



Coventry City Council

Public report

Report to
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

12th March 2018

Report of
Councillor G 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 elected members appointed to Committees of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) over the preceding twelve months.
- 1.2 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 the 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 is 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 legislative and constitutional parameters and operates governance arrangements within that framework which requires appointments to its board and sub committees from the seven constituent authorities. From May 2017 the WMCA became a Mayoral Combined Authority.
- 1.4 The City Council has made a number of appointments to the WMCA board and committees including to the Overview and Scrutiny committee and the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee to which the City Council representative continue to have significant input.
- 1.5 The appointment 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

2 Recommendations

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

3 Information on the WMCA activity

- 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 Council meeting.
- 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 holder for Skills and Productivity. The WMCA aims to tackle the low productivity, shortage of skills and high rates of unemployment seen in some parts of the region.
- 3.3 The WMCA has a number of key priorities - economic growth, skills, transport and housing as well as reforming public services and reducing the region's welfare bill. To deal with these priorities the WMCA has established three commissions;

Land Commission

The aim of the Land Commission was to identify measures that could help provide more developable land for housing and employment that so that the levels of growth the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) could be met. The land commission identified measures to increase supply of land for housing and employment helping meet the level of growth set out in the SEP and now set out for delivery in the Land Action Plan.

Productivity and Skills Commission

The aim of this commissions is to understand the true extent of the productivity and skills challenge in the West Midlands and make recommendations to address the issues identified.

Mental Health Commission

This commission is undertaking research into mental health and its impact on the public sector. A full Thrive Action Plan has been put into place, fully resourced and progress is being checked against it.

- 3.4 The WMCA sets out its strategy and vision for improving the quality of life for everyone in the West Midlands in its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). The strategic approach focuses on priority actions.

The eight priority actions are:

1. **New manufacturing economy:** harnessing the biggest concentrations of high value manufacturing businesses in Europe and their supply chains.
2. **Creative and digital:** further developing the area's vibrant and flourishing sector.
3. **Environmental technologies:** securing transformational environmental improvements.

4. **Medical and life sciences:** enabling the further growth of the medical and life sciences sector and supporting other businesses to diversify and become part of the sector's supply chain.
 5. **HS2 growth:** maximising the benefits of the largest infrastructure project in Europe.
 6. **Skills for growth and employment for all:** ensuring the skills needs of businesses are met and everybody can benefit from economic growth.
 7. **Housing:** accelerating the delivery of current housing plans to increase the level of house building to support increased level of growth.
 8. **Exploiting the economic geography:** making the most of the scale and diversity of the West Midlands' geography to enable economic growth and community wellbeing throughout the urban core and rural areas.
- 3.5 More information on the activities of the Combined Authority is available at www.wmca.org.uk. As reference above the Leader of the City Council has given regular updates on WMCA activity at meetings of full Council and the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee receives regular feedback from the Members appointed to the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4 What Financial Contribution Does the Council Make to this Organisation

4.1 The financial contribution for 2017/18 was £212 500.

5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

West Midlands Combined Authority Board

Appointees: Councillor Duggins (Lead) (Sub Councillor O'Boyle) and Councillor A Khan (Sub Councillor Maton)

10 meetings scheduled for the year (up to 9th February meeting there have been 8 meetings held).

Councillor Duggins attended 7 meetings – no meetings attended by substitute.
Councillor Khan attended 5 meetings - no meetings attended by substitute.

Audit and Risk Committee

Appointees: Councillor Bains (Lead) (Sub Councillor N Akhtar)

5 meetings scheduled for the year (up to 19th January meeting there have been 3 meetings held).

Councillor Bains attended 3 meetings - no meetings attended by the substitute.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Appointees: Councillor Mutton (Lead) (Sub Councillor Clifford) and the Joint Coventry/Solihull Member for 2017/2018 Councillor Brown (Sub Councillor McNicholas)

5 meetings scheduled for the year (up to 30th January meeting there have been 4 meetings held).

Councillor Mutton attended 4 meetings - no meetings attended by substitute.
Councillor Brown attended 3 meetings and Councillor McNicholas attended 1 meeting as substitute.

List of background papers

Proper officer:

Author:

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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