



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 5 September 2022 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Cathy Bayton (Chair)	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Naeem Akhtar	Coventry City Council
Councillor David Barker (substitute)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Andrew Burrow	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Ellen Fenton	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Ian Kettle	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Nigel Lumby	Shropshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Martin McCarthy	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Karen Simms	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Mike Sutherland	Staffordshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Paul Sweet	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Jamie Tennant	Birmingham City Council
Amanda Tomlinson	Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership
Councillor Vera Waters	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

In Attendance

Gareth Bradford	Executive Director for Housing Property & Regeneration
Dan Essex	Governance Services Manager
Clare Hatton	Director of Employment & Skills
Rob Lamond	Head of Strategy & Analysis, Housing Property & Regeneration
Lyndsey Roberts	Scrutiny Officer

Item Title

No.

79. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mike Chalk (Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities), Councillor Lauren Rainbow (Birmingham) and Councillor Ken Wood (Birmingham).

80. Minutes - 11 July 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record, subject to an amendment to minute no. 74 ('Skills Provision Review') to include concerns that the report expressed a focus on level 3 and above qualifications.

81. Matters Arising

(a) Review of Governance

The Governance Services Manager reported that work continued on the governance review, and it was anticipated that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the WMCA Board.

82. Helping to Deliver Affordable and Social Housing Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Update on Progress

The committee considered a report of the Executive Director for Housing, Property & Regeneration that provided an update on the work of the WMCA and its partners in implementing and responding to the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's review of Affordable and Social Housing.

At its meeting on 21 July, this committee identified the provision of affordable and social housing within the region as a key area of focus for 2021/22. The recommendations arising from the review were reported to the WMCA Board on 18 March 2022.

The committee received clarification on the definition of public land and affordable housing, which the Government defined as land in public ownership, and with regards to regional affordable housing, the WMCA reviewed local household incomes and the different type of housing required within local authority areas. The Head of Strategy & Analysis agreed to share the regional affordable housing definition.

In terms of best value, the West Midlands Public Land Charter asked public owners to take a long-term strategic approach to the disposal and development of land and to look to support inclusive growth. The WMCA continued to work together with Transport for West Midlands to consider how it could unlock land using transport investments and infrastructure corridors. The Head of Strategy & Analysis agreed to share the West Midlands Public Land Charter.

The committee discussed and shared comments on the affordable housing target and the affordable housing pilot project in the region. The proposal in development was seeking to deliver 100% affordable delivery on specific sites in the region, alongside other wider policy ambitions including zero carbon modular constructed homes. Members welcomed the pilot project and requested to receive further updates and briefings at future meetings on the development of the pilot and delivery of modular and zero carbon homes.

In addition, the Executive Director for Housing Property & Regeneration informed the committee of the work being undertaken on the development of a Future House Building Strategy that includes approaches to improving energy efficiency. It was noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the committee.

The committee questioned whether the WMCA consulted with The Almshouse Association, as its approach was different to that of a housing association. The Executive Director for Housing Property & Regeneration agreed to look into this further and would report back via the Affordable Housing Strategy. It was subsequently reported that a meeting with the Association had been diarised for November.

The Chair reported that she had received communication from Birmingham's Fair Housing Campaign in relation to the provision of transit sites and accessibility to services. The WMCA was currently in dialogue with local authorities and would respond accordingly.

Resolved:

- (1) The progress that has been made in the implementation of the recommendations of the 2021/22 Overview & Scrutiny review undertaken to examine the role and remit of the WMCA to deliver affordable and social housing within the West Midlands be noted.

83. Skills Provision Scrutiny Review - Updated Scope

The committee considered an amended scoping document for the forthcoming Skills Scrutiny Review, which incorporated the committee's comments made at the last meeting.

Whilst the importance of a wide range of skills was recognised, it was important that residents could obtain access to the initial skills required to progress. The Chair emphasised the need for the review to encompass the specific needs of the regional areas.

Resolved:

- (1) The amended scoping document for the forthcoming scrutiny review be agreed.

84. Grant Register

The committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Finance & Business Hub that provided an update on the grant register which contained all current 'live' grants where the WMCA was the accountable body, and captured a comprehensive total of grants, awarding body, time period for delivery and a description of what the grant delivered.

The committee discussed a number of the specific grants including the Rough Sleeping Initiative, Sustainable Warmth and Technical Bootcamps and requested further details on these. The Head of Finance Business Partnering & Strategic Planning noted the comments made and agreed to provide an update to the committee.

Resolved

(1) The Grant Register be noted.

85. Minutes: Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee - 14 July 2022

The committee received the minutes of the Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 14 July 2022

Resolved

(1) The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022 be agreed.

86. Work Programme

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

Resolved

(1) An additional meeting of the committee be held on 17 October 2022 to review the UK Shared Prosperity Fund submission and a report on findings of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal Scrutiny Working Group.

87. Date of Next Meeting

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

The meeting ended at 11.15am