



West Midlands Combined Authority

WMCA Board

Friday 18 September 2020 at 11.00am

Minutes

Constituent Members

Andy Street (Chair)	Mayor of the West Midlands
Councillor Bob Sleigh (Vice-Chair)	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Mike Bird	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Ian Courts	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Maria Crompton	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor George Duggins	Coventry City Council
Councillor Patrick Harley	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Brigid Jones	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Abdul Khan	Coventry City Council
Councillor Ian Ward	Birmingham City Council

Non-Constituent Members

Councillor George Adamson	Cannock Chase District Council
Councillor Matt Dormer	Redditch Borough Council
Councillor Tony Jefferson	Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Councillor Jeremy Oates	Tamworth Borough Council
Councillor Izzi Seccombe	Warwickshire County Council

Observer Members Awaiting Membership

Councillor Andrew Day	Warwick District Council
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Observer Members

Councillor Greg Brackenridge	West Midlands Fire Authority
Chris Burden	Young Combined Authority
David Jamieson	West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner
Rob Johnson	Midlands Trades Union Congress

In Attendance

Councillor Cathy Bayton	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Peter Fowler	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Kath Hartley	Transport Delivery Committee
Waheed Saleem	Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner
Councillor Lisa Trickett	Overview & Scrutiny Committee

This meeting was held in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. The meeting was conducted using Microsoft Teams video conferencing software and all participants took part in the meeting remotely.

47. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ian Brookfield (Wolverhampton), Councillor Shaun Davies (Telford & Wrekin), Councillor Peter Nutting (Shropshire), Mandy Thorn (The Marches LEP) and David Lane (Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee).

48. Minutes - 24 July 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

49. Forward Plan

A forward plan of items to be considered at future meetings of the board was noted.

50. Chair's Remarks

(a) Councillor Maria Crompton - Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

The Chair reported that Councillor Maria Crompton had been appointed Portfolio Lead for Public Service Reform & Social Economy and Chair of the Public Service Reform Board.

51. Update on Annual Planning and Delivery

The board considered a report from the Director of Strategy on changes to the portfolio deliverables previously approved by the WMCA Board to ensure better support and alignment to the region's response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the impact of the pandemic during the first six months of 2020/21, there had been a significant change to the environment within which the WMCA's planned delivery, enabling and influencing activity was being delivered. A review of the deliverables within the Annual Plan had shown that while some of the supporting activity to realise deliverables may have had to have been revised or repurposed, the majority of the portfolio deliverables themselves remained relevant, and progress against them had continued.

The Chief Executive confirmed that a six-monthly review of delivery on the annual plan deliverables would be submitted to the next meeting of the board on 13 November 2020.

Resolved:

The changes to the high-level portfolio deliverables that were approved as part of the WMCA budget 2020/21 be noted and the amended list of portfolio deliverables be endorsed.

52. Appointment of WMCA Returning Officer

The board considered a report from the Head of Governance, Clerk and Monitoring Officer seeking to confirm the continuation of the appointment of the Combined Authority Returning Officer in respect of the Combined Authority Mayoral elections first made on 24 May 2019.

Martin Reeves had been appointed Combined Authority Returning Officer for the mayoral elections scheduled for 7 May 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, that election was subsequently postponed until 6 May 2021. It was therefore intended to re-appoint Martin Reeves to the Returning Officer position until further notice.

Resolved:

- (1) Martin Reeves, Chief Executive of Coventry City Council, be appointed as the West Midlands Combined Authority Returning Officer until further notice.
- (2) It be noted that the Returning Officer intended to appoint Helen Paterson, Chief Executive of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, as his deputy.

53. Extending Term of Office for Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee Chair

The board considered a report from the Head of Governance, Clerk and Monitoring Officer seeking approval to re-appoint David Lane as Chair of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee for a further 12 month period, to include the approval of the WMCA's 2020/21 annual accounts.

Given the uncertainties of the current year, including the postponement of the mayoral elections until May 2021 and the difficulties in recruiting a new chair of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee during the wider restrictions, David Lane was approached to continue in post for a further 12 months. This would provide continuity through to the end of the Mayoral term of office and provide confidence that the audit and assurance function was being overseen by individuals experienced in the governance of the WMCA.

Resolved:

- (1) David Lane be appointed as the independent member and chair of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee for a further 12 month period (to include the approval of the WMCA's 2020/21 annual accounts).
- (2) The Head of Governance undertake a recruitment exercise to ensure that a new independent member could be appointed for a four-year term effective from September 2021.

54. Financial Monitoring Report 2020/21

The board considered a report from the Director of Finance on the WMCA's finances as at the end of July 2020, an update on the financial implications of COVID-19 and the impact of the crisis on the overall level of the WMCA's reserves.

The overall year to date position at the end of July showed a £32,000 favourable variance from budget. This consisted of a favourable variance within the transport budget of £93,000, largely due to lower concessionary patronage volumes and efficiency savings offsetting the COVID-19 impact on advertising revenue and departure charge income. The latest forecast therefore set out the best assessment at the time of writing of the forecast impact on WMCA's financial position in 2020/21, including the specific impact of COVID-19, but was subject to constant change. It was proposed that the latest forecast deficit of £2.0m was met from the one-off use of reserves

Councillor Bob Sleight confirmed that further discussions would take place between the Mayor and constituent authority leaders during October, before a further update was considered at the next meeting of the board on 13 November 2020. The Chair thanked officers for all the work they had done to mitigate the impact of the pandemic of the WMCA's budgets.

Resolved:

- (1) The financial outturn position as at the end of July 2020 be noted.
- (2) The latest forecast for 2020/21, incorporating the estimated impact of COVID-19, be noted.
- (3) The key actions to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in 2020/21 and to bring the forecast position back within budget be noted.
- (4) The use of one-off reserves totalling £2.0m required to bring the forecast position back within budget be noted.
- (5) It be noted that an update on the Medium-Term Financial Planning position for the period 2021/22 to 2025/26 would be provided in the financial monitoring report considered by this board at its meeting on 13 November 2020.

55. Comprehensive Spending Review Representation and Economic Recovery Update

The board considered a report from the Director of Strategy on the proposed representation to the Government's 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review and on an update on the work to drive economic recovery, including the 'Recharging the West Midlands' submission to Government.

In July, guidance was published by the Government on the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review. The Chancellor of the Exchequer emphasised that it provided the opportunity to deliver on the third phase of coronavirus recovery activity, including "commitments made in the March Budget to rebuild, level up and invest in people and places, spreading opportunities more evenly across the nation." The WMCA agreed to develop a joint representation to be signed off by WMCA Board, centred around a strategic narrative of 'levelling up' and 'green recovery', with a core foundation of sustainable funding, including the proposals outlined in the 'Recharging the West Midlands' investment proposition.

Across all 31 asks in 'Recharge the West Midlands', 18 propositions had been either allocated funding or were in policy areas where it was believed the Government had allocated money, and officers would continue to push for the swift confirmation of funding for the West Midlands.

David Jamieson noted that West Midlands Police currently had a number of buildings that were underused and available for use, particularly in Solihull and Sutton Coldfield. He would welcome discussions with other public service providers who wished to make use of this availability. Councillor Ian Ward welcomed this suggestion, and supported the objective within the submission of having public services delivered at the right level and as close to communities as possible. Councillor Bob Sleigh confirmed that the consultation response had also been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 September 2020.

Resolved:

- (1) The Comprehensive Spending Review representation be agreed for submission to the Treasury on behalf of the WMCA.
- (2) The update on economic recovery, following the report to the meeting of the WMCA Board on 24 July 2020 on this topic, be noted.

56. Inclusive Communities Portfolio Update

The board considered a report from the Chief Executive on the key deliverables and activity as part of the Inclusive Communities portfolio and how it was being refocused to better support the post COVID-19 recovery, and to respond to recent events such as Black Lives Matter, building on the Equalities Update report presented to the WMCA Board on 24 July 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic had thrown existing social, economic and health inequalities across the region into sharp focus, disproportionately impacting black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, women, young people and other disadvantaged groups in society. Since its launch in September 2019, the Young Combined Authority had contributed to the development of WMCA policy and identified its own priorities for young people. Reflecting on its first 12 months, and informed by feedback from Young Combined Authority members themselves, changes have been made recently to its operating model. At the heart of these changes had been the principles of engagement - ensuring the voice of the under-25s was present in planning, decision-making and delivery - and supporting the development of a closer relationship between the Young Combined Authority and the WMCA's political leadership that would enable more informed challenge and input.

Councillor Brigid Jones encouraged portfolio leads to meet with their Young Combined Authority shadow as a means of engaging with underrepresented voices. Councillor Ian Courts supported this suggestion and indicated that the Environment & Energy Board had received good engagement from members of the Young Combined Authority, which he hoped could be replicated with other boards. The Chair welcomed the report and looked forward to the Leadership Commission being a critical friend to the WMCA.

Resolved:

The updates and planned activity within the Inclusive Communities portfolio, including the recent changes to the Young Combined Authority, the proposed renewal and refocus of the Leadership Commission and other WMCA activity to embed equalities, diversity and inclusion, be noted and endorsed.

57. Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee - 14 July 2020

The board received the minutes of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee meeting held on 14 July.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2020 be noted.

58. Wellbeing Board - 17 July 2020

The board received the minutes of the Wellbeing Board meeting held on 17 July.

In respect of minute no. 8 ('Regional Health Impact of COVID-19 Task & Finish Group'), Councillor Izzi Seccombe indicated that she would like to see the Young Combined Authority and representatives of black, Asian and minority ethnic communities involved in the task & finish group in order to hear as wide a range of views and experiences as possible.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2020 be noted.

59. Investment Board - 20 July 2020

The board received the minutes of the Investment Board meeting held on 20 July.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2020 be noted.

60. Strategic Economic Development Board - 20 July 2020

The board received the minutes of the Strategic Economic Development Board meeting held on 20 July.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2020 be noted.

61. Transport Delivery Committee - 20 July 2020

The board received the minutes of the Transport Delivery Committee meeting held on 20 July.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2020 be approved.

62. Investment Board - 10 August 2020

The board received the minutes of the Investment Board meeting held on 10 August.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2020 be noted.

63. Strategic Economic Development Board - 20 August 2020

The board received the minutes of the Strategic Economic Development Board meeting held on 20 August.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2020 be noted.

64. Housing & Land Delivery Board - 7 September 2020

The board received the minutes of the Housing & Land Delivery Board meeting held on 7 September.

In respect of minute no. 13 ('COVID-19 Recovery Discussion Paper: Town Centre Living and Regeneration'), Councillor Mike Bird confirmed that the board was now looking at how town centres could adapt to the challenges of COVID-19, particularly if the pandemic was to unlikely to disappear in the short term.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020 be noted.

65. Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 7 September 2020

The board received the minutes of the inquorate Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 September.

In respect of minute no. 68 ('Comprehensive Spending Review - Draft Submission Document'), Councillor Lisa Trickett thanked the Director of Strategy for including the committee's comments within the report considered earlier in the meeting. Members had also asked to see a tracker at future meetings in order to have an oversight of the funding resources that had been achieved through the 'Recharge West Midlands' investment proposition.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020 be approved.

66. Young Combined Authority - August/September

The board considered a report of the Young Combined Authority activity during held in August and September.

Chris Burden reported that the Young Combined Authority was now entering its second year and its members had decided to look again at how it was operating. Changes had been made to give more opportunity for their voices to be heard, including identifying thematic leads to shadow the key work areas of the WMCA. The Chair welcomed these new arrangements and looked forward to working closely with Young Combined Authority members over the coming year.

Resolved:

The report be noted.

67. Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

That, in accordance with s100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the business or financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

68. Enabling the Development of the Arden Cross Multi-Storey Car Park (HS2 Interchange) Site

The board considered a report of the Director of Finance seeking approval of an Investment Programme allocation for development costs for the Arden Cross Multi-Storey Car Park.

As part of the HS2 Interchange station design, HS2 Ltd was empowered to deliver up to 7,400 car parking spaces for the station. The current configuration for the car parking contained within the HS2 Hybrid Act was entirely surface car parking and consumed 20.4 hectares of land adjacent to the station. This design would significantly reduce the amount of land available for commercial and residential development, as well as impede a sense of place being created at this new destination, negating the objective of driving economic growth around the new station. The Arden Cross alternative scheme for a multi-storey car park would allow up to 13.2 hectares of land to be made available for early commercial and residential development, subject to planning consent.

Councillor Ian Courts welcomed the proposals, noting that creating an economic zone in this area helped to maximise the benefit that HS2 would bring to the region.

Resolved:

- (1) An Investment Programme funding allocation, as set out in the report, for development costs towards the development of the Arden Cross Multi-Storey Car Park be approved.
- (2) The need as a West Midlands region to show a positive commitment towards the development of the Arden Cross Multi Storey Car Park be agreed.

- (3) The principle of a repayable grant from the WMCA to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, as set out in the report, to deliver the works at the HS2 site be agreed, which would be predicated on:
- (i) the WMCA and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council identifying reliable, sufficient and secure income streams to repay the investment;
 - (ii) the WMCA being adequately satisfied that the proposal was affordable and that the risks associated with the investment were acceptable to the WMCA;
 - (iii) the WMCA's constituent authorities supporting the agreement, and in particular noting the exposure to the under-write risk;
 - (iv) the proposals progressing through the WMCA's assurance framework;
 - (v) final approval to any repayable grant by the WMCA Board.
- (4) A further report be submitted at a future date, requesting funding approval as set out in the report, subject to the progression of this proposal through the WMCA's assurance frameworks.

69. Date of Next Meeting

Friday 13 November 2020 at 11.00am.

The meeting ended at 12.00pm