

# West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

19<sup>th</sup> October 2023

<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=138&MId=867>

## Mayors Question Time:

As we have seen online the new deeper devolution deal has given rights to the Mayor to consolidate the position of PCC into the Mayoral role as is the case in both London and Manchester already. Andy Street plans on seeking these powers. Effect for Redditch, potentially better collaboration on county lines drug dealing. Andy Street will undertake a big recruitment drive which will be beneficial for Redditch when crimes cross borders.

Andy Street has met with both Rabbis and Mosque leaders along with the Chief Superintendent regarding the Israeli/Gaza war. Andy Street commented on the dignity he witnessed on all sides and as leader he wants to see peace in the West Midlands and will do all he can to support both communities.

Andy told us that he is examining how to release funds to districts more expediently. This will help us on the occasions we are successful with funding from the WMCA.

## Economy

We discussed the LEP's and Andy told us he felt the transition from the LEPs to WMCA had been smooth. The work to support business growth in the West Midlands will continue. Redditch will be a part of this.

There hasn't yet been an impact assessment carried out on the changes to the HS2 project. The replacement projects in the Midlands are relatively secure as Andy had personally sat down with Government to discuss which projects needed prioritising. Andy Street is disappointed in the decision but will still work towards greater connectivity between Birmingham and Manchester.

## Skills

The MWCA's plan for growth is a plan for youth. The CA are focusing on specific training for the job vacancies in the market. There is an aim to lift the level of educational attainment for example more NVQ level 3's achieved than level 2.

Upskilling people is essential as the biggest number of vacancies are in jobs such as nursing and IT development.

Bootcamps are being offered for practical skills such as plumber, builder, electrician etc.

They have developed an Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Fund. This allows extra funding from businesses to go into a pool allowing SME's to take on apprentices who otherwise wouldn't have been able to.

This benefits Redditch as many students and apprentices go into Birmingham from Redditch for both education and employment opportunities using the trainline.

### Environment

The MWCA is working with districts on plans to achieve net zero. The plan for the CA is still to achieve net zero by 2041.

### Affordable Homes

The MWCA has more money to spend on social homes thanks to the greater devolution deal. There are a good number of social housing companies coming forward with plans. Local Authorities are welcome to bid for some of the £400m on offer.

### Birmingham section 114 notice

The CA cannot solve Birmingham's finances, but the CA can pick up some of the projects Birmingham can no longer honour. For example, the loan proposal for the Hypodrome. Andy Street will also be advising Michael Gove and Birmingham Leaders on how to move forward. Andy is also talking to local businesses to reassure that their investment into Birmingham is safe. Important for Redditch as a neighbour.

Meeting on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – I was unable to attend due to a diary clash.

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Councillor Emma Marshall

Redditch Borough Council's Representative on West Midlands Combined Authority  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee