



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date	8 March 2021
Report title	Effectiveness of Transport Delivery Committee in Overseeing the Delivery of WMCA Transport Policies - Update on Recommendations
Overview & Scrutiny Committee Lead	Councillor Cathy Bayton, Councillor Ahmad Bostan and Councillor Angus Lees
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Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the progress on the implementations of the recommendations agreed by the WMCA Board on 17 January 2020.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the committee of the progress made with the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Transport Governance Scrutiny Review undertaken last year.

2. Background

- 2.1 During 2019/20, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee undertook a scrutiny review on the effectiveness of transport governance within the West Midlands Combined Authority. At its meeting on 17 January 2020, the WMCA Board considered the findings of the scrutiny review and subsequently approved the recommendations made in the scrutiny review's final report.

- 2.2 The scrutiny review reached four key conclusions, namely:

- Recommendation 1 - Strengthen Transport Delivery Committee
- Recommendation 2 - Establish a Strategic Transport Board
- Recommendation 3 - Establish a Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee
- Recommendation 4 - Improve governance oversight

- 2.3 The review group was chaired by Councillor Cathy Bayton, Vice-Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and also comprised Councillor Ahmad Boston and Councillor Angus Lees. The review was undertaken during November 2019 and was supported by William Britton (Transport Strategy Researcher), Dan Essex (Governance Services Manager) and Lyndsey Roberts (Scrutiny Officer).

3. Progress Update

3.1 Recommendation 1: Strengthen Transport Delivery Committee

- 3.1.1 The scrutiny review panel recognised the value of the Transport Delivery Committee in many areas of the work it undertook, but considered that it could become more effective following a review of its terms of reference and a more structured approach to developing its workplan for the year. There were also a number of recommendations supporting greater visibility to the work of its Lead Member Reference Groups and the relation between the Chair of the committee and the Portfolio Lead for Transport.

- 3.1.2 Progress in implementing these recommendations has not progressed at the pace initially anticipated. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic at the start of 2020 and the subsequent impact that the three national lockdowns had on the public transport network has meant that the focus of the committee, officers from Transport for West Midlands and the wider WMCA has rightly been on managing this, particularly in respect of scaling the transport network down and then back up in response to the changing travel trends throughout the year. Transport Delivery Committee have of course been involved in monitoring these issues as well.

- 3.1.2 In the recent Q&A with the Chair of Transport Delivery Committee, members of Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee reiterated the need for this strengthening of the committee and the work will now be undertaken over the coming months ready for approval in the new mayoral term.

3.2 Recommendation 2: Establish a Strategic Transport Board

3.2.1 In spring 2020, the WMCA established a Strategic Transport Board that helped to facilitate closer engagement between the Portfolio Lead for Transport and cabinet members for transport within its constituent authorities. Whilst the setting of transport policy remained the responsibility of the WMCA Board, the Strategic Transport Board now provides a structured forum to discuss regional transport matters and share issues and ideas and provided the mechanism to resolve problems earlier within the lifecycle of transport policy and strategy development.

3.2.2 The Strategic Transport Board is supported by a number of advisors, including the Managing Director for Transport West Midlands, Policy, Strategy & Innovation Director for Transport for West Midlands and team, together with senior transport officers from each constituent council. The board meets on a monthly basis and has discussed a number of strategic matters including:

- E-scooter trials across the region
- Emergency Active Travel Fund
WM2041 - Developing the First Five Year Carbon Plan
- Review of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan and approaches to community engagement to support strategy development
- Pot-holes and Highways Challenge funding
- Moving Traffic Offences
- Supported travel policies
- West Midlands Ultra Low Emission vehicles

3.3 Recommendation 3: Establish a Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee

3.3.1 The WMCA needed rigorous scrutiny of its transport policy making and delivery and in the autumn 2020 the Overview & Scrutiny Committee established its Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee, was set up to scrutinise transport policy as determined by the WMCA Board and transport delivery that was the responsibility of Transport Delivery Committee.

3.3.2 The sub-committee, which is chaired by Councillor Cathy Bayton and its membership largely drawn from the transport scrutiny committees within constituent authorities, meets on a bi-monthly basis and has scrutinised a number of transport related matters this year including:

- Student Transport Arrangements ('return to school')
- Supported Travel Policies Review Update
- HS2 Growth Strategy Refresh
- Bus Byelaws
- Development of the Local Transport Plan
- Emergency Active Travel Fund
- Regional Road Safety
- Commonwealth Games Transport Plan

- 3.3.3 In October 2020, the sub-committee questioned Councillor Ian Ward, Portfolio Lead for Transport on transport policy matters. A number of recommendations were considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and shared with the WMCA Board on 13 November. These recommendations have led to proposals for a review of alternative ticketing policies, which will be undertaken during 2021/22.
- 3.3.4 A further Q&A session was held with Councillor Kath Hartley, Chair of the Transport Delivery Committee, on transport delivery matters last month.
- 3.3.5 For the forthcoming year, the sub-committee would like to work closely with the Strategic Transport Board to develop its annual work programme in terms of pre- development and pre-decision scrutiny matters.

3.4 Recommendation 4: Governance Oversight

- 3.4.1 The scrutiny review concluded that significant aspects of the transport governance arrangements had been inherited – and remained unchanged – from the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority/Centro, organisations that were subsumed into the WMCA when it was established in 2016. Included within these arrangements were the payment of basic and special responsibility allowances to members of Transport Delivery Committee, an arrangement that was not replicated within any other WMCA board/committee. Given that these allowances were last reviewed more than five years ago, and by a predecessor organisation, it was recommended that the WMCA Board should carry out a periodic review so that it may confidently adopt a scheme of allowances that appropriately recognise the requirements of membership of the WMCA Board and its committees.
- 3.4.2 It is proposed that a review of allowances is carried out in the new mayoral term.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising out of the recommendations contained within this report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising out of the recommendations contained within this report.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct equality implications arising out of the recommendations contained within this report.

7. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct inclusive growth implications arising out of the recommendations contained within this report.

8. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 8.1 The WMCA exercises transport powers overwhelmingly in respect of the area covered by its constituent authority members.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 There are no further specific implications arising out of the recommendations contained within the report.