

Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee

Date	12 April 2022
Report title	Delivery of the Annual Business Plan
Accountable Chief Executive	Laura Shoaf, Chief Executive Email: Laura.Shoaf@tfwm.org.uk Tel: (0121) 214 7444
Accountable Employee	Linda Horne (Finance Director & Section 151 officer) Email: Linda.Horne@wmca.org.uk Tel: (0121) 214 7508
Report has been considered by	Linda Horne (Executive Director of Finance and Business & Section 151 officer)

Recommendation(s) for action or decision: For Information/Discussion

Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Consider the paper outlining the development and production of the Annual Business Plan 2022/23 (enclosed as appendix 1)
- (2) Note how the dynamic business planning process will support regular conversations across the Combined Authority on resources required to deliver and enable a more flexible approach when new funding sources become available.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This paper provides the background to the development of the Annual Business Plan (ABP), an overview of content and how it will be used, monitored and measured supporting the move towards data-driven, evidence-based decision making. There is also an outline of how this will be updated through a dynamic process, utilising both Finance and HR Business Partners during 2022/23.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Annual Business Plan (ABP) is a vital link in the 'golden thread' between the WMCA Aims and Objectives, agreed by WMCA Board in November 2021, through Directorate and team plans and into the Individual Performance Management (IPM) goals of staff across the organisation. The ambition was to produce a plan setting out all activity to be delivered in 2022/23 aligned to those aims and objectives.

Identifying all planned activity was undertaken collaboratively across the Finance & Business Hub and delivery Directorates. It was vital to not only look at planned project activity but business as usual (BAU) too and the establishment (staffing) numbers and funding/resources to deliver a balanced budget.

The Strategic Leadership Team were actively engaged in the development of the ABP with Linda Horne as the sponsor. There was also attendance at TfWM Leadership meetings and then sessions with all Heads of Service to identify activity under headings of project, BAU, Covid-response specific and aspirational – the latter for areas where there is the potential for future sources of funding to be announced during the financial year.

- 2.2 The Annual Business Plan adds value in a number of ways. It provides a single source of the truth for delivery activity to achieve the Aims & Objectives expressed as outputs called High Level Deliverables (HLDs), there is also greater visibility of the funding sources and through regular monitoring and reporting to SLT it provides accountability.

It is primarily an internal document intended as a valuable reference guide; a resource for all staff across the organisation to clearly see how the work they are doing supports the delivery of the strategic aims and, ultimately achieve the vision of a *more prosperous and better connected West Midlands that is fairer, greener and healthier*.

3. Performance Monitoring and reporting of the Annual Business Plan

- 3.1 There are 136 High Level Deliverables (HLD) underneath the objectives and these are statements that set out the activity at quite a high level over the financial year. There are SMART milestones beneath each HLD; these provide the detail at a much more granular level of delivery activity and are profiled by month with measures and targets and this information is also used by finance colleagues in budget phasing of the capital programme.

- 3.2 Progress against HLDs and milestones will be collated and analysed against profile monthly and a report produced for SLT. There will also be a 'real-time' dashboard, using Power Bi, that can be accessed at any time that provides a RAG-rated view of performance against profile from the 6 WMCA Aims down to milestone level and where achievable, into individual project level.
- 3.3 This reporting solution delivers a 'single version of the truth' through data that will be triangulated with the Strategic Risk Register and finance cost codes, providing a visually rich dashboard with a hierarchy of data from a strategic aim and objective view down to individual milestone. This will support evidence-based decision making.

4. Dynamic Business Planning process

- 4.1 This first Annual Business Plan, nested underneath the corporate Aims and Objectives, presents an opportunity to continue the engagement across Directorates and continuously improve the process. To replace the current intensive period of business planning aligned to the annual budget planning round, instead there will be regular conversations and a more iterative process involving both Finance and HR Business Partners, led by the Business Planning Specialist and Workforce Management Lead, to review and consider performance and resource. This dynamic process is intended to provide greater engagement across staff teams, alignment to the overall vision and regular reporting will give SLT the assurance where there is the flexibility to respond to new opportunities.
- 4.2 These regular business reviews will focus on three main areas:
1. Workforce Planning – workforce profile, current recruitment plans, vacancies levels, FTC arrangements, absence issues, talent and succession profiling
 2. Financial Management & Planning – spend against profile, budget discussions, efficiency opportunities and risks
 3. Performance reporting against ABP – HLD performance and trends, portfolio pipeline profile, changes to activity, horizon scanning and successes
- 4.3 ARAC can be assured that the integrated planning process that has effectively joined business activity, finance and resources together has allowed us to appropriately resource the team to deliver the requirements of the annual business plan.

We have actively bolstered the HR and Resourcing team to ensure we have resourced work programmes in place to support around CRSTS, UK Shared Prosperity and the Trail-blazing Devolution deal.

We are currently recruiting for 42 vacancies in all areas across the Authority.

Key roles filled in the last quarter are Head of Safety, Security and Emergency Planning (Feb 2022) and Head of Policy & Public Affairs (March 22).

5. Financial Implications

The ABP was developed in an integrated planning approach with Finance and HR colleagues to ensure it was deliverable with the budget and organisational resource plan.

The Budget underpinning this plan was approved by the CA Board at its meeting on 11th February 2022

- 6. Legal Implications**
No implications
- 7. Equalities Implications**
No implications
- 8. Inclusive Growth Implications**
No implications
- 9. Geographical Area of Report's Implications**
No implications
- 10. Other Implications**
No other implications
- 11. Schedule of Background Papers**
None
- 12. Appendices**

Appendix 1 Annual Business Plan 2022/23