



Public Service Reform Board

Tuesday 1 March 2022 at 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present

Councillor Kerrie Carmichael (Chair)
Sarah Middleton

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
CEO Black Country Consortium

In Attendance

Richard Costello
Ed Cox
Claire Dhami
Neil Griffiths
Anna Humphreys
Jonathan Jardine
Dr James Rees
Aqeel Rizvi
Paul Sanderson

Office of Police and Crime Commissioner
West Midlands Combined Authority
West Midlands Combined Authority
West Midlands Fire Service
West Midlands Combined Authority
Office of Police and Crime Commissioner
University of Wolverhampton
West Midlands Combined Authority
Office for Health Improvement and
Disparities
West Midlands Combined Authority
West Midlands Combined Authority
Homelessness Taskforce

Claire Spencer
Neelam Sunder
Jean Templeton

Item Title
No.

43. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brigid Jones, Councillor Ian Brookfield, Councillor Stephen Craddock, Councillor George Duggins, Councillor Simon Phipps, Councillor Bob Sleigh, Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Henrietta Brealey, Laura Caulfield, Vanessa Jardine, Catherine Mangan, Tom McNeil, David Melbourne, Sue Ibbotson and Gary Taylor.

44. Nomination of Substitutes

Stephanie Taylor (City of Wolverhampton Council) for Councillor Ian Brookfield, Dr James Rees (University of Wolverhampton) for Laura Caulfield, Paul Sanderson (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities) for Sue Ibbotson, Neil Griffiths (West Midlands Fire Service) for Gary Taylor and Jonathan Jardine and Richard Costello (Office of Police and Crime Commissioner) for Tom McNeil.

45. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of 30 September 2021 would be deferred for approval at the next Public Service Reform Board due to no Committee Member present from previous board meeting to approve.

46. Levelling Up White Paper and Trailblazer Devolution Deal

The board received a presentation from the Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform on the Levelling Up White Paper which was published by the Government on 2 February 2022.

The definition of levelling up within the Levelling Up White Paper was to increase opportunity across the United Kingdom and to reduce disparities between and within regions and set out 12 levelling up 'missions' for 2030.

Within the Levelling Up White Paper, The West Midlands Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Combined Authority had been invited to negotiate a 'trailblazer devolution deal' as the Government had recognised positively the competence and capacity of both Combined Authority's. The West Midlands Combined Authority had started the process to respond to this, by involving and communicating with local authority partners and stakeholders for the identification of principles to take forward, gain private sector support and double the devolution deal to local authorities, with a strong emphasis on data and accountability.

The Levelling Up White Paper noted in excess of 100 different policy topics with the West Midlands Combined Authority identifying 20 workstreams that would comprise of the region's trailblazer devolution deal, with three workstreams of relevance in particular for the board to be made aware of, which was homelessness prevention, crime, community safety and resilience, as well as social capital and social economy that had relevance in the Levelling Up White Paper.

The timetable for the trailblazer devolution deal negotiations was unknown as the Government had not set a specific timetable, however the West Midlands Combined Authority's intention was to move at pace and to have a draft proposal submitted to government by June 2022 with an expected headline devolution deal before summer recess of government and final approval in autumn.

In response to a question from Jonathan Jardine regarding the timescale of the devolution deal process aligning to external partners and stakeholders own decision making meetings to feedback, the Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform confirmed there would be four elements consisting of a stakeholder engagement plan on who to involve in conversations, a government engagement plan, a timetable plan with critical milestones and a position paper to bring together the relevant policies for the workstreams.

Councillor Carmichael asked the board to consider what workstreams would be important for the devolution deal as commented that homelessness was a priority, as well as community safety around drugs and night-time enforcement.

The Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform welcomed considerations received, however re-emphasised that any propositions of the devolution deal would need to relate specifically to the levelling up missions.

Resolved:

- (1) The publication of the Levelling Up White Paper and reflection on its implications for the West Midlands Combined Authority area was noted.
- (2) The collaborative governance for developing the trailblazer devolution deal was noted.
- (3) The opportunities for public service reform and inclusive growth within the trailblazer devolution deal was noted.

47. Inclusive Growth Framework

The board considered a report and presentation from the Senior Policy Officer for Public Services and Inclusive Growth on the rationale for how the Inclusive Growth Framework worked and how it had been remodelled along with examples of practice.

The West Midlands Combined Authority defined inclusive growth as a more deliberate and socially purposeful model of growth, measured not only by how fast or aggressive it was, but also by how well it was created and shared across the whole population, place and by the social and environmental outcomes it realised for people.

The framework captured eight fundamentals, reflecting important principles of what good growth looked like and was based on the model in Kate Raworth's 'Doughnut Economics' in achieving the goal for economic activity to work for humans, whilst being regenerative of the environment. The model comprised of two boundaries being planetary and human with the presentation outlining the over-use of earth's resources and breaching of the planet's ecological ceiling, for example in carbon-intensive activities and removal of green spaces, as well as highlighting the basics in a shortfall in areas of the fundamentals required for people to thrive, for example in access to public transport, adequate childcare support and poor air quality in enabling a balanced and aspirational model for both. The data and indicators would be used to map effectively and to show against each fundamental at different spatial levels on meeting needs.

The eight fundamentals of inclusive growth would focus on climate resilience, affordable and safe places, connected communities, education and learning, health and wellbeing, equality, inclusive economy and power, as well as influence and participation with each fundamental explored in depth during the presentation.

As well as working with partner organisations, at the heart of inclusive growth would be the voice of citizens from a community research survey, which would be at a three-year interval rather than annually to allow a greater understanding and insight from the lived experiences of citizens to enable a greater piece of intergenerational work.

Resolved:

- (1) The draft updated version of the Inclusive Growth Framework was noted.
- (2) The identification of ways in which the draft updated version of the Inclusive Growth Framework could be used and applied was noted.
- (3) The board to receive an annual report of the Inclusive Growth Framework was agreed.

48. Annual Performance Planning and Update

The board received a verbal update from the Head of Public Service Reform and Prevention on the annual performance to date against the 2021/22 deliverables and identification of the high level deliverables for 2022/23.

Resolved:

- (1) The progress against the 2021/22 high level deliverables to date was noted.
- (2) The high-level deliverables for 2022/23 was approved.
- (3) The identification of the board to receive a more detailed report on progress, activity or future direction was noted.

49. Homelessness Taskforce Update

The board received a verbal update and presentation from the Senior Programme Manager for Homelessness on the six homelessness task groups, with a particular focus on the work of the Children and Families Task Group with on-going work involving a reduction in time spent in temporary accommodation, early interventional help and support to avoid evictions and rough sleeping, as well as the focus on work being undertaken in 2022/23.

The presentation outlined the main areas of work focussed on the Rough Sleeping Task Group, Children, Families and Young People Task Group and the Domestic Abuse and Homelessness Sub-Group for three areas of cohorts being children and families, young people and older singles. The task groups were established to tackle the homelessness experienced by specific groups of people in a tailored, needs-based manner to obtain a greater understanding in intervention and identification as to why certain life circumstances result in homelessness to avoid homelessness being inevitable.

The Rough Sleeping Task group was working towards the Government's pledge to end rough sleeping by 2024/25. The work involved the recent submission of the rough sleepers initiative bids to add value to the work of local authorities in the West Midlands Combined Authority areas to help with their pathways to rough sleeping and to operationalise the goal of ending rough sleeping, as well as working with the Centre for Homelessness Impact, which would involve prevention initially but if unpreventable, to ensure rough sleeping was rare, was a brief occurrence and non-occurring in understanding the definition of the four concepts and what metrics to use to measure progress against.

The Chair of the West Midlands Combined Authority Homelessness Taskforce provided a verbal update and presentation on the work of the Children, Families and Young People Task Group with lots of work and activity around intelligence gathering, to ensure a robust understanding of the present challenges faced by families, which particularly included woman and children at risk of homelessness or in temporary accommodation. The taskforce had an action plan in place in exploring how families could be helped better by receiving good information advice and guidance, early help, continuation of lobbying for more affordable housing developments, support the work of the new Domestic Abuse Subgroup and the joining up of services to create ground-breaking work along with the proposed devolution deal from the Levelling Up White Paper to support. The group membership included voluntary and legal sector agencies, social housing organisations, local authorities, West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and academic representation.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner reconfirmed their commitment of domestic abuse being a key area ensuring investigation of cases do not lead victims into homelessness and would have engagement with the Domestic Abuse and Homelessness Subgroup.

Resolved:

- (1) The homelessness taskforce update was noted.

The meeting ended at 4.00pm.