



West Midlands
Combined Authority

WMCA Board

Date	15 January 2021
Report title	Young Combined Authority Vision and Priorities for the West Midlands
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Report has been considered by	YCA Board - 2 and 16 December 2020 Strategic Leadership Team - 16 December 2020 Programme Board - 4 January 2021

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The WMCA Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note and endorse the development of the Young Combined Authority Board's 'vision and priorities' document and reflect on where proposals can inform WMCA policy, delivery and future devolution asks.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report is to inform the WMCA Board of the Young Combined Authority's (YCA) work to develop and publish their vision and priorities. These will be presented to WMCA Board on 15 January 2021.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Young Combined Authority (YCA) was established by the WMCA Board in 2019 and continues to be a key activity within the Inclusive Communities portfolio.
- 2.2 The YCA was set up with the purpose of bringing together a diverse group of young people, aged 16 to 25, from across the West Midlands to guide and challenge the WMCA as it makes decisions which will shape the future. Since its launch, the YCA has contributed to the development of WMCA policy and spoken about its own priorities to the WMCA Board.
- 2.3 In early 2020, the YCA decided to develop a 'manifesto' to set out its key ambitions for the region and associated 'asks' of the region's leaders and decision makers. This was inspired by a workshop led by Aston University in December 2019 for the members to explore political party manifestos ahead of the last general election, and the project was undertaken in the spirit of the YCA's founding principles of 'autonomy', 'advising' and 'challenging.'
- 2.4 The YCA were due to present their 'manifesto' to the WMCA Board meeting on 20 March 2020. However the meeting was cancelled due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak and the project came to a close.
- 2.5 The YCA has recently reviewed and refreshed its earlier 'manifesto' in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the region and its young and diverse population, and is now keen to present its vision and priorities to the WMCA Board.

3. A YCA vision and priorities for a post-Covid West Midlands

- 3.1 Seven themes have been identified as being particularly important for shaping a 'good' regional recovery. These themes broadly align with the WMCA's own portfolios, and the YCA has decided to align its new Board Co-Lead positions and vision and priorities document to them:

- Culture and Major Events
- Skills
- Digital
- Environment
- Transport
- Housing and Regeneration
- Inclusive Communities and Wellbeing

- 3.2 The ideas and ‘asks’ set out under each of these themes have been developed by the YCA Board members, with the relevant Co-Leads drafting content for collective discussion and endorsement. Content for the YCA’s vision document has also been informed by the previous ‘manifesto’ project that Aston University supported in early 2020 as well as more recent engagement between the YCA and WMCA.
- 3.3 Attached is an outline of the YCA Board’s draft vision and priorities document which sets out some of the ideas and asks which are anticipated to be presented to the WMCA Board on 15 January 2021.
- 3.4 It is important to highlight that some of the ‘asks’ made by the YCA Board will go beyond the direct influence of the WMCA. The YCA Board has produced its ambitions for a generation and its region, not an organisation.
- 3.5 By producing their vision and priorities document, the YCA Board aim to encourage leaders and decision-makers across the West Midlands – including WMCA Board members, partner organisations and potentially candidates of the 2021 mayoral elections – to consider and integrate the priorities of young people within their own policy development and delivery.

4. Anticipated next steps

- 4.1 YCA Board representatives will present their report, “Our West Midlands: YCA vision and priorities (TBC)”, to the WMCA Board on 15 January 2021.
- 4.2 The YCA Board also intend to develop a wider plan for sharing their vision and priorities with leaders and decision makers across the West Midlands and discussion on which ideas can be taken forward. The YCA is also considering if and how to share their report with candidates for the West Midlands mayoral elections, in a politically impartial way, with the view to ensuring that youth priorities are high on the agenda.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications to the WMCA arising from this paper. Any recommendations from the YCA Board will be considered individually as they impact on the WMCA forward planning process and spending decisions.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The YCA is a consultative body with no delegated decision-making powers except for the ownership of their own development and work programme.
- 6.2 When approving the establishment of the YCA in February 2019, WMCA Board agreed to not place ‘undue restraints on the workings of the YCA.’ Accordingly, the WMCA will not prevent the YCA from independently engaging candidates of the West Midlands mayoral election on the content of their vision document, so long as this is done in a politically impartial way.

7. Equalities and inclusive growth implications

- 7.1 The diversity of voices on the YCA Board suggests that their development of a vision and priorities document would have positive equalities and inclusive growth implications, as the members are able to grow their influence over regional government and encourage wider democratic participation.

8. Background papers

'Leadership Commission: Developing and Delivering a Youth Combined Authority', WMCA Board, 8 February 2019:

<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s2581/Report.pdf>

'Inclusive Communities Portfolio Update', WMCA Board, 18 September 2020:

<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s4646/Report.pdf>

YCA minutes, WMCA Board, 13 November 2020:

<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s4888/Report.pdf>

Appendix: draft outline of the YCA Board's vision and priorities document