

Attendance

Members of the Scrutiny Board

Cllr Ian Angus
Cllr Philip Bateman
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre (substitute)
Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Stephen Simkins (Chair)
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Greg Brackenridge
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Louise Miles

Employees

Keith Ireland	Managing Director
Sue Handy	Head of Customer Service
Charlotte Johns	Head of Transformation
Adrian McCormick	Head of Transformation
Colin Parr	Head of Governance
Steve Rice	Customer Engagement Manager
Stuart Evans	West Midlands Combined Authority

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from:

Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur – Cllr M Hardacre acted as substitute
Cllr Arun Photay
Cllr Patricia Patten
- 2 Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting (26 April 2016)**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 **Matters arising**

Minute 5 – Joint Protocol to Manage Unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller Encampments

Scrutiny Officer advised that a draft of the protocol will be sent to members in September 2016 for information.

Scrutiny Review of Employability and Skills - Tracking and Monitoring.

Scrutiny Officer advised that a briefing paper Education Business Engagement will be sent to members of Scrutiny Board as requested.

Cllr Stephen Simkins welcomed Stuart Evans (West Midlands Combined Authority) to the meeting.

There were no other matters arising.

5 **Information Governance Performance Report Quarter Four 2015-16**

Anna Zollino-Biscotti, Information Governance Manager, reported the main findings from the performance report. The Information Governance Manager commented on the increase in the total number of information requests received during quarter four period (January – March 2016). Information Governance Manager reported that 100% of Freedom of Information (FOI) / Environment Regulations (EIR) and 99% of Subject Access Requests (SAR) were responded to within time.

The Managing Director congratulated the employees in the team on the progress made and improved performance in responding FOI/EIR requests. The Managing Director commented on the costs of responding to information requests and the policy of putting information in the public domain, to help reduce the level of demand on the service.

Councillors commented on the presentation of Subject Access Requests (SAR) and suggested that future reports should be changed to make it clearer the number of requests received as shown in Appendix C.

Resolved

The Board welcomed the progress made by the service and would like its comments on the displays considered when presenting future reports.

6 **Update on the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)**

Cllr Roger Lawrence, Leader of the Council, briefed Councillors on current progress made in the establishment of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), details of the devolution deal and the election of a Mayor.

Keith Ireland, Managing Director, welcomed Stuart Evans to the meeting. The Managing Director explained the reason the delay in getting Parliamentary approval to establish the WMCA and the abolition of the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority.

Cllr Lawrence advised that Warwickshire and Rugby were now non-constituent members of WMCA, and that discussions were on-going with other local authorities.

Councillors queried the reasons for the objection to the order to establish WMCA. Cllr Lawrence explained that the parliamentary process allows a single MP to object to a draft Order of the Secretary of State. The reason for the objection was related to the creation of the Mayor and the powers that would be conferred on them.

Stuart Evans explained that the order would be re-submitted and the expectation is it will be approved as it only requires a majority of MPs to approve the order.

Councillors queried the financial contribution of members of WMCA and if the amount was on one off payment.

The Managing Director explained that there is a flat rate contribution for 2016/17 of £250,000 for members. The payment for non-constituent members is £25,000. Districts will contribute at a rate of £100,000. The level of payment will be increased in future at the determination of the Combined Authority Board. The Managing Director explained that it was a costly process to set up the WMCA.

The Board discussed the role of WMCA in improving transport links across the region.

Councillors queried the governance arrangements for WMCA. The Leader explained the different members of the WMCA are leading on different work streams. For example, Sandwell MBC was leading on the Land Commission and City of Wolverhampton Council is leading on the governance work stream.

Councillors commented on the need to involve the public in the discussions about the development of the WMCA and in producing information showing the benefits for Wolverhampton and the wider region. Councillors expressed concern that they did not have enough information to answer queries from the public about the benefits of WMCA.

Cllr Lawrence outlined the benefits of WMCA will bring to Wolverhampton and the region, such as job creation and making the region more competitive. The WMCA has communications team working to raise awareness of the current and future plans. Cllr Lawrence commented on the need to consider the individual identities of the seven metropolitan councils and getting public support for the plans. The key issue was to stress that the WMCA plans were aimed at drawing down powers from central government rather than drawing powers from local authorities.

The Managing Director outlined the funded posts within the WMCA and the other senior officer supported provided, at no cost to the WMCA.

Councillors commented on the importance of robust accountability and strong governance arrangements. The Managing Director responded that skilled expertise is being brought to support the work. The Managing Director commented that he was happy to meet Councillors to offer briefings on progress or respond to information requests about governance arrangements.

Councillors queried the current thinking among members of the group about the level of remuneration for Mayor. The Managing Director responded that there had been some informal discussions with the leaders and indications suggest a salary in the range £40,000-£50,000. The decision would be considered by an independent person who would be asked to make a recommendation. The level of award once agreed would be reviewed by the WMCA Board at a future date.

The panel welcomed the offer of the Managing Director to attend future meetings to brief the Board on progress. The Scrutiny Chair welcomed the report and the progress made.

Resolved

The Managing Director to be invited to a future meeting of the Board to give an update on progress in the establishment of the WMCA.

7 Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2015-16

Colin Parr, Head of Governance, presented the annual report and invited comments on the draft before it is considered by the Council.

Councillors suggested that a number of changes are needed before the report is presented to Council. The Head of Governance suggested the report should be added to the agenda for the next Chair/Vice Chair meeting to give Councillors the opportunity to make more detailed comments.

Resolved

The Scrutiny Board to consider the draft report at the next Chair/Vice Chair meeting.

8 Corporate and social care complaints - Fourth Quarter

Steve Rice, Customer Engagement Manager, outlined the main findings of the corporate, social care and public health complaints report for quarter four (1 January 2016 – 31 March 2016). The Customer Engagement Manager welcomed comments on the content and layout of the report.

The panel queried the definition of a complaint and whether the report fully captures issues raised by members of the public. Councillors were concerned that the number of complaints recorded does not reflect the actual number made. Sue Handy, Head of Customer Services, explained that not all enquiries received are considered as a complaint, it would depend on the situation.

In some situations, the an enquiry from the public may be treated as a service request and not a complaint, depending on the issue. The Customer Services explained the work being done to capture information from across the service. The Customer Engagement Manager explained that his service will deal with all formal complaints received.

Resolved

The Board welcomed the report.

9 **Equality Champion Annual Report 2015-16**

Cllr Mike Hardacre, Equalities Champion, presented the report. Equalities Champion thanked employees for the support received during his period and the highlighted the achievements detailed in the report. The Equalities Champion thanked the Managing Director for his support in supporting changes to the Agresso system to get real time data on the profile of the workforce.

The Equalities Champion commented on the equalities training available on HUB and the need to respond to challenge facing in the City where it is estimated that 100 different languages are spoken.

The Equalities Champion welcomed the work being done by the Equalities Team to set up employee groups based on protected characteristics.

Councillors commented on the progress made in raising the issue of equalities. The Managing Director commented that only 10% of staff had completed the section on personal characteristics. The Council is planning to ask employees to use diversity tab can be found in Agresso to capture more data on the protected characteristics such as sexuality and religion. The work is being done as part of the Councils commitment to equality and diversity

The Managing Director commented on the lack of representation of BME at senior management level and that more work is needed to improve the situation. The Board discussed the opportunities for current employees to secure senior posts within the Council.

The Equalities Champion thanked everyone for their efforts.

Resolved

The Board welcomed the report and progress made.

10 **Corporate Plan 2016 - 2019**

Charlotte Johns, Head of Organisational Development presented an updated Corporate Plan. The Head of Organisational Development briefed the Board on the main changes and how it links to other Council strategies.

Resolved

The Board welcomed the report and noted the progress.

11 **Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17**

Colin Parr, Head of Governance, briefed the Board on progress in developing the work programme for 2016/17. The Head of Governance commented that feedback from the annual scrutiny planning event will be included in discussions about the future agenda items and review topics.

Councillors commented that the plan is to undertake two scrutiny reviews during the year. Chair of Scrutiny Board advised Councillors to consider the findings of the risk register and any red items when developing their individual panel work programmes. Chair of Scrutiny Board encouraged Councillors to have early discussion with their respective Cabinet Members about issues which they would like the panel to consider.

Councillors suggested that Combined Authority should be added to the agenda for a future meeting.

Resolved

The Board welcomed the report. A report on progress in establishing the WMCA to be presented to a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 20.15