

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny (O&S)
Committee 11-07-2022

The chair is appointed by the Board but the deputy is elected from the Labour members of the committee. The Mayor is a conservative. As this was the first meeting of the new municipal year only a few of us moved and accepted the minutes of the last meeting. The Chair took the opportunity to thank the retired members.

We had a report on the 'trailblazer' devolution deal in which both WMCA and Manchester are fast tracking the next deal with the Government, transport, skills and housing being the main areas of interest. The WMCA need to have the submission ready for September 2022.

Following this was a more detailed report on the 'levelling up' provisions. There are a range of specifications some of which apply to local authorities, the most important one being planning.

A verbal report on O&S governance was given after questions were asked at the previous meeting. It appears that O&S members are considered to be co-opted and as such can have an allowance. It was also explained that reports should be either 4 or 6 pages maximum, depending on the context. The Transport Security Sub-Committee is an anomaly being set up under a previous system but is hoped to bring it into line with the WMCA.

The allocation of the Skills budget was discussed at length with Birmingham having 50.68%. Employment is returning to pre-covid levels and there are more level 3 qualifications but still not enough. It was suggested that there was a need for more lower-level qualifications to fit the job market.

Finally the committee had a view of the grant register and was able to comment.