

Report from WMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Monday 1 July 2024

Terms of Reference include the following:

Membership

- Birmingham City Council x 3
- Coventry City Council x1
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council x 1
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council x 1
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council x 1
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council x1
- City of Wolverhampton Council x 1
- Association of Black Country Authorities x 1
- Non-Constituent Authorities (Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Warwickshire) x 4

Voting

Members appointed from constituent authorities have one vote each.

Members appointed from non-constituent authorities are non-voting representatives but can speak at the meetings.

Skills Scrutiny Review

This was an update to note the progress made and next steps on the implementation of the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Skills Scrutiny Review, which started last September.

The aim of the review is to understand the impact of the devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to the WMCA on the delivery of local skills training within the region, and to identify the challenges and ways in which the WMCA and local authorities can most effectively use skills development to address short and longer term challenges in the region, particularly in relation to its big economic challenges.

We heard that the devolved AEB is approximately £170m. It is for adults aged 19 and over who live in one of the WMCA constituent authorities (see list above). It doesn't cover non-constituent authorities. I asked the skills lead officers how residents living in non-constituent areas, such as Worcestershire, might be able to benefit from the initiatives outlined in the report, and the answer was:

The WMCA shares best practice with the Department for Education so that other regions across the country can benefit. They felt that what had worked best in the West Midlands region was wraparound support with employers. This was particularly important in the construction sector, as, in addition to qualifications, people need practical experience to get the essential 'tickets' they need to work on site. The skills leads also highlighted the importance of strong partnerships with employers and the Department for Work and Pensions.