



Public Service Reform Board

Tuesday 15 December 2020 at 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present

Councillor Maria Crompton (Chair)
Councillor Karen Grinsell
Councillor Brigid Jones
Councillor Ian Kettle
Councillor Louise Miles
John Adams
Laura Caulfield
Tom McNeil

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Birmingham City Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
City of Wolverhampton Council
Further Education
Higher Education
Office of the Police and Crime
Commissioner
NHS

Rachel O' Connor

In Attendance

Ed Cox
Neelam Sunder
Claire Dhami
Claire Spencer

West Midlands Combined Authority
West Midlands Combined Authority
West Midlands Combined Authority
West Midlands Combined Authority

**Item Title
No.**

12. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brookfield (City of Wolverhampton Council), Henrietta Brearley (Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce), Vanessa Jardine (West Midlands Police), Paul Jennings (NHS), Phil Loach (West Midlands Fire Service), Sarah Middleton (Black Country Consortium), Jatinder Sharma (Further Education) and Alison Tonge (NHSE).

13. Nomination of substitutes

Rachel O' Connor had been nominated as a substitute for Paul Jennings, Councillor Louise Miles had been nominated as a substitute for Councillor Ian Brookfield and John Adams had been nominated as a substitute for Jatinder Sharma.

14. Declarations of Interest

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

15. Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Chair proposed that Councillor Brigid Jones be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the board for the remainder of the current municipal year.

The board agreed the appointment.

Resolved: That Councillor Brigid Jones be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the board for the remainder of 2020/21.

16. Minutes - 10 September 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2020 were agreed as a true record.

17. Single Assurance Framework - Impact on Thematic Board Terms of Reference and Role

The Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform, Ed Cox, presented a report on the Single Assurance Framework that was adopted by the WMCA Board on 24 July 2020.

The report set out the purpose of the Single Assurance Framework, the proposed core roles and implications for thematic boards and portfolio improvements.

Ed Cox reported that standardised terms of reference had been developed for thematic boards to support core roles and to ensure a consistent approach is delivered across the WMCA for each portfolio area.

He added that non-voting members of the board would continue to play an important role in partnership working in the development and delivery of the portfolio programmes and projects.

The Chair and Vice-Chair both welcomed the opportunity for elected members without a Cabinet Lead position to join as non-voting members as this would allow them to put forward their views and would at the same time, develop their interest and talent.

In relation to the membership of the board, it was noted that the appointments of Chair and Vice-Chair were made from the existing membership and were not additional positions.

In relation to the appointments from the 3 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), it was noted that each LEP determined their own representative on the board.

Resolved:

1. That the Single Assurance Framework requirements for thematic boards be noted;
2. That the proposed portfolio improvements for the Public Service Reform Board be noted and

3. That the amended terms of reference for the board as set out in Appendix A of the report be endorsed subject to clarification regarding the appointment of the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair and LEP representatives.

18. Recovery Co-ordination Group - Community Recovery Priorities

The Head of Public Service Reform and Prevention, Claire Dhmi, presented a report that provided an update on the programme of activity to respond to the community recovery priorities and principles presented to the Recovery Forum in July and September 2020.

Claire Dhmi outlined the work of the Recovery Co-ordination Group (RCG) and the document 'Levelling up West Midlands: our road to community recovery and prospectus for government' that was agreed by the RCG, Leaders and Portfolio Holders on 20 November. It was noted that the document sets out the vision for recovery based on 6 priorities and 4 cross-cutting principles agreed by the Citizens Panel.

In relation to the next steps, Claire Dhmi reported that a 'sponsor' would be sought from Leaders within the constituent local authorities to take forward one of the 6 priority areas and work was underway to develop the top 5 collaborative opportunities identified by local authorities which would have the most impact.

With regards to the open innovation competition that would launch in January 2021 to provide communities with the opportunity to win cash to take forward projects to support recovery, it was noted that details would be sent to communication leads early in New Year along and a website would also be set up to promote the competition.

In relation to enquiry from Rachel O' Connor as to how the health sector/ STP could help promote the work of RCG, Claire Dhmi undertook to contact Rachel O'Connor outside of the meeting on the matter.

Resolved:

That the '*Levelling-up the West Midlands: Our roadmap to community recovery and prospectus for government*' and the next steps of the programme of activity to respond to the community recovery priorities and principles developed by the Recovery Coordination Group, and presented to the Recovery Forum be noted and disseminated.

19. Update on Inclusive Growth in Practice and Next Steps

The board received an update on Inclusive Growth in practice and next steps from the Senior Policy Adviser, Public Services and Inclusive Growth, Claire Spencer.

The presentation commenced with an overview of the Inclusive Growth Framework ('what good looks like'), the Inclusive Growth Decision-Making Toolkit ('making all investments inclusive') and Inclusive Growth Tests ('keeping us true').

Claire Spencer provided an overview of the work being undertaken, which included progress on Inclusive Growth Corridors since March 2020 (Kingshurst, Solihull) and East Birmingham) and the next steps.

In relation to a comment from Councillor Kettle regarding the apparent absence of the Black Country authorities in this workstream, Claire Spencer advised that this was not a reflection on the WMCA's focus and the Inclusive Growth Corridor work would be hopefully be rolled-out to other areas in due course once the toolkit had been proven.

The Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform, Ed Cox added that if there were regeneration projects that local authorities and partners wanted the WMCA to explore, colleagues were welcome to contact the team who would be more than happy to assist in this regard.

The Chair asked that members contact officers within their authority/ organisation to ask if they need assistance from the WMCA with any projects.

Resolved:

That the update be noted.

20. Update on Homelessness Taskforce

The Programme Manager for Homelessness, Neelam Sunder provided an update on the work of the Homelessness Taskforce since March 2020. This included details of the Covid-19 homelessness response, the rough sleeping initiative 2020/21, next steps accommodation programme 2020/21, research to inform work, the homelessness proposal submitted as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the taskforce priorities until March 2021.

Neelam Sunder explained how the pressures of the pandemic had resulted in more joined-up working, sharing of information/ risks and rapid decision-making at the business end of the process that has led to successful outcomes in moving people to long-term accommodation which should lead to key policy changes and practices moving forward to tackle homelessness.

Neelam Sunder undertook to circulate papers on the work of Homelessness Taskforce to the board for information.

Resolved:

That the update be noted.

21. Punishing Abuse

Claire Dhami, Head of Public Service Reform and Prevention and Tom McNeil, Strategic Adviser to the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, presented a report that provided an update on progress regarding punishing abuse research into the extent of childhood adversity, abuse, loss and trauma in children involved in the criminal justice system in the West Midlands.

It was noted that the research was led by Dr Alex Chard and his report, '*Punishing Abuse*' was expected to be published in January 2021 along with a joint policy response by the WMCA and OPCC. The report provides the evidence for key policy proposals, the reform of youth justice services and for further discussion and collaboration between local authorities on the wider reform of services for children.

Claire Dhami and Tom Mc Neil outlined the key findings, recommendations and next steps and advised that the policy recommendations would form part of the Comprehensive Spending Review asks to Government.

The Chair commented on the very positive work highlighted in the report and hoped that the recommendations would be taken forward following publication of the report in January.

Resolved:

1. That progress on research be noted and
2. That publication of the full report be approved.

22. Learning from Lockdown

Claire Spencer reported that it was proposed to hold a private workshop style session early in the new year to capture the learning from lockdown and this would also include the learning from Homelessness Taskforce.

The board endorsed the proposal.

Resolved:

That a workshop be held early in the new year to focus on the learning from lockdown.

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm.