



WMCA Board

Friday 19 November at 11.00 am

Minutes

Constituent Members

Andy Street (Chair)	Mayor of the West Midlands
Councillor Mike Bird	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Ahmad Bostan	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Ian Brookfield	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor George Duggins	Coventry City Council
Councillor Karen Grinsell	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Patrick Harley	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Brigid Jones	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Ian Kettle	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Stephen Simkins	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Bob Sleigh	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Ian Ward	Birmingham City Council

Non-Constituent Members

Councillor Matthew Dormer	Redditch Borough Council
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Observer Members

Councillor Greg Brackenridge	West Midlands Fire Authority
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In Attendance

Councillor Cathy Bayton	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
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The following participated in the meeting remotely via Microsoft Teams

Lee Barron	Midlands Trades Union Congress
Councillor Andrew Day	Warwick District Council
Councillor Shaun Davies	Telford & Wrekin Council
Councillor Kath Hartley	Transport Delivery Committee
Councillor Matt Jennings	Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Councillor Sebastian Lowe	Rugby Borough Council
Councillor Olivia Lyons	Cannock Chase District Council
Councillor Jeremy Oates	Tamworth Borough Council
Councillor Heather Timms	Warwickshire County Council
Councillor Lisa Trickett	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Kristofer Wilson	Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council

57. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Ilia Bowles (Marches LEP), Councillor Ian Courts (Solihull), Councillor Abdul Khan (Coventry), Councillor Tony Jefferson (Stratford-on-Avon), Tim Pile (Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP), Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Warwickshire) and Tom Westley (Black Country LEP).

58. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

59. Forward Plan

The forward plan of items to be reported to future meetings of the board was noted.

60. Confirmation of Statutory Officer Appointment

The board considered a report of the Director of Finance seeking confirmation of the appointment of the Chief Executive and to formally confirm their statutory role for the WMCA.

Following the resignation of the former Chief Executive, a recruitment process had been undertaken in order to appoint to the role on a permanent basis. The role performed statutory functions for the WMCA in line with the Local Government & Housing Act 1989, having the statutory responsibility as Head of Paid Service. An extensive search was carried out, a shortlist of four candidates produced and a process of technical assessment and stakeholder review carried out. A further recruitment process had taken place under the direction of the Employment Committee to formally appoint a permanent Chief Executive.

Councillor Ian Brookfield commended the quality of the internal candidates who had been shortlisted for the post.

Resolved:

The appointment of Laura Shoaf as Chief Executive and the WMCA's Statutory Head of Paid Service be endorsed.

61. WMCA Aims & Objectives

The board considered a report of the Chief Executive on the latest draft of the WMCA's Aims & Objectives.

The purpose of the Aims & Objectives document was to set out how the WMCA would deliver on the region's priorities, guide its use of powers and money secured from Government, and enable the WMCA to measure its progress against its priorities. They would be regularly reviewed, including a formal review every six months to monitor progress. The Aims & Objectives document had been developed through bilateral and multilateral engagement with the Mayor and leaders of constituent authorities, with other key stakeholders such as the Young Combined Authority, and with colleagues from across the WMCA.

Resolved:

The WMCA's Aims & Objectives document be agreed.

62. Financial Monitoring 2021/22

The board considered a report of the Director of Finance providing an update on the WMCA's finances as at the end of September 2021 (including the financial implications of COVID-19).

The overall year to date position at the end of September showed a £1.717m favourable variance from budget. This consisted of a favourable variance within the transport budget of £1.911m largely due to concessions savings during the pandemic as a result of reduced service provision by operators, lower patronage and no fare increases. The second forecast for the financial year was completed throughout October 2021. This showed a small improvement from the first forecast, with a surplus of £0.636m expected. Of this saving, £0.988m was within transport which was driven by year to date concessions savings as patronage and fares continued to be below the amounts budgeted. The forecast position reflected the ongoing uncertainty of the bus market, which might lead to the WMCA subsidising additional socially and economically necessary bus services during 2021/22.

Councillor Ian Ward noted that the WMCA had been unsuccessful in its Levelling Up Fund submission of £50m to fund the required Metro depot enhancements. He considered therefore that the cost of these depot works should come from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement. Councillor Ian Brookfield was disappointed at the amount of funding allocated to the region through the Community Renewal Fund. The Chair expressed his frustration at the bidding requirement linked to securing Government funding, which he considered to be unhelpful. He was also disappointed that the Metro depot enhancements were not to be funded by the Levelling Up Fund.

Resolved:

- (1) The financial position as at 30 September 2021, including the Mid-Year Treasury Strategy update, be noted.
- (2) The recharge of 2021/22 Business Rates Growth monies be approved.
- (3) The update on WMCA's Medium Term Financial Plan and Annual Budget process be noted.
- (4) The acceptance of £5.4m of Community Renewal Fund award, and the requirement for all appropriate assurance and governance arrangements being delegated to the Director of Finance and the Monitoring Officer, in accordance with grant conditions, be approved.
- (5) The update on the continued operation of West Midlands 5G Ltd be noted.
- (6) The update on the Buy Before You Board scheme be noted, and authority be delegated to the Director of Finance to approve the successful tender.
- (7) It be noted that the annual review of the WMCA's Single Assurance Framework had been completed, with no updates identified in its application for the next 12 months.

- (8) The update of the WMCA's performance against the approved 2021/22 Annual Business Plan, be noted.
- (9) In relation to University Station, the revised budget of £65m, including enhancement works related to the additional scope and the associated funding package, be approved.
- (10) The acceptance of £2.62m of funds from Department of Work & Pensions in relation to the European Social Fund's Find Your Futures grant be noted.
- (11) The use of existing transport reserves of £4.6m to mitigate and manage emerging pressures with the WMCA's transport capital programme be noted.

63. Simplifying Economic Governance and Establishing the West Midlands Economic Growth Board

The board considered a report of the Director of Productivity & Skills on the establishment of a new Economic Growth Board with decision-making powers, led by the Portfolio Lead for Economy & Innovation, which would put regional economic development at the heart of the WMCA's decision making.

Leaders of the seven constituent authorities and the Mayor had agreed to a comprehensive review of the region's governance. This included a focus on streamlining economic governance and policy-making, and establishing clearer, more accountable decision making. It was proposed to establish a new Economic Growth Board to provide strong, democratically accountable economic leadership with decision-making powers. The board would be accountable to the WMCA Board and would provide strategic oversight of the region's approach to driving green and inclusive economic growth.

Councillor Ian Brookfield welcomed these proposals and considered that it would be beneficial if the Vice-Chair of the new board was drawn from the business sector.

Resolved:

- (1) The establishment of an Economic Growth Board as a decision-making board for the WMCA, to be chaired by the Portfolio Lead for Economy & Innovation, be approved.
- (2) It be noted that the Economic Growth Board would formally replace the advisory Strategic Economic Development Board and the COVID-19 Recovery Jobs Taskforce, which would now cease to meet.
- (3) The Economic Growth Board's terms of reference, membership (including voting rights) and draft work programme be approved.
- (4) It be agreed that the Economic Growth Board could make recommendations to vary its membership as required.
- (5) It be noted that further work was required to simplify and/or rationalise the range of groups and boards that previously reported into the Strategic Economic Development Board.

- (6) The parallel work being undertaken to clarify the role of advisory groups comprised of business representatives be noted.
- (7) The need for a new officer group to inform the work of the Economic Growth Board be endorsed.
- (8) The work of the Strategic Economic Development Board and the contribution its members had made be acknowledged.

64. Environment & Energy Board - 9 September 2021

The board received the minutes of the Environment & Energy Board meeting held on 9 September 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2021 be noted.

65. Strategic Economic Development Board - 10 September 2021

The board received the minutes of the Strategic Economic Development Board meeting held on 10 September 2021.

In respect of minute no. 35 ('WM2041 Update: Home of the Green Industrial Revolution'), Councillor Stephen Simkins stressed the importance and difficulty in retro-fitting 292,000 homes in the region to improve domestic heat and energy efficiency. The Director of Inclusive Growth & Public Service Reform indicated that retro-fitting was largely the responsibility of local authorities, although the WMCA would be seeking to support authorities undertaking this work, especially in regard to bidding for funding and maximising the benefits of scale. A new 'smart hub' was being established to specifically help with this.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2021 be noted.

66. Transport Delivery Committee - 13 September 2021

The board received the minutes of the Transport Delivery Committee meeting held on 13 September 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021 be noted.

67. Housing & Land Delivery Board - 15 September 2021

The board received the minutes of the Housing & Land Delivery Board meeting held on 15 September 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the inquorate meeting held on 15 September 2021 be approved.

68. Investment Board - 20 September 2021

The board received the minutes of the Investment Board meeting held on 20 September 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2021 be noted.

69. Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee - 29 September 2021

The board received the minutes of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee meeting held on 29 September 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the inquorate meeting held on 21 September 2021 be approved.

70. Public Service Reform Board - 30 September 2021

The board received the minutes of the Public Service Reform Board meeting held on 30 September 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2021 be noted.

71. Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 14 October 2021

The board received the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 October 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2021 be noted.

72. Investment Board - 18 October 2021

The board received the minutes of the Investment Board meeting held on 18 October 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2021 be noted.

73. Wellbeing Board - 19 October 2021

The board received the minutes of the Wellbeing Board meeting held on 19 October 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2021 online via Microsoft Teams be approved.

74. HS2 Regional Enterprise Board - 21 October 2021

The board received the minutes of the HS2 Regional Enterprise Board meeting held on 21 October 2021.

Councillor Karen Grinsell indicated that this was the inaugural meeting of the new board and thanked all those who had been nominated to sit on it. She reiterated that the overarching aim of the board was to ensure the region was able to maximise the benefits of HS2.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2021 be noted.

75. Strategic Economic Development Board - 28 October 2021

The board received the minutes of the Strategic Economic Development Board meeting held on 28 October 2021.

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting of the board and thanked Tim Pile who chaired its meetings, and all other members of the board for the time and effort they had given to it.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2021 be noted.

76. Skills Advisory Board - 1 November 2021

The board received the minutes of the Skills Advisory Board meeting held on 1 November 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2021 be noted.

77. Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee - 2 November 2021

The board received the minutes of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee meeting held on 2 November 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2021 be noted.

78. Housing & Land Delivery Board - 4 November 2021

The board received the minutes of the Housing & Land Delivery Board meeting held on 4 November 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the inquorate meeting held on 4 November 2021 be approved.

79. Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 8 November 2021

The board received the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 November 2021.

In respect of minute no. 28 ('WMCA Aims & Objectives'), Councillor Cathy Bayton indicated that the committee had supported these, but had wished to see more engagement with the region's residents in their development. She also thanked Councillor Bob Sleight for attending the meeting to give an update on the latest progress with the WMCA's current governance review. She said that the committee would be looking to engage more closely with other portfolio leads during the coming year.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2021 be noted.

80. Employment Committee - 9 November 2021

The board received the minutes of the Employment Committee meeting held on 9 November 2021.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2021 be noted.

81. Young Combined Authority Update - November 2021

The board received a report from the Young Combined Authority setting out its programme of activity during November.

Resolved:

The report be noted.

82. Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

The public and press be excluded from the meeting in accordance with s100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, for the following items of business as they were likely to the disclosure of exempt information as specified in the paragraphs of the Act.

83. Compulsory Purchase Order for Rail Package 1

The board considered a report of the Interim Managing Director, Transport for West Midlands, seeking approval to acquire the land necessary for the delivery of Rail Package 1, new stations at Willenhall and Darlaston and for the Mayor to approve in principle the making of a compulsory purchase order.

At its meeting on 15 January 2021, the board approved the full business case for Rail Package 1, which comprised two new stations in the Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council area at Willenhall and Darlaston. The proposed stations would enable the delivery of a train service that would result in significant improvements to connectivity between these communities and Walsall, Wolverhampton and Birmingham. In order to de-risk the land assembly phase of the delivery, it was proposed to make a compulsory purchase order in order to acquire the interest in land required to deliver the stations at Willenhall and Darlaston. The use of compulsory powers would avoid the risk that delivery of the stations could be frustrated if acquisitions could not be finalised through private treaty.

Resolved:

- (1) The acquisition of the land identified in the report under WMCA's powers contained within the Housing & Regeneration Act 2008 to enable the infrastructure development contained in Rail Package 1 (Willenhall and Darlaston stations) for the benefit of people living in the WMCA's area be approved by the WMCA Board.
- (2) The making of a compulsory purchase order to secure the land in support of Rail Package 1 (Willenhall and Darlaston stations) be approved by the board member representing Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and the Mayor.
- (3) The Mayor exercise his reserved power to make a compulsory purchase order under section 9(2) of the Housing & Regeneration Act 2008 in respect of the parcels of land outlined in the report.

84. Suspension of Metro Services - Update

The Chair asked the Interim Managing Director, Transport for West Midlands, to provide an update to the board on the suspension of Metro services that had been implemented on 13 November and the likely timetable for their reintroduction. The Interim Managing Director explained the circumstances leading up the decision to suspend services, along with when she expected to have sufficient further information to be in a position to say when they would resume.

Board members sought clarification as to why a reduced service could not be operated, along with the financial considerations and implications of the suspension of services. The Chair requested that a further detailed briefing be provided to those constituent authority leaders most impacted by this suspension as matters developed. The board recognised that passenger safety was the most important consideration, but urged that Metro services be resumed as soon as it was safely possible.

Resolved:

The update be noted.

[NB. The Chair agreed to take this matter as an additional item of urgent business so as to ensure that board members were fully briefed as to the very latest position regarding the current suspension of Metro services.]

85. **Date of Next Meeting**
Friday 14 January 2022 at 11.00am.

The meeting ended at 12.20pm.