in delivery and spend on these is accelerating with £227m of funds drawn down by project sponsors.

The major projects are gathering pace. The office development at Friargate in Coventry is due to break ground in November and Coventry City Centre South masterplanning is developed, with a planning application imminent in Q4. The Metro projects account for £233m of commitments and are in delivery with some projects nearing completion. UKC has benefitted from a further £13.5m of commitments this year and has drawn down £17m to date, supporting the key work in maximising the benefit of the new HS2 stations.

The Gateway review is currently in progress and will determine future receipts of the 30 year devolution settlement. To date the feedback appears positive with a Ministerial decision expected in Q1 of 2021. The Investment Board maturity was particularly singled out as an achievement.

We are focussed on working with all Sponsors to maximise the benefits from the Investment Programme and have worked with the new Strategic Hub to implement the Single Assurance Framework to facilitate this.

Corporate Assurance

The Strategic Hub was formed in March 2020 bringing together the specialisms of risk, performance and assurance within one team to support WMCA in delivering its objectives and priorities. The functionality includes developing a strategic risk framework and an appraisal process for project development and approval. Assurance are providing 2nd line of defence across project management and delivery and supporting stakeholders to ensure those projects are assured against the regional priorities. Meanwhile the performance arm is providing reporting and monitoring to CMT, SLT and the WMCA Board to inform and drive evidence-led decision making and developing a monitoring and evaluation regime so there can be better understanding of the benefits and outputs from programmes.

A new assurance framework (SAF) was adopted in July 2020 and this new approach to initiation, development and approval is supported by the Hub functionality who have developed the tools, templates and guides necessary to ensure a consistent and proportionate approach to project delivery and will raise the understanding of assurance and its benefits.

Overview and Scrutiny

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to play an active role in the governance of the Combined Authority. The committee meets every other month and considers issues that arise out of the work of the Combined Authority Board and other committees, hearing evidence from Officers of the CA and Portfolio lead Members. The committee also undertake specific targeted studies resulting in reports and recommendations. This the Committee has focussed its attention on the Combined Authority's role in supporting the region's response to, and recovery from, COVID-19. The Committee has continued its practice of involving members of the Young Combined Authority (YCA) which has brought the voice of young people to the table.

Supporting the region's response and recovery planning

The Authority has been a key participant in regional local resilience forum activity (LRF) has been a key member of the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) chaired by WM Police (and subsequently Local Government) and we have taken on the responsibility for convening and chairing the Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG). Membership of these groups gives the Combined Authority the opportunity to be at the heart of the pandemic planning and decision-making and has afforded a number of important opportunities for added value where we can act and convene on a regional basis. The Transport Cell, part of the LRF structure and led by TfWM, has ensured a multi-agency coordinated response to managing transport through lockdown to the current recovery stages in order to provide a safe and secure network for those that needed it most.

The Combined Authority has also played a substantial role in leading and convening the region's economic response to the pandemic, complementing and supporting activity at both a regional and national level. The COVID-19 economic impact was formed early in the crisis, bringing together over 40 of the region's business, political, university and trade union leaders who continue to meet weekly. They have acted to identify and lobby government to address gaps in support to mid-sized firms, self-employed people. More recently, they have helped share vital insight across major businesses from different sectors about how the transition from lockdown is supporting business recovery. The Economic Impact Group, plus the Strategic Economic Development Board and Recovery Forum are guiding an approach to economic recovery that is agile, where the right interventions are delivered at the right moment to meet economic and social needs. This approach supported the development of the Recharge West Midlands submission to government ahead of the financial statement in July and continues to support ongoing work on a more substantial economic strategy refresh.