



Report to
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

10 May 2017

Report of
Councillor George Duggins - Leader of the Council

Title
Annual Report on the Work of Outside Bodies – West Midlands Combined Authority

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out details of the work of the elected members appointed to Committees of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.
- 1.2 The WMCA is a statutory body that facilitates the collaboration and joint working between local authorities to drive economic prosperity for the area. It was established on 17 June 2016 with Coventry being one of the seven constituent members. This gives the City Council full voting rights at its board and influence in how the WMCA achieves its ambition for the West Midlands to help rebalance the UK economy, closing the £16bn output gap, and lead the Midlands Engine for the benefit of the region and the citizens of Coventry.
- 1.3 The WMCA operates within the framework of legislative and constitutional parameters and its governance arrangements require appointments to its board and sub committees from the seven constituent authorities. From May 2017 the WMCA will be operating as a Mayoral Combined Authority.
- 1.4 Council has made the following appointments to the WMCA board and its committees:-

WMCA Board:

- Councillor George Duggins (substitute member Councillor Jim O'Boyle)
- Councillor Abdul Khan (substitute member Councillor Kevin Maton)

WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Councillor John Mutton (substitute member Councillor R Singh)

WMCA Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee:

- Councillor Sucha Bains (substitute member Councillor N Akhtar)

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Appointments to the WMCA Board and Committees should continue to be made to the organisation in line with legislative requirements.

3 Information on the WMCA

- 3.1 The Board co-ordinates the work of the WMCA to achieve its identified priorities across the region. The Leader of the City Council as member of the WMCA board provides a statement of the work of the WMCA at each meeting of the City Council.
- 3.2 The Leaders of the constituent authorities, as part of their WMCA duties, have distinct responsibilities for programmes, initiatives or projects and work in partnership with each of the three Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). Councillor Duggins is portfolio lead member for skills and productivity – skills and productivity commission (including employability), learning for the future and Further Education (FE) area reviews.
- 3.3 In March, Cllr Duggins was appointed as the City Council's representative on the Board of Directors for the newly created West Midlands Growth Company, created and owned by the WMCA, to attract investment, jobs, visitors and businesses to the West Midlands and raise the profile of the region in national and global markets.
- 3.4 The WMCA has set out its priorities as follows:-

Economic Priority:

The West Midlands Combined Authority is based on an extensive Functional Economic Market Area assessment, which tested whether the geographic area covered by the three LEPs would be more beneficial financially than the LEPs continuing to work separately. As a result of this, the emerging WMCA plans on using the geography to jointly create an economy which is the strongest outside London and contributes fully to the Government's vision of a wider "Midlands Engine for Growth".

The West Midlands region is renowned for its innovation – its businesses account for almost 10% of UK research and development expenditure, much of which is delivered in partnership with local universities. It has some of the best performing educational institutions in the country and it has particular strengths in digital technology and computer science, healthcare, business administration, engineering and technology, and education. The region also has a range of internationally recognised research institutions. This is why the West Midlands Combined Authority has ambitious plans to build on these strong foundations.

If the region grows at the same rate as the London economy then the West Midlands will be £26.4 million better off by 2030.

Skills Priority:

The West Midlands suffers from a significant shortage of skills both at the lower and higher ends of the skills spectrum. The skills deficit is reflected in the high levels of unemployment (9.3%) across the seven Metropolitan Authorities. This is why skills is one of the West Midlands Combined Authority's key priorities.

3.5 **Transport Priority:**

We need a fully integrated rail and rapid transit network that connects our main centres with quick and frequent services, and that increases the number of people who can readily access HS2 stations and main centres. By delivering this, we will reduce transport's impact on our environment, improving air quality, reducing carbon emissions and improving road safety. The resulting network will enable the efficient movement of goods to help businesses to connect to supply chains, key markets and strategic gateways.

Housing Priority:

The West Midlands has a large and ever-increasing population, which needs to be accommodated for in the future. This is why housing is one of the West Midlands Combined Authority's key priorities. The WMCA will therefore establish a Land Commission to help identify the land which can be used or regenerated to create homes for the future.

- 3.4 The WMCA has established three commissions to create a blueprint that can deliver economic, social and public sector reform for the West Midlands and also a blueprint for change that may be used elsewhere in the country. The Commissions are addressing:
- Mental Health
 - Productivity and Skills
 - Land
- 3.5 In April 2017 the WMCA published its Review and Annual Plan 2017/18 which highlights progress to date and sets out the objectives that will develop and grow the Combined Authority agenda during 2017/18. The plan is available at:
<https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/>
- 3.6 The Plan includes a summary of the significant projects supported by the WMCA aimed at addressing the region's primary regeneration and economic growth goals. For Coventry, this includes:
- Resources of £150m identified in the Devolution Deal to support the Council with the development of both its City Centre South and Friargate schemes - earlier this year the WMCA Board approved a grant of up to £98.8m to support the development of the City Centre South scheme.
 - The Connecting Coventry programme totalling £620m, of which £284m will be provided by the WMCA, to deliver a step change in transport connectivity to remove barriers to growth including improving connectivity to HS2 and UK Central.

4. **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny committee met four times over the course of the last year and has been consolidating its terms of reference and formulating its work programme. In November it held a workshop with Leaders and Chief Executives to support the development of the work programme.
- 4.2 In considering the formulation of its work programme the Committee was minded to concentrate on the outcomes from the three Commissions established by the Combined Authority addressing Mental Health, Productivity and Skills and Land. The Committee will address these issues, together with a fourth focusing on budget scrutiny, through the establishment of task and finish groups and these will start work in the new municipal year.

- 4.3 In January, the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017 was ratified. This comes into force on 8 May 2017 and sets out arrangements for working including for membership, chairing, work programming and scrutiny relations with the Mayor and the combined authority and these will be reflected in the future working of the Committee. Work is also being undertaken to develop protocols for effective working between combined authority and local authority scrutiny.
- 4.4 The WMCA Board received a report on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 7 April 2017 and this can be found at pages 19-49 of the report pack at: <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1817/adocpackpublicversion0001.pdf>

5. Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee

- 5.1 The Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee met three times during the year. It considered a number of reports and policies of the WMCA that have been produced during the first year including the strategic risk strategy and risk report, report on the overview of governance and assurance arrangements, report of the internal auditor and counter fraud review and finance and budget update.
- 5.2 The Chair of the Committee has worked closely with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure that the two bodies work in a complementary and effective way and attended the November workshop.
- 5.3 The WMCA Board received a report on the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee at its meeting of 7 April 2017 and this can be found at pages 51-54 of the report pack at: <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1817/adocpackpublicversion0001.pdf>

4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointments

- 4.1 The appointments to the WMCA Board and Committees ensure the voice of Coventry residents is heard, the benefits of devolution for the City continues and that the City Council retains its influential role within the WMCA.

5 What Financial Contribution Does the Council Make to this Organisation

- 5.1 The financial contribution for 2016/17 was £213,000, although the budget put aside for the WMCA was £500,000.

6 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

- 6.1 The West Midlands Combined Authority Board met 13 times during the year. Councillor Duggins attended all 13 meetings and Councillor A Khan attended 9.
- 6.2 West Midlands Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee have held 4 meetings, Cllr Mutton has attended two meetings and submitted apologies for two meetings, sending a substitute to one. Cllr Mutton also attended the workshop in November.
- 6.3 West Midlands Combined Authority Audit Committee – Cllr Bains has attended all 3 meetings of the Committee.

List of background papers

Proper officer:

Author:

Councillor George Duggins - Lead Member
(Any enquiries should be directed to the above)

Telephone: 024 7683 1003

Other contributors:

Councillor Sucha Bains

Councillor John Mutton

Julie Newman, Legal Services Manager (People)

Adrian West, Members and Elections Team Manager

Papers open to Public Inspection

<https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.org.uk/committees/>

Description of paper

Schedule of City Council Appointments to Outside Bodies

Location:

Council House, Room 59