



West Midlands Combined Authority

WMCA Board

Friday 11 February 2022 at 11.00 am

Minutes

Constituent Members

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

Non-Constituent Members

Councillor Matthew Dormer	Redditch Borough Council
Councillor Lezley Picton	Shropshire Council

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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In Attendance via Microsoft Teams

Councillor Andrew Day	Warwick District Council
Councillor Kath Hartley	Transport Delivery Committee
Talha Ikhtlaq	Young Combined Authority
Councillor Tony Jefferson	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 Izzi Seccombe	Warwickshire County Council
Hamaam Shire	Young Combined Authority
Mark Smith	Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee
Gary Taylor	Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership
Councillor Kristofer Wilson	Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council

109. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Anita Bhalla (Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP), Councillor Kerrie Carmichael (Sandwell), Councillor Maria Crompton (Sandwell), Councillor Shaun Davies (Telford & Wrekin), Councillor Abdul Khan (Coventry), Councillor Ian Ward (Birmingham) and Sarah Windrum (Coventry & Warwickshire LEP).

110. Chair's Remarks

(a) Councillor David Vickers

The Chair noted the sad death of Councillor David Vickers, Deputy Leader of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and member of this board. He paid tribute to his dedicated public service both to Dudley and the wider West Midlands region. Councillor Patrick Harley echoed these comments, paying tribute to the guidance and support Councillor David Vickers had given to him whilst he had been Leader of the council. He also thanked members of the board for the condolences the council had received in the last week. Members of the board observed a minute's silence in memory of Councillor David Vickers.

111. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

112. Forward Plan

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

113. WMCA Budget 2022/23

The board considered a report of the Director of Finance presenting the final 2022/23 budget for approval.

Councillor Cathy Bayton thanked the Mayor and Portfolio Lead for Finance for attending the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's budget Q&A on 15 December. She noted that transport funding to support passenger services still recovering from the impacts of COVID-19 remained a significant concern for members and urged clarity from the Department for Transport as soon as possible. Councillor Bob Sleight shared these concerns and noted that a revised budget might need to be presented to the board were there to be significant cuts to the financial support currently being provided to bus services.

In respect of the development of the 2023/24 draft budget, the Director of Finance indicated that she intended to bring some initial considerations to the Mayor & Portfolio Leads Liaison meeting in April.

Resolved:

(1) The WMCA consolidated revenue budget be approved, including:

(a) the budget requirement for transport delivery 2022/23 comprising four elements:

- (i) £117.0m to be funded from the existing transport levy mechanism;
 - (ii) £18.7m to be funded from grant awarded by the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee;
 - (iii) use of £4.5m business rates retention income;
 - (iv) a transfer from earmarked reserves of £3.6m.
- (b) the WMCA delivery (non-transport) budget requirement for 2022/23 of £161.9m comprising of six elements:
 - (i) £142.7m adult education spending to be funded from Adult Education Budget funding devolved by the Department for Education;
 - (ii) £6.7m to be funded from other devolution deal grants;
 - (iii) £1.2m to be funded from other income, notably investments;
 - (iv) £4.6m to be funded from constituent authority fees (fees to remain at the same level as 2021/22);
 - (v) £500,000 to be funded from non-constituent authority and observer fees (which represented an increase of £5,000 a year per non-constituent authority from 1 April 2022);
 - (vi) use of £6.0m business rates retention income.
- (2) The Mayoral office budget for 2022/23 of £800,000, to be funded from additional mayoral capacity funding of £800,000, be approved.
- (3) The first year (2022/23) of the indicative WMCA capital programme be approved, noting the indicative onward programme thereafter.
- (4) It be noted that there would be no Mayoral precept during 2022/23.
- (5) The WMCA's commitment to work with the Mayor and Leaders to develop a long-term, sustainable budget and plan throughout 2022, building on the 2022/23 agreed Aims & Objectives and a sustainable financial plan be noted.
- (6) The matters identified by Overview & Scrutiny Committee that arose out of the Mayoral Q&A on 15 December 2021 be noted.
- (7) Authority be delegated to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for Finance, to make any final changes that may result from the final Local Government Finance Settlement.
- (8) The following policies and strategies, which contained items as required by statute be approved:

- (a) the WMCA Treasury Management Strategy;
- (b) the WMCA Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Statement;
- (c) the WMCA Pay Policy Statement.

[In accordance with the requirements of the Combined Authorities (Finance) Order 2017, the Mayor and Constituent Authority members voted on these resolutions as follows:

FOR (9): Andy Street, Councillor Mike Bird, Councillor Ian Brookfield, Councillor Ian Courts, Councillor George Duggins, Councillor Patrick Harley, Councillor Brigid Jones, Councillor Stephen Simkins and Councillor Bob Sleigh.

AGAINST (0): none.]

114. WMCA Air Quality Options Paper

The board considered a report of the Director of Inclusive Growth & Public Service Reform on different approaches that were likely to be available to the WMCA and its constituent authorities to improve air quality across the WMCA area.

The West Midlands was faced with air pollution from a number of different sources, but predominantly generated through emissions from transport, and particulates. In 2019, a draft WMCA Regional Air Quality Review and Action Plan was prepared that provided a useful reference point for air quality improvements across the West Midlands and was used to develop ten priority areas for action in transport. To date, the focus on addressing air quality in the West Midlands (by both the WMCA and constituent local authorities) had been in lowering emissions. This was likely to change with the new targets that would be set through the Environment Act 2021, which set out the Government's new framework for environmental legislation.

Councillor Ian Courts noted that in a recent national assessment of the preparedness for tackling climate change, the WMCA was the highest ranked of all combined authorities in the country. He thanked everyone who had been involved in this work, but stressed the need to ensure these plans were now transferred into specific actions and activity.

Resolved:

- (1) The growing importance of particulate matter in addressing air quality be noted.
- (2) The relationship between local authorities and combined authorities established by the Environment Act 2021 be noted.
- (3) A new and more proactive collaborative working arrangement with local authorities developing air quality plans within a wider West Midlands Air Quality Framework be considered, which clarified roles for different parties and identified a number of shared working practices.

115. Transport Delivery Committee - 10 January 2022

The board received the minutes of the Transport Delivery Committee meeting held on 10 January 2022.

Councillor Kath Hartley confirmed that the committee was taking a close interest in the Government's financial support to the bus sector, and the impact that any withdrawal would have on passengers.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2022 be noted.

116. Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 10 January 2022

The board received the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 January 2022.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2022 be noted.

117. HS2 Regional Enterprise Board - 11 January 2022

The board received the minutes of the HS2 Regional Enterprise Board held on 11 January 2022.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2022 be noted.

118. Employment Committee - 12 January 2022

The board received the minutes of the Employment Committee meeting held on 12 January 2022.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2022 be noted.

119. Wellbeing Board - 18 January 2022

The board received the minutes of the Wellbeing Board meeting held on 18 January 2022.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2022 be noted.

120. Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee - 18 January 2022

The board received the minutes of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee meeting held on 18 January 2022.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2022 be noted.

121. Housing & Land Delivery Board - 19 January 2022

The board received the minutes of the Housing & Land Delivery Board meeting held on 19 January 2022.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2022 be noted.

122. Young Combined Authority

The board considered an update report on the recent activity of the Young Combined Authority.

The YCA was looking at a number of issues affecting younger people in the region, including homelessness, affordable housing, mental health issues and equality matters. They had also met with representatives of the Young Combined Authorities at four other combined authorities and a joint meeting with these other groups was planned for 30 June, which they intended to invite the Mayor to.

Resolved:

The update from the Young Combined Authority be noted.

123. Date of Next Meeting

Friday 18 March at 11.00am.

The meeting ended at 12.00pm.