



West Midlands Combined Authority

WMCA Board

Friday 13 November 2020 at 11.00 am

Minutes

Constituent Members

Andy Street (Chair)	Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority
Councillor Bob Sleight (Vice-Chair)	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Mike Bird	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Ian Brookfield	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Ian Courts	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor George Duggins	Coventry City Council
Councillor Patrick Harley	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Abdul Khan	Coventry City Council
Councillor Danny Millard	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Ian Ward	Birmingham City Council

Non-Constituent Members

Councillor George Adamson	Cannock Chase District Council
Councillor Matthew Dormer	Redditch Borough Council
Councillor Tony Jefferson	Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Councillor Jeremy Oates	Tamworth Borough Council
Councillor Izzi Seccombe	Warwickshire County Council
Tom Westley	Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership

Observer Members Awaiting Membership

Councillor Andrew Day	Warwick District Council
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Co-Opted Member

Chris Burden	Young Combined Authority
Rob Johnston	Midlands Trades Union Congress
Aisha Masood	Young Combined Authority

Observer Members

Councillor Greg Brackenridge	West Midlands Fire Authority
David Jamieson	West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner

In Attendance

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

- | Item No. | Title |
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| 70. | Apologies for Absence
Apologies for absence were received from Lee Barron (Midlands TUC), Councillor Maria Crompton (Sandwell), Councillor Shaun Davies (Telford & Wrekin), David Lane (Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee), Tim Pile (Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP) and Mandy Thorn (The Marches LEP). |
| 71. | Chair's Remarks

(a) Herefordshire Council
The Chair reported that Herefordshire Council had indicated that it was no longer seeking non-constituent membership of the WMCA. |
| 72. | Minutes - 18 September 2020
The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record. |
| 73. | Forward Plan
The plan of items to be considered at future meetings of the board was noted. |
| 74. | Annual Delivery 2020/21: Mid-Year Update
The board considered a report from the Director of Strategy on a mid-year summary of progress against portfolio deliverables for 2020/21.

At its meeting on 5 June 2020, the board agreed not to publish an Annual Plan for 2020/21 given a need to reassess the portfolio deliverables originally agreed for 2020/21 and to review WMCA's ongoing activity, strategic aims and planning processes in the context of the region's recovery from COVID-19.

The report provided a half-year summary of delivery and progress against 2020/21 WMCA portfolio activity. It enabled the board and other stakeholders to review the progress of portfolio activities that supported its inclusive economic growth aspirations and realised the vision of a healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous region.

Resolved:

The mid-year summary of progress against portfolio deliverables for 2020/21 be noted. |
| 75. | Supporting the Economy Through Inward Investment, Capital Attraction and Tourism Activity
The board considered a report from the Chief Executive, West Midlands Growth Company, seeking to extend for a further two years the £0.7m per annum revenue funding provided by the WMCA to the West Midlands Growth Company. |

Since April 2019, the West Midlands Growth Company had received £2.5m per annum from the WMCA to deliver the outputs set out in its business plan. Despite significant global uncertainties, in the first year of operation all targets were exceeded. Due to COVID-19, the forecast for 2020/21 was less optimistic but, despite this, jobs and Gross Value Added targets would still be exceeded across the two year period.

From April 2021, activity to deliver the activities set out in the value chain would predominantly be clustered under four programmes that had been created since April 2019: the Commonwealth Games Tourism, Trade & Investment Programme, the West Midlands/India Partnership, Non Departmental Public Bodies Programme and the Key Account Management programme.

Resolved:

- (1) It be agreed to extend for two years (from April 2021) the current investment of £0.7m per annum from the WMCA revenue budget to the West Midlands Growth Company to support inward investment, capital attraction and tourism promotion activity.
- (2) The extension of £1.8m per annum from the investment programme, agreed by the Investment Board on 21 September 2020, thereby approving a total investment by WMCA of £2.5m per annum (£5m total) to the West Midlands Growth Company from April 2021, be endorsed.

76. WMCA HS2 Growth Strategy Refresh

The board considered a report from the Managing Director, Transport for West Midlands, providing an update on the publication of the HS2 Growth Strategy refresh: 'The Defining Decade - the Midlands high speed path to recovery' and to advise of the communication and engagement that would take place to promote the launch of the strategy with key local and national stakeholders.

The 'Midlands HS2 Growth Strategy' was first published in April 2015 and was the first such strategy delivered to Government that evidenced the direct benefits that would be realised within the West Midlands with the arrival of HS2. Following the outcome of the Oakervee Review in to HS2, it was agreed that the time might be right to 'refresh' the HS2 Growth Strategy, to look at the progress made to date and to review whether the priorities as set out in the original strategy were still as important today as they were in 2015.

The refresh had been built on the original strategy, but rather than look and feel the same as the previous document which was a direct 'ask' of Government, the new strategy looked to celebrate the progress made so far to date, as well as to outline what the key next steps would be within the West Midlands region on delivering maximum growth from the HS2 delivery programme, whilst not shying away from some of the key challenges that were still faced.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe welcomed the benefits that HS2 would bring to the West Midlands, but noted that HS2 Ltd was only required to give a very short notice period to commence construction works impacting the highway. This had resulted in Warwickshire County Council being given two weeks notice of works that would close the Fosse Way for nine months. She considered that there needed to be better co-ordination between strategic decision making and operational work within HS2 Ltd. The Managing Director, Transport for West Midlands undertook to raise these understandable concerns with HS2 Ltd through the Strategic Resilience Group and ensure Warwickshire's officers were involved in this.

Resolved:

The publication of the WMCA HS2 Growth Strategy refresh 'The Defining Decade - the Midlands high speed path to recovery' be noted.

77. Financial Monitoring Report 2020/21

The board considered a report from the Director of Finance providing updates on the WMCA's finances as at the end of September 2020, (including the financial implications of COVID-19), the medium-term financial planning process and on the treasury management activities.

The overall year to date position at the end of September showed a £0.417m favourable variance from budget. This consisted of a favourable variance within the transport budget of £0.579m largely due to lower concessionary patronage volumes and Regional Transport Co-ordination Centre efficiency savings offsetting the COVID-19 impact on advertising revenue and departure charge income. There was an adverse variance of £0.162m within the Delivery budget, largely as a result of lower than budgeted investment income owing to the 0.1% bank rate which had impacted the returns on cash balances.

Resolved:

- (1) The financial outturn position as at the end of September 2020 be noted.
- (2) The latest forecast for 2020/21, incorporating the estimated impact of COVID-19, be noted.
- (3) The updated Medium-Term Financial Planning position for the period 2021/22 to 2025/26 be noted.
- (4) The final confirmed project allocations made under the Get Britain Building initiative be noted.
- (5) The Treasury Management Strategy Mid-year update be noted.

78. Bus Byelaws

The board considered a report from Director of Network Resilience, Transport for West Midlands, on an update on the development and implementation of bus byelaws and an overview of the next steps required to implement these additional powers.

Reducing crime and disorder and making passengers feel safer remained a priority not only for Transport for West Midlands but also the Police & Crime Commissioner (through the Safer Travel Plan) and British Transport through its Annual Plan. Public consultation earlier in the year showed significant support for the introduction of bus byelaws. Discussions had been held with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government as to how these byelaws could be best introduced. The report set out the process intended to be followed.

Councillor Kath Hartley reported that the Transport Delivery Committee had overseen the development of these byelaws, including consulting with passenger representative groups. She also sought assurances that the byelaws would not restrict Sikhs carrying a kirpan during bus journeys. Councillor Cathy Bayton indicated that the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee intended to undertake a review of the effectiveness of the byelaws during the first year of their implementation.

The Portfolio Lead for Transport welcomed the review to be undertaken by the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee, and confirmed that the proposed byelaws would align with all existing equality laws, including permitting the carrying of a kirpan for religious reasons.

Resolved:

- (1) The progress made with regards to bus byelaws since May 2019 be noted.
- (2) The progression to the next steps be approved.
- (3) Authority be delegated to the Managing Director of Transport for West Midlands and the WMCA's Monitoring Officer to conclude the works on bus byelaws.

79. West Midlands Rail Ltd Governance Evolution

The board considered a report from the Managing Director, Transport for West Midlands, on proposals to evolve the governance arrangements of West Midlands Rail Ltd to strengthen its ability to achieve its policy aims of delivering local leadership for local rail services by working with the rail industry to deliver a step change in rail services across the region.

The principles underpinning the governance of West Midlands Rail Ltd were developed in 2015, before the emergence of the Mayoral Combined Authority. The existence of this senior elected position had, inevitably, led to a political, media and public expectation that the Mayor would intervene on rail matters, as was evidenced during the period of poor rail performance in autumn 2019. Therefore, in early 2020 the West Midlands Rail Ltd Board agreed to explore options to evolve its governance to include a role for the Mayor of the West Midlands.

The report set out the proposed governance changes to permit for the Mayor of the West Midlands to become the non-Director, non-voting Chair of West Midlands Rail Ltd, and also for the creation of two new Vice-Chair roles.

Resolved:

- (1) The changes to the Articles of Association, which would permit for the Mayor of the West Midlands to become the non-Director, non-voting Chair of West Midlands Rail Ltd, and also for the creation of two new Vice-Chair roles be approved.
- (2) The power described in 3.1(i) of the West Midlands Rail Ltd Articles of Association to represent and publicise West Midlands Rail Ltd through lobbying and related activities and survey to advance West Midlands Rail Ltd's purpose be delegated to the Chair.

80. Health of the Region Report

The board considered a report from the Director of Public Service Reform on the overall health of people living in West Midlands, and in particular the impact of COVID-19 on the local population.

The Health of the Region report described the extent of health inequalities in the WMCA region and the opportunities for action, considering the relationship between health and wealth and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report was intended to sit alongside the State of the Region report, which focused on the economy and growth.

David Jamieson noted with concern the recent increases in domestic violence, as well as serious and organised crime. He praised the work of the Violence Reduction Unit and stressed the importance of learning from best practice across the country. He had commissioned youth workers to go into hospital A&E departments to talk to people who had been victims of knife crime to offer support and advice when they came out of hospital.

Aisha Masood noted the links between health and poverty, and urged the WMCA to target measures to reduce levels of poverty whenever it could. Councillor Izzi Seccombe welcomed these comments, particularly recognising the importance of supporting children and younger people to break out of the cycles they may find themselves in that had significant impacts on their health.

Resolved:

- (1) The final draft for publication of the Health of the Region, prepared in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, be noted.
- (2) The recommendations to Government on the basis of the findings within the report be agreed.
- (3) The commitments to action of the WMCA and its partners be endorsed.

81. Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee - 8 September 2020

The board received the minutes of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee meeting held on 8 September.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2020 be noted.

82. Public Service Reform Board - 10 September 2020

The board received the minutes of the Public Service Reform Board meeting held on 10 September.

Resolved:

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

83. Transport Delivery Committee - 14 September 2020

The board received the minutes of the Transport Delivery Committee meeting held on 14 September.

Resolved:

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

84. Investment Board - 21 September 2020

The board received the minutes of the Investment Board meeting held on 21 September.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2020 be noted.

85. Environment & Energy Board - 15 October 2020

The board received the minutes of the Environment & Energy Board meeting held on 15 October.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2020 be noted.

86. Wellbeing Board - 16 October 2020

The board received the minutes of the Wellbeing Board meeting held on 16 October.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2020 be noted.

87. Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 16 October 2020

The board received the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 October.

Councillor Lisa Trickett thanked the Mayor for attending the Q&A session that focussed on policy-related matters. The committee had made a series of observations for the Mayor to reflect on and consider. The Chair undertook to provide a formal response to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on these matters.

Resolved:

The minutes of the inquorate meeting held on 16 October 2020 be approved.

88. Investment Board - 19 October 2020

The board received the minutes of the Investment Board meeting held on 19 October.

In respect of minute no. 81 ('SQW Draft Report and Headlines'), Councillor Bob Sleigh confirmed that the board had now considered the review that had been undertaken of the role of the Investment Board and Investment Fund, and had welcomed the conclusions that both were effective in their roles and purpose.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2020 be noted.

89. Strategic Economic Development Board - 20 October 2020

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

Resolved:

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

90. Housing & Land Delivery Board - 2 November 2020

The board received the minutes of the Housing & Land Delivery Board meeting held on 2 November.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2020 be noted.

91. Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 2 November 2020

The board received the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2 November.

Resolved:

The minutes of the inquorate meeting held on 2 November 2020 be approved.

92. Young Combined Authority - October

The board considered a report of the Young Combined Authority activity during October.

Aisha Masood reported that the Young Combined Authority intended to submit its vision and priorities to the next meeting of the board. Chris Burden thanked all members and officers that had engaged with the Young Combined Authority in recent months. The YCA was seeking to amplify the voice of the region's youth as the West Midlands sought to recover and build back from the COVID-19 pandemic during 2021.

Resolved:

The report be noted.

93. Date of Next Meeting

Friday 15 January 2021 at 11.00am

The meeting ended at 12.25pm.