



Public Service Reform Board

Thursday 4 March 2021 at 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present

Councillor Wasim Ali	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Karen Grinsell	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Izzi Seccombe	Warwickshire County Council
Henrietta Brealey	Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce
Laura Caulfield	Higher Education
Sue Ibbotson	Public Health England
Paul Jennings	Chief Executive NHS Birmingham & Solihull CCG
Jatinder Sharma	Further Education

In Attendance

Ed Cox	West Midlands Combined Authority
Claire Dhami	West Midlands Combined Authority
Claire Spencer	West Midlands Combined Authority
Neelam Sunder	West Midlands Combined Authority
Councillor Sharon Thompson	Birmingham City Council

23. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Crompton (Sandwell MBC), Councillor Jones (Birmingham City Council), Vanessa Jardine (West Midlands Police), Phil Loach (West Midlands Fire Service), Tom McNeil (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner), Alison Tonge (NHSE) and Jean Templeton (Homelessness Taskforce).

24. Declarations of Interest

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

25. Chair's Remarks

Councillor Ali reported that he would be chairing the meeting today as unfortunately both the Chair, and Vice-Chair were unable to attend the meeting.

26. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2020 were agreed as a true record.

27. PSR Annual Business Plan: High Level Deliverables

The Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform, Ed Cox, presented a report that informed the board of progress made on the high deliverables for the year 2020/21 and set out the proposed high level deliverables for the coming year 2021/22.

The Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform reported that a number of changes had been made to the high level deliverables (HDLs) as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and outlined the changes that had been made which included the addition of four new high deliverables in the context of Region's recovery and the proposed high level deliverables for 2021/22.

The Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform also highlighted the key achievements of the directorate during the year that were set out in paragraph 2.7 of the report. This included the publication of the Community Recovery Road Map, the launch of the digital inclusion coalition, a rough sleepers initiative and an Inclusive Growth Framework for Kinghurst redevelopment in Solihull amongst other work.

In relation to an enquiry from Councillor Grinsell regarding inclusive growth for Kinghurst, Solihull and how this board links with the work being undertaken on inequalities, the Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform reported that tackling inequalities is at the heart of everything the WMCA does and referred to the integration of the work of this board with the Wellbeing Board that has a focus on health inequalities.

The Senior Adviser- Public Services and Inclusive Growth, Claire Spencer advised that with regards to Kingshurst, the next stage of the programme would be to undertake community engagement to understand the views of various groups and to connect them with investment.

Further to an enquiry from Sue Ibbotson regarding how this board engages with the Directors of Public Health on Integrated Care Systems, its core themes and inequalities, the Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform advised that the WMCA's Wellbeing Board was undertaking this role; the Wellbeing Board had oversight of 50 different commitments with partner organisations to tackle health inequalities that are 'owned' by the Strategic Transformation and Recovery Board (STaR Board).

The Head of Public Service Reform and Prevention, Claire Dhami considered that the Chair of this board might want to consider 'cross-fertilisation' working with the Wellbeing Board.

Councillor Seccombe, Chair of the Wellbeing Board, reported that inequalities feature across the work of many boards and should be owned by all partners in the West Midlands. Councillor Seccombe added that she would welcome the Wellbeing Board connecting with this board as proposed by Claire Dhami.

Resolved:

1. That progress to date on 2020/21 high level deliverables be noted;
2. That the proposed high level deliverables for 2021/22 be endorsed;

and

3. That an update on the high level deliverables be submitted to every board meeting be agreed.

28. Community Recovery

The board considered a joint report of the Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform and the Head of Public Service Reform and Prevention that provided an update on community recovery progress since the last meeting.

The Head of Public Service Reform and Prevention, Claire Dhami outlined the report and provided an update on the delivery of the 6 priorities areas identified by the Citizens Panel that are being led by a local authority 'Sponsor' along with one of the 'cross-cutting' principles.

The Head of Public Service Reform and Prevention also highlighted the Community Recovery Innovation Challenge Competition aimed at grassroot organisation and SMEs to put forward their ideas/innovation for improving the lives of citizens and communities. It was noted that the top twenty ideas would be awarded a cash prize of £500 plus an invitation to a business development masterclass delivered by Power to Change and the top 3 ideas would also receive support, investment and coaching up to the value of £15k each.

In relation to an enquiry from Councillor Grinsell as to whether all the competition ideas could be shared with this board after the winners have announced so that local authorities could take forward any ideas with the potential for future development, Claire Dhami advised that this was the intention and to also link ideas to local initiatives.

The Chair asked members to help promote the competition with their network of organisations; it was noted the closing date for entries was 21 March.

Resolved:

That progress since the publication of 'Levelling up West Midlands: Our roadmap to Recovery and Prospectus for Government' be noted.

29. Homelessness Taskforce: Children and Families and Young People Task Group

The Programme Manager for Homelessness, Neelam Sunder, provided an update on the Homelessness Taskforce since the last meeting.

The Homelessness Programme Manager reported that significant progress had been made by cross sector support services working in partnership with local authorities and the Rough Sleeper Task Group to tackle homelessness during the pandemic ; their combined efforts had resulted in a reduction of 62 % in the number of rough sleepers in WMCA area during autumn 2020, the lowest in 10 years. It was noted that an action plan would now focus on preventing rough sleeping.

The Homelessness Programme Manager advise the board that the Homelessness Taskforce would now focus its attention on future homelessness and what could be achieved as a collective for children, families and young people and reported on a specific task group for this area. The Children, Families and Young People Task Group would seek to reduce the number and time households spend in temporary accommodation and look to increase the numbers in secure and affordable accommodation.

Councillor Thompson (Birmingham Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods) thanked Neelam Sunder and the team for their work on tackling homelessness in the West Midlands and by the same token, Neelam Sunder conveyed her thanks and appreciation to Councillor Thompson and the Taskforce Members Advisory Group for all her support in this area.

Resolved:

That the update be noted.

30. Verbal Updates

The Senior Policy Adviser – Public Services and Inclusive Growth, Claire Spencer, provided updates on the Social Economy Business Plan and on the Inclusive Growth workstreams and the Head of Public Service Reform and Prevention, Claire Dhami, provided an update on the Punishing Abuse work.

In relation to the Social Economy Business Plan it was noted that the first draft of the Social Economy Business Plan (taking forward the recommendations of the Social Economy Taskforce) would be submitted to stakeholders, local enterprise partnerships and universities for consideration before submission to this board after the mayoral election.

In relation to Inclusive Growth, Claire Spencer reported that 20 Inclusive Growth Business partners have recently been confirmed which includes the Black Country Consortium and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP. Claire Spencer advised that the Inclusive Growth Team was interested in working with local authorities and partner organisations to help support the region and add value.

Dudley Interchange project was one example where the team was unlocking inclusive growth potential with regards to the construction and build value of the scheme. Claire Spencer asked colleagues to let her know of any areas they would like the team to be involved with.

Further to consideration of the Punishing Abuse report at the last meeting, the Head of Public Service Reform and Prevention, Claire Dhami reported that a joint policy response from the Police and Crime Commissioner and Mayor would be published on 12 March with regards to the report's recommendations.

The report recommendations set out the case for system reform to prevent children being admitted to the criminal justice system in the first instance and the need to tackle broader structural issues.

The Chair noted the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's representative on this board, Tom McNeil was unable to attend today's meeting but had submitted comments on the report's findings. His comments noted the hardship endured by many children in the criminal justice system, the powerful evidence for pushing public health approaches in criminal justice and recognised this research was a great example of cross-party and inter-agency collaboration.

Resolved:

That the updates be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.23 pm.