

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

Friday, 24 May 2019, County Hall, Worcester - 10.00 am

Minutes

Present:

Mr C J Bloore (Chairman), Mr A A J Adams,
Mrs J A Brunner, Mr A D Kent, Mrs F M Oborski and
Mrs R Vale

Also attended:

Mr A C Roberts, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for
Children and Families
Mr L C R Mallett
Mrs E B Tucker, Group Leader 2017 Group

Mark Stansfeld, Chairman, Worcestershire Local
Economic Partnership
Gary Woodman, Executive Director, Worcestershire
Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP)
Luke Willetts, Director of Operations, Worcestershire
Local Enterprise Partnership
Steph Simcox (Head of Strategic Infrastructure Finance
and Financial Recovery)
Graham Ballinger, Wyre Forest District Council
Ged Bearcroft, Wychavon District Council
Philippa Coleman (Lead Commissioner - Early Health),
Stephanie Courts, Children's Clinical Service Manager,
Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust
Paul Smith (Transport Commissioning and Logistics
Manager)
Sandy Bannister (Corporate Equality and Diversity
Manager)
Sheena Jones (Democratic Governance and Scrutiny
Manager)
Alyson Grice (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. Presentation handouts for Annual Report on
Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership
(WLEP) and Update on the Assessment Pathway
for Children and Young People who may have
Autism
- C. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 March 2019
(previously circulated).

(Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the
signed Minutes).

1095 Apologies and Welcome	Apologies were received from Mrs E A Eyre and Mr P A Tuthill.
	The Chairman welcomed Adam Kent and Rebecca Vale to their first meeting of the Board. He thanked Paul Middlebrough and Kit Taylor for their hard work as Members of the Board.
1096 Declaration of Interest and of any Party Whip	In relation to item 7 Worcestershire Passenger Transport Review and Strategy Public Consultation, Mrs F M Oborski declared an interest (other disclosable interest) as Chair of the Wyre Forest Bus Users Forum.
1097 Public Participation	None.
1098 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting	The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 March 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
1099 Annual Report on Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP)	<p>The Chairman and Executive Director of the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) had been invited to the meeting to provide an annual update on the achievements of the WLEP over the last 12 months and to outline strategic objectives for 2019/20. The WLEP Director of Operations and the Local Authority's Section 151 Officer were also in attendance.</p> <p>The Chairman and Executive Director of the WLEP introduced the report by way of a presentation. The following main points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although Worcestershire was a small county it had a reputation for delivery and for thinking to the future. The County had a strong profile with central government. • The importance of connectivity (both physical and digital) was emphasised. • The LEP was ahead on the 3 main KPIs as set out in the Strategic Economic Plan. With economic growth at 3.1%, WLEP was one of the leading LEPs nationally. • It was now important to maintain the LEP's reputation and keep the KPIs moving in the right direction. • In terms of structure, the WLEP was working effectively and had implemented all but a couple of the recommendations from the Government's

LEP review. Having the right governance was important and the WLEP was in a strong position.

- The WLEP was part of a local consortium of partners taking forward work on 5G and expertise within the County was now very strong. This had resulted in the development of the UK's first 5G-enabled factory and it was anticipated that 5G would have a significant impact on productivity.
- Improved connectivity meant that businesses no longer needed to be based in cities and improvements locally meant that the benefits of an urban lifestyle could be found in a beautiful place. 5G had been a huge success, not just for Worcester or Malvern but for the whole county. It was something that set Worcestershire apart from other regions.
- The Worcestershire economy could be described as 'a thousand flowers that bloom' with no single specialism and no one huge employer. The economy was mainly small to medium enterprises with a different make up in each district.
- In October 2018 the WLEP had launched BetaDen, the county's first Technology Accelerator. This recognised the shift to the technology sector and aimed to give companies accelerated support.
- In relation to skills development, the WLEP was working with every middle and high school in the county to deliver support in line with curriculum requirements.
- The Energy Strategy was a large piece of ongoing work which included ambitious carbon saving targets.
- Despite Brexit, inward investment was strong and the development of Worcester 6 was highlighted. This was a good logistics site and had also attracted businesses from many different sectors.
- The WLEP had hosted a number of foreign delegations including delegations from France and Israel looking at security technology, involving companies from across Worcestershire. The aim was to create a cluster of companies in 'Cyber Valley' with a strong reputation within the UK and internationally.
- The annual Skills Show had been held at Chateau Impney and had been attended by more than 5000 young people with representation by more than 100 companies.
- Although it was important to develop a Worcestershire brand with a whole county feel,

there was no huge marketing budget for this. The WLEP was aiming to recruit 1000 county ambassadors to sell the county to other business people.

- In terms of Business Plan priorities for 2019/20, the key objectives were to develop a Local Industrial Strategy and refresh the Strategic Economic Plan. All LEPs were required to produce a Local Industrial Strategy in 2019. This would highlight Worcestershire's distinctive strengths and the evidence base would be critical.
- Key infrastructure schemes receiving LEP investment were highlighted including:
 - A38 Bromsgrove which was one of the top ten priority areas for West Midlands Connect
 - Churchfields, Kidderminster which was being undertaken jointly with Wyre Forest District Council and Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (GBSLEP) with construction starting in September.
 - The Duckworth Centre of Engineering which was approved in November 2018 and would see £4 million investment in a multi-site engineering centre.
 - Kidderminster Rail Station which would see a partnership with GBSLEP to update the second busiest railway station in the county.
 - The Kiln Worcester would see £195k investment in the refurbishment of the old police station building to provide a collaborative space for professionals and entrepreneurs. The formal launch would take place in September 2019.
 - Pershore Northern Link improvements would see a £5 million LEP investment.
 - Worcestershire Parkway station which would see a £8.3 million LEP investment in partnership with the County Council. This was on target for completion by the end of 2019.
 - Dualling the Carrington Bridge which would build on previous investments in the road network.
- Feedback from the WLEP's Annual Performance Review had been positive with the WLEP receiving 'good' judgements across the three categories of Strategy, Delivery and Governance. Despite this, the WLEP was committed to continuous improvement, with a particular target

to improve the diversity of the LEP Board.

- In summary, it was important for all partners to work together and contribute to the Strategic Economic Plan going forward. The county had momentum and was building the enablers for economic growth.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following main points were made:

- In response to a request for further information on 5G, Members were informed that 5G's speed and capacity would lead to a fundamental change in technology. It was part of a jigsaw of solutions with many applications. The WLEP aimed to educate businesses on how 5G could help.
- A question was asked about the future of WLEP given its small size. In response, Members were informed that there had been no discussion about change. The WLEP's success meant that it had a strong voice which could be enhanced by collaboration with other LEPs in the region.
- A Member suggested that, although it was positive to hear about the success of 5G, there were still areas of the county (for example parts of Kidderminster) which could not yet get reliable 3G.
- It was suggested that Kidderminster Railway Station was a brilliant development but that the initial consultation had been flawed. In particular, parking around the station continued to be a problem, causing real issues for local residents. In addition, the road network needed to improve in order to meet passenger targets. It was acknowledged that the development had some knock-on effects, but development was an iterative process which had to start somewhere.
- Although the suggested electrification of taxis was welcome, the number of available changing points was questioned. In response, it was suggested that rapid charging would mean a taxi could be charged in 20 minutes. The WLEP's energy strategy was starting to look at this.
- Members were encouraged to feed in their comments to the Local Industrial Strategy.
- The focus on rail was welcomed. A question was asked about the potential to increase capacity on the Shakespeare line which would open up Worcestershire's Eastern gateway. The feedback was welcomed and Members were reminded that rail expansion was a key enabler and differentiator for the county.

- In response to a question about support for small and medium-sized businesses, Members were reminded that approximately 95% of the value of UK PLC was in small businesses. The WLEP was working with local businesses to give them the tools to grow, with 5G connectivity providing a real opportunity. It was acknowledged that these businesses were run by hard working people who were often difficult to reach as their focus was on running their business.
- It was suggested that access to information on available support was difficult for small businesses. The Board was informed about a scheme in Valencia, Spain where bigger businesses shared their expertise on how to get things done with smaller companies.
- In response to a question about the engagement of children and young people with business, Members were informed that more young people were now looking at apprenticeships, something that was promoted by the WLEP.
- A question was asked about what might be available to replace EU funding and whether central government could help further. Given the reductions in local authority funding, it was suggested that the WLEP now had spending power that councils no longer had. The Board was reminded that the WLEP did not make spending decisions but rather agreed priorities with partners. The WLEP had a good track record for delivering.
- Concern was expressed that, although Redditch was a key manufacturing and engineering base in the county, young people still had to travel to Worcester for skills training. It was acknowledged that Redditch was an important area of advanced manufacturing and Members were reminded that Heart of Worcestershire College had an engineering centre in Bromsgrove.

In conclusion, Members noted the developments outlined in the report and presentation and suggested that:

- The relationship between the WLEP and individual Councillors should be further developed.
- Work to enhance the diversity on the WLEP Board should be supported.

The Board would welcome a further update in 12 months' time.

1100 Update on the Assessment Pathway for Children and Young People who may have Autism

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, the Lead Commissioner – Early Health, and the Children’s Clinical Service Manager, Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (WHCT) had been invited to the meeting to update the Board on the assessment and diagnostic pathway for children and young people who may be on the autistic spectrum (the Umbrella Pathway).

By way of introduction the Board received a presentation, during which the following main points were raised:

- The Board had previously been updated in February 2018. Since then a local area inspection of services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) had taken place. This highlighted the need for partnership working and whole system leadership.
- In December 2018 Worcestershire’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Profile had been published. This estimated that there were 1235 children with autism in Worcestershire, 1111 of whom were of school age. The Umbrella Pathway currently received between 900 and 1000 referrals per year. Analysis of referrals showed a higher than expected level of demand.
- The NHS long term plan recognised this as a national issue. Members were reminded that NICE guidelines recommended a period of watchful waiting.
- The average time taken for the assessment process had risen slightly. As the team worked through the backlog, it was expected that the average time would reduce.
- This should be seen alongside developments in the whole system offer and improvements to the SEND local offer.
- Further work was needed to embed use of the graduated response which schools were encouraged to use when responding to emerging SEN. The service was developing school level inclusion profiles which would inform this work.
- Additional health funding was available for the Umbrella Pathway and mental health and emotional wellbeing services.
- Early help and support for parents had received a positive response.
- An audit of referrals and subsequent action would be undertaken to ensure referrals were appropriate.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following main points were raised:

- The Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel reported that she had received emails from parents concerned about the length of time taken for assessment. She expressed concern that the average time on the pathway in 2018 was more than a year and commented that this was unacceptable. If children were diagnosed early enough they would be able to access specialist nursery provision and concern was expressed that children could be missing out due to delays in diagnosis. She asked what level of investment would be needed to ensure parents received an acceptable level of service.
- The Lead Commissioner agreed that current timescales were too long and reminded the Board that the aspiration was to have a maximum assessment time of 6 months. Officers were currently working with the WHCT to put together a business case to achieve this, with an immediate investment of £100k available. The business case, including figures for what extra investment might be needed, would be available in approximately 3 months.
- It was suggested that some children whose first language was not English may be mistakenly suspected of being on the autistic spectrum as they did not have the language skills to cope in the classroom. They may be suspected of exhibiting autistic behaviours which in reality were as a result of social isolation.
- Members were informed that a child would not need a diagnosis of autism in order to obtain an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The EHCP was an assessment of what support the child needed.
- Members were reminded that when there were concerns about pre-school children, they were often referred to Child Development Centres. Advice was often to watch and wait and the age of two was very early to make a diagnosis.
- It was suggested that it would be helpful to produce countywide advice for teachers to encourage correct and accurate referrals. The Lead Commissioner agreed to follow up this suggestion with colleagues. Members were reminded that information for schools was provided by Babcock Prime who also offered

school and setting-specific training. There was sometimes a mismatch between the views of the school and parents, and it was confirmed that parental consent was required in order to take forward a referral. The referral process included a questionnaire for the school and parents.

- Concern was expressed that, when compared with the figures for one year ago, the average time taken to complete the pathway was going in the wrong direction. It was suggested that the average figures concealed longer waiting times for some children. The Lead Commissioner acknowledged the concern. She confirmed that for children who completed the pathway in 2018 the shortest time taken was 8 days, whereas the longest was 673 days. Action was being taken to speed this up, such as including the parental questionnaire as part of the referral which as well as speeding up the pathway, also demonstrated the family's level of engagement. It was agreed that future reports to the Board should include the range of figures as well as the average.
- The Chairman of the Board expressed his frustration that the update was not more positive. He had witnessed the huge impact on the families involved and it was unacceptable that they had to wait this long. He asked that the business case be brought to the Board or the Children and Families O&S Panel as soon as it was ready. He also asked for clarification on what needed to be done in order to see immediate improvement.
- Members were reminded that the specific business case related to the staffing and investment in the Umbrella Pathway. This should also be seen as part of a whole system issue and symptomatic of the whole SEND agenda.
- The Chairman asked for ideas as to how the Board could support the service to achieve bigger and quicker progress.
- Members were reminded that lots of children who started on the pathway would not be diagnosed with autism but would need help and support for other reasons. The Chairman commented that it was important to ensure appropriate help for all children.

It was agreed that:

- Officers would follow up on what was currently provided to schools in regard to NICE guidelines to ensure accurate referrals and look into

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Consultation**

- providing further written guidance if necessary.
- The business case for the Umbrella Pathway would be brought to Children and Families O&S Panel as soon as it was available.
- A further update would be brought to OSPB in 12 months' time.

The Transport Operations Manager had been invited to the meeting to update the Board on the development of a new Passenger Transport Strategy for Worcestershire. The Corporate Equality and Diversity Manager was also in attendance.

By way of introduction, the Transport Operations Manager made the following main points:

- Plans for a review of the Passenger Transport Strategy had been initiated at Corporate Strategy Planning week in September 2018.
- The work undertaken by the scrutiny task group (which reported to Cabinet in December 2018) had been valuable.
- In January 2019 Cabinet approved a Passenger Transport Review to investigate levels of need and demand.
- On 6 June Cabinet would be asked to approve the draft Strategy and proceed to a public consultation. It was important to get the strategy into the public domain and local Members could help with disseminating the consultation information to all parts of the county.
- It was suggested that scrutiny Members may wish to visit other areas of the country (such as Nottingham and Leicestershire) to look at how bus services were run.
- The formal consultation would run for three months.

The Corporate Equality and Diversity Manager reminded Members that transport was key to a range of people with protected characteristics. It was essential that the Council did all it reasonably could to ensure the consultation was seen by hard to reach groups. She agreed that local Members would be key in this.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following main points were raised:

- A question was asked about whether Shropshire Council had been involved in the discussions, given that some services currently received joint

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subsidies with Shropshire. In response, Members were told that talking to neighbouring counties was vital and it was confirmed that Shropshire Council had been involved in the development of the Strategy.

- The needs of school and college students (especially FE students) should be considered.
- Although it was important to encourage people onto public transport, the bus services were not currently available to get people out of their cars.
- It was suggested that buses were just part of the picture and discussions should include home-to-school transport, community transport and transport for social care. The Chairman reminded Members that the scrutiny task group had hoped to complete the second part of the scrutiny on community transport.
- The Chairman agreed that Members had a responsibility to get the consultation forms out into their communities. The Transport Operations Manager informed Members that scrutiny could play a vital role in contacting hard to reach groups so that the consultation could get a complete picture and decisions could be made based on robust evidence.

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Panel had recently considered congestion and cycling as a follow up to discussions on LTP4. Good progress was being made. There had been some concern about the end of the Choose How You Move scheme which had reduced congestion and increased car sharing and bus use. The Panel felt it would helpful to look at this again. The Chairman of the Board welcomed work in this area and emphasised the importance of encouraging parents and pupils to walk or cycle to school.

Adult Care and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Panel had recently looked at Delayed Transfers of Care, jointly with the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A scrutiny task group to consider Quality Assurance of Care and Nursing Homes was currently being set up.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Although the Chairman of HOSC had not been able to

attend the meeting, he had provided a written update as follows:

- The new Chief Executive of the Acute Trust had attended a recent meeting to outline his programme of improvement and performance management. The Trust was currently going through the CQC inspection process.
- The Chairman had also met with representatives of the CCGs. The CCGs were preparing to consult on proposals for a merger at managerial level and this consultation would be launched within a month or so.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Family Front Door Scrutiny Task Group was ongoing and was aiming to conclude before the end of the school term.

A meeting with the Chief Executive of the County Council had agreed a way forward with regard to scrutiny of Worcestershire Children First. The Chairman of the Board agreed that this had been a helpful meeting and emphasised the need to ensure the conclusions were followed through.

A report on a new model of delivery for the Medical Education Team which had been due to come to Cabinet in June had now been delayed until October. There was some concern in schools about this delay and the Chairman of the Panel undertook to raise these concerns with the Director of Children, Families and Communities.

A report on the Future Provision of Overnight Unit-Based Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities would be considered by the Panel on 4 June, ahead of a Cabinet discussion on 6 June. This report would need careful consideration and there may be a need to reconvene the scrutiny task group.

Scrutiny Work Programme

The Chairman reminded Members that they should let the Scrutiny Team have any ideas for the 2019/20 Scrutiny Work Programme. The draft programme would be considered by the Board in July.

Forward Plan

The Democratic Governance Manager reminded

Members that the Government had recently published statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny, which although not directive, there was a need for the Council to have regard to. She undertook to circulate the document to Members. The guidance should be borne in mind by the Board when considering the 2019/20 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The meeting ended at 12.24 pm

Chairman