



# West Midlands Combined Authority

## Wellbeing Board

Tuesday 19 October 2021 at 10.00 am

### Minutes

#### Present

|                                  |                                       |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Chair) | Portfolio Lead for Wellbeing          |
| Councillor Kamran Caan           | Coventry City Council                 |
| Councillor Stephen Craddock      | Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council  |
| Rebecca Farmer                   | NHS England                           |
| Councillor Karen Grinsell        | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Councillor Julian Gutteridge     | Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council   |
| Councillor Paulette Hamilton     | Birmingham City Council               |
| Councillor Suzanne Hartwell      | Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council |

#### In Attendance

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Lola Abudu         | Department for Health & Social Care   |
| Mubasshir Ajaz     | West Midlands Combined Authority  |
| Ed Cox             | West Midlands Combined Authority  |
| Jed Francique      | West Midlands Combined Authority  |
| Madeleine Freewood | City of Wolverhampton Council   |
| Mark Frosbrook     | West Midlands Combined Authority  |
| Simon Hall         | West Midlands Combined Authority  |
| Alistair McIntyre  | Black Country & West Birmingham Sustainability & Transformation Partnership |
| Tatum Matharu      | West Midlands Combined Authority  |
| Aquil Rizvi        | West Midlands Combined Authority  |
| Ruth Tennant       | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council                                       |

#### Item Title

##### No.

#### 35. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Margaret Bell (Warwickshire), Guy Daly (NHS) Andy Hardy (NHS) and Paul Maubach (NHS).

## **36. Chair's Remarks**

### **(1) Sir David Amess MP**

The Chair noted the death of Sir David Amess, MP for Southend West, on 15 October following his stabbing at a constituency surgery. She offered the condolences of the board to his family and friends, and stressed the importance that all of those undertaking public service were afforded respect and were able to go about their business in safety. She called on everyone to consider carefully the language they used when discussing matters that might divide opinion, and stressed the importance of recognising that everyone in public life had the interests of the region at heart. Board members thoroughly endorsed these comments.

### **(2) Arrangements for Future Meetings**

The Chair reported that further consideration would be given as to whether the board should meet again in person or would continue with an online/hybrid approach. Members recognised that there were benefits in meeting physically together in a room, but stressed that a meeting-by-meeting approach should be considered given that rates of COVID-19 infection were currently increasing and members should not meet face-to-face in these circumstances when it was not needed and there were no formal decisions for the board to make.

## **37. Minutes - 20 July 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

## **38. Wellbeing Focus on Health Inequalities**

The board considered a report of Head of Wellbeing & Prevention reviewing the outcomes of the Wellbeing workshop held at the last meeting and how this could influence the board's future work programme.

Following the workshop, the Director of Inclusive Growth & Public Service Reform reported that it was proposed to focus the work of the WMCA's Wellbeing & Prevention team in working with partners to develop programmes of activity that would address health inequalities by tackling some of the wider determinants of poor health in the region. The four main priorities for the Wellbeing & Prevention function going forward would therefore be:

- To galvanise action to ensure all economic investment in the region supported better health outcomes.
- To work with partners to attract funding from Government and provide a regional voice on health inequalities.
- To work with partners to maximise the economic opportunities created by the West Midlands health and care economy.
- To champion specific issues and deliver grant-funded programmes where there was the clear support of the WMCA and its partners to do so.

Councillor Paulette Hamilton stressed the importance of ensuring that the work of the board supported local authorities and focussed on those areas where there were advantages in scale to be gained. The Head of Wellbeing & Prevention supported these comments and indicated that they were working with colleagues to identify where the Wellbeing & Prevention team could add value and scale-up initiatives to bring region-wide benefits.

Resolved:

- (1) The key takeaways from the Wellbeing Board workshop held in July 2021 be noted.
- (2) Proposal to shift the focus of the Wellbeing & Prevention team towards addressing health inequalities be endorsed.

### **39. Include Me WM Review and Recommendations**

The board considered a report of the Physical Activity Policy & Delivery Lead on the context, impact and the outcomes from an independent review into Include Me WM and what was needed to become an exemplar region in getting more disabled people active.

For the last two years, the WMCA had been leading the Include Me WM programme, which focused on a commitment to make the West Midlands an exemplar region in getting disabled people active. The programme was based on extensive consultation and research on the barriers and opportunities faced by disabled people in getting active. One in six adults who had COVID-19 were disabled or had long term health conditions and 54% of adult disabled people in the West Midlands were categorised as inactive.

Much of the WMCA's work had been about cultivating a social movement for more inclusive and accessible sport. Ninety-one organisations had pledged to make changes in service delivery, including five local authorities, Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee and the Albion Foundation. Coventry City Council was using Include Me WM as one of its corporate diversity and inclusion priorities to strengthen the council's work to embed inclusive values and behaviours including staff training. Birmingham City Council's 'Creating an Active City Plan' was focusing on reducing health inequalities through a disability lens to encourage better system and behaviour change across the city.

Councillor Paulette Hamilton paid tribute to Michael Willis, who had recently died but had previously undergone a double lung transplant and had worked with Transport for West Midlands on mobility issues that particularly impacted organ transplant patients. She stressed the importance of ensuring that people impacted by a broad range of disabilities were able to participate fully in society, and noted the important role Include Me WM played in this. Councillor Karen Grinsell enquired whether representatives of people with learning disabilities were included within this work. The Include Me WM Manager indicated that a citizens' panel was recruited widely, and although it had not been possible to recruit someone with the lived experiences of every disadvantaged group, there was a wide range of people involved in the panel that had proved to be extremely useful.

Resolved:

- (1) The Include Me WM review findings and recommended actions be noted.
- (2) The board receive a maximum of twice-a-year presentations from the WMCA's Disability Champions on progress and issues impacting on the wellbeing of disabled people in the West Midlands.

**40. Community Listening Exercise to Inform the Mental Health Commission**

The board considered a report of the Director of Inclusive Growth & Public Service Reform highlighting the findings of a community listening exercise for the forthcoming Mental Health Commission. The exercise had been commissioned as one of the influences to help shape the focus commission.

The WMCA commissioned BVSC Research, the Institute for Community Research & Development at the University of Wolverhampton and the Centre for Peace, Trust & Social Relations at Coventry University to undertake a 'listening exercise' to understand more about the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health and wellbeing of communities across the region and to capture some initial community feedback on potential areas of focus for the commission. A total of 129 participants were engaged through a series of one-to-one interviews, focus groups, a survey and individual cohort case studies of forgotten voices. The report provided further details on the findings of the listening exercise, compounding factors that contributed to worsening mental health, supportive and enabling factors, along with potential areas of focus for the Mental Health Commission.

Councillor Paulette Hamilton welcomed the report and suggested it provided a good opportunity to re-engage with partners that it had not been possible to do so with during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Mental Health Prevention Strategic Lead welcomed these comments, noting that it was important to ensure the work of the commission added value to that already being undertaken, and did not put additional pressures on those parts of the system already under pressure.

Resolved:

The feedback from the 'community listening exercise' be noted, which highlighted:

- (a) Feedback on the impact of COVID-19 on the mental wellbeing of communities in the West Midlands.
- (b) Compounding factors contributing to worsening mental health.
- (c) Supportive, enabling factors.
- (d) Potential areas of focus for the Mental Health Commission.

**41. Wellbeing Annual Performance and Forward Planning**

The board considered a report of the Director of Inclusive Growth & Public Service Reform on progress made to date against the 2021/22 deliverables and confirming the end of year position for the deliverables for 2020/21.

The Chair thanked all members of staff and partners who had been involved in delivering the programmes during the last 18 months, often in difficult circumstances.

Resolved:

- (1) The progress against the 2021/22 High Level Deliverables to date be noted.
- (2) The progress on 2020/21 High Level Deliverables be noted.

**42. Independent Placement Support Update and Appointment of Chair**

The board considered a report of the Strategic Lead for Thrive into Work providing an update on the work taking place on the Thrive into Work Independent Placement Support Programme and to seek support to appoint Mark Axcell, Chief Executive of the Black Country Mental Health Partnership Trust as Chair of the Independent Placement Support Programme Board.

The current focus of the programme had been to extend existing services running across the Black Country up until March 2022, to expand services into Birmingham, Solihull and Coventry up until July 2022, and to explore the impact of the Independent Placement Support in specialist pathways for those with neuro-development barriers, those at risk of homelessness and individuals in custodial diversion pathways. Recent reporting showed that targets were exceeding expectations both in preventing people from falling out of work and for those entering into the job market. For those requiring retention support, 73% have been on sick leave for four weeks or longer and for those service users seeking support to gain employment, 89% are long term unemployed.

The Chair requested that a further report be presented to the next meeting of the board that provided further information on the role and proposed membership of the Independent Placement Support Programme Board.

Resolved:

- (1) The progress of the Independent Placement Support Programme be noted.
- (2) The appointment of Mark Axcell as Chair of the Independent Placement Support Programme Board be endorsed.

**43. Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 18 January 2022 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 12.00pm.