



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 17 October 2022 at 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present

Councillor Cathy Bayton (Chair)
Councillor Andrew Burrow
Councillor Mike Chalk

Councillor Ian Kettle
Councillor Nigel Lumby

Councillor Martin McCarthy
Councillor Lauren Rainbow
Councillor Jamie Tennant
Councillor Vera Waters

Association of Black Country Authorities
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local
Authorities
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Shropshire Non-Constituent Local
Authorities
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Birmingham City Council
Birmingham City Council
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

In Attendance

Fiona Aldridge
Steve Bowyer

Julia Cleary

Dan Essex
Carl Pearson
Lyndsey Roberts
Laura Shoaf

Head of Insight & Intelligence
Partnerships & Engagement Strategic
Lead
Head of Corporate Support &
Governance
Governance Services Manager
Head of Major Funding
Scrutiny Officer
Chief Executive

**Item Title
No.**

88. Inquorate Meeting

The meeting was inquorate and therefore decisions taken at the meeting would be submitted to the WMCA Board on 28 October 2022 for formal approval.

89. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Naeem Akhtar (Coventry), Councillor Ellen Fenton (Association of Black Country Authorities), Councillor Paul Sweet (Wolverhampton) and Amanda Tomlinson (Black Country LEP).

90. Minutes - 5 September 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

91. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan - Draft Report for WMCA Board

The committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Economic Delivery, Skills & Communities on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan, prior to its submission to the WMCA Board on 28 October 2022.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund was a central pillar of the Government's Levelling Up agenda, providing funding for local areas to increase life chances across the UK and to build pride in place. The funding could be spent on three investment priorities relating to community and place, supporting local businesses and people and skills.

The committee discussed the allocation of Shared Prosperity Fund for non-constituent authorities and the potential opportunities to work in collaboration with them. In terms of the funding gap for 'people and skills', there were a number of challenges including the availability of the fund (not available until 2024/25) and that the overall value of the Shared Prosperity Fund was lower than previously available through the European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund. However, each local authority had undertaken a risk assessment and had mitigation strategies in place.

The committee questioned the role of the business support advisors and their locality, the 4% administration allocation, the allocation of the Shared Prosperity Fund to each local authority and need and the ability to spend year 1 funds by 31 March 2023. In addition, members noted the importance of an integrated approach to the investment priorities.

With regards to the Adult Education Budget, the Head of Insight & Intelligence agreed to share the allocation of the fund to each local authority area through the forthcoming skills scrutiny review.

Recommended to the WMCA Board:

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee support the approval of the recommendations contained within the report and being considered by the WMCA Board at its meeting on 28 October 2022.

92. Trailblazer Devolution Deal Scrutiny Working Group - Summary Report

The committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Strategy, Integration & Net Zero on the findings of the Overview & Scrutiny Trailblazer Devolution Deal Working Groups that considered each of the trailblazer devolution proposals in detail.

At its meeting on 11 July, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to hold a series of working groups over the summer period to review each of the proposals in detail and to discuss the local benefits that could be delivered to each local authority area through the proposed Trailblazer Devolution Deal.

The Partnerships & Engagement Strategic Lead welcomed the valuable engagement with members of the committee, which had helped to develop the proposals and shape the impact of the devolution deal. In terms of the timetable, negotiations continued with Government, and it was envisaged that the draft deal would be considered by the WMCA Board on 18 November.

In response to a question raised regarding young people and breaking the cycle of criminality through the devolution deal, the WMCA was seeking a combination of responsibility and resource and it was recognised that there was a need for a regional perspective through early years and prevention.

The committee highlighted the possibility of future initiatives to generate energy through the utilisation of roof-based solar panels and shared comments regarding retrofitting and sustainable funding, market shaping, affordable housing and the work of the homelessness taskforce, fiscal challenges and the impact on the trailblazer devolution deal.

In terms of next steps, the Governance Services Manager confirmed that the conclusions of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would form part of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal report that was to be considered by the WMCA Board on 18 November.

Recommended to the WMCA Board:

- (1) The conclusions of the working groups, as set out within the report, that would help to support and shape the Trailblazer Devolution Deal submission to Government being considered by the WMCA Board be endorsed; and
- (2) Further updates and briefings be submitted to future meetings of the committee on developments following the submission of the devolution proposition to the Government.

93. Minutes: Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee - 8 September 2022

The committee received the minutes of the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 8 September 2022.

In relation to the delivery of the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension, the committee referred to the recent press releases and sought clarification as to whether the funding was available to deliver the extension. The Chief Executive confirmed that whilst there was a funding challenge, earlier this year the WMCA Board had reiterated its commitment to deliver the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro scheme in full and funding solutions were being explored. During a visit to Birmingham, the Prime Minister had reiterated her personal commitment to deliver the scheme in full.

Recommended to the WMCA Board:

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2022 be agreed.

94. Work Programme

The committee noted a work programme of items that were to be reported to future meetings.

Recommended to the WMCA Board:

The work programme of items to be reported to future meetings be noted.

95. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 20 October 2022 at 10.00am (Mayoral Q&A on WMCA policy)

The meeting ended at 3:40pm