



WMCA Board Meeting

Date	21 July 2017
Report title	The West Midlands Leadership Commission
Portfolio Lead	Cohesion and Integration - Councillor Steve Eling
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Report to be/has been considered by	WMCA Board

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The WMCA Board is recommended to:

1. Endorse the establishment of the West Midlands Leadership Commission and commit to supporting its important work in spreading opportunity in the region.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The West Midlands Leadership Commission seeks to improve the opportunities for people from those communities and groups which are currently under-represented in the leadership of the West Midlands. This should contribute to ensuring the leadership of the future is representative of the region it serves.

2.0 Background

2.1 There are many groups whose members are under-represented in leadership positions across the West Midlands in all sectors, including:

- Black and minority ethnic (BME)
- White working-class boys
- Women
- LGBT
- Disabled people

2.2 The leadership of the wider WMCA itself (including LEPs, Executives, Commissions, Taskforces etc.) has come under scrutiny for its own composition, and the Mayor has committed to exploring what lies behind this and taking appropriate action.

2.3 This under-representation can lead to disaffection and feelings of isolation within these communities, and can limit aspiration. We should address this as, while we are a diverse region we also a socially and economically divided region and to be a successful and thriving region in the twenty-first century, we need to make the most of the talent and potential that we have in the region.

3.0 The Establishment of a West Midlands Leadership Commission

3.1 The establishment of a West Midlands Leadership Commission will allow the WMCA to lead this important work.

3.2 The Leadership Commission will:

- Understand the current representation of these groups in leadership positions in the West Midlands.
- Identify the barriers which these groups face in the West Midlands.
- Engage with campaign groups and pressure groups in this area.
- Create a strategy and prioritised action plan for tackle leadership under-representation in the West Midlands.
- Launch a number of early actions, aimed to address the problems which are well understood.

3.3 Early actions may include some of the following:

- Promotion of name-blind recruitment processes in organisations and businesses across the West Midlands.
- Encourage applications from under-represented groups in a range of leadership positions: Magistrates, JPs, Deputy Lieutenants, School Governors, Charity Trustees, Non-executive NHS Chairs and Directors.
- A cross-party campaign to increase representation amongst political candidates for local elections.

- Targeted employment initiatives for under-represented groups across the West Midlands.

3.4 Members of the commission will be drawn from all sectors, including business, the universities, the public sector and the third sector, and are to be appointed by the Chair.

3.5 It will be independently chaired and the Mayor has asked Anita Bhalla OBE to chair the Leadership Commission. She has accepted the role. Anita Bhalla OBE is the Chair of Performances Birmingham Ltd (Town Hall and Symphony Hall), Chair of the Creative City Partnership, Board member of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP and recent past Chair of MAC (Midlands Arts Centre). She worked for the BBC for 26 years in many senior positions which included setting up the Asian Network from the West Midlands and as Head of Political & Community Affairs for England.

3.6 The Leadership Commission will report on findings and progress to the Mayor and to the WMCA Board, via Councillor Steve Eling, the portfolio holder for Cohesion and Integration.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 No request for extra financial resources above what has been budgeted for 2017/18 is being made at this stage.

4.2 There may be further financial requirements, but these will be approved through the WMCA Board or the proper delegated authority.

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 The Leadership Commission's purpose is to increase representation in leadership positions across the WMCA.

6.2 There are no other equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Appendices

None