

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	West Midlands Combined Authority Deeper Devolution Deal (DDD) 3		
Directorate	Economy, Environment & Communities		
Service	Regeneration & Economy		
Responsible Officer	Dave Brown		
Proposal planning start	Autumn 2022- initial planning and outline of proposed DDD commitments and engagement with government.	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	October 2023- planned ratification of the DDD by WMCA Board.
1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Policy	Yes	New
	Procedure	No	N/A
	Guidance	No	N/A
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?	No	N/A
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?	No	N/A
	Other - give details		
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change?		
	<p>The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) was formed in 2016, with all seven West Midlands Councils as constituent members, together with 10 councils joining as non-constituent members and the (then) three Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). Following the agreement and approval of the first two Devolution Deals in 2016 and 2018 respectively, further devolution from government- a new 'Deeper Devolution Deal' (DDD)- is now proposed. If approved by the constituent authorities that deal will be ratified by WMCA Board in October 2023 and commitments will be implemented thereafter.</p> <p>The deal aims to reboot the economy, provide vital housing, jobs and skills, build on existing strengths in transport, and drive net zero ambitions – generating economic growth and levelling up outcomes for all our residents, businesses and communities.</p> <p>The deal will mark a new phase of devolution by bringing new powers and control over investment to the region. The deal includes several provisions that will enhance the existing functions of the WMCA and will unlock over £1.5 billion of funding for the region. The deal recognises that the WMCA has lacked the key levers and flexibility to 'unleash the potential of devolution', and addresses this through a range of new powers, responsibilities and resources. Many of the commitments in the deal are firsts for regional devolution. It commits government to a single, departmental-style settlement with the WMCA at the next spending review, in return for new accountability arrangements and a single outcomes framework.</p>		



The devolution commitments will enable the region to locally prioritise, control and decide how funding is spent within devolved area, and therefore ensure greater local alignment with the council's existing policies and strategies for sustainable economic growth and levelling up across our communities.

The key provisions in the deal include:

- A new landmark housing deal worth up to £500 million to drive brownfield regeneration and deliver affordable housing at pace, including a route to full devolution of the affordable housing programme funding.
- The creation of up to six Growth Zones backed by 25-year business rate retention, with an expected total value to the region of at least £500 million, to target investment and encourage jobs and regeneration.
- A commitment to a single funding settlement, where for the first time, a region will be treated as if it were a government department with a new departmental-style budget arrangement. The intention is to develop a memorandum of understanding about how the process of a single pot of funding will work, including the scope of the funds included in the settlement, how it will be apportioned, and assurance and accountability arrangements. Fiscal devolution will include retention of business rates for the next 10 years – worth an estimated £45 million a year to the WMCA and local authorities.
- The proposed devolution of the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) will enable the WMCA to change the mechanisms for providing public subsidy to private bus operators which will improve accessibility across the region and support the decarbonisation of bus fleets.
- The deal makes provision for enhanced governance and accountability arrangements, including the development of a 'scrutiny protocol' and mayoral scrutiny by MPs.
- A commitment to be involved in decisions on major UK government land disposals and reconfiguration, driving regeneration and unlocking private investment through repurposing and redeveloping publicly owned land.
- A new role for the WMCA in integrating and promoting business support services across the region - powered by a new strategic productivity partnership with departments across government, greater involvement in the governance of the British Business Bank's UK funds, and collaboration with the UK Investment Bank on commercial arrangements for infrastructure finance.
- A new strategic innovation partnership will give the West Midlands a unique voice in setting out regional innovation opportunities to inform the UK research and innovation's future funding strategies.
- The Department for Business and Trade ('DBT') will recognise the West Midlands Growth Company as the lead agency for investment in the region and work with them to develop a West Midlands international strategy.
- Measures to tackle digital exclusion including greater influence over high-speed

broadband investment across the region and a £4 million fund for devices and data to get more people online.

- Greater local responsibility for developing and delivering careers advice and a partnership with Department for Work and Pensions to target employment support.
- A new partnership with Great British Railways to offer greater local oversight and control of public transport services.
- The UK’s first formally designated transport ‘regulatory sandbox’ to enable the region to test and develop cutting-edge transport solutions. This will deliver cleaner and safer vehicles and innovative transport services to our streets faster while supporting new jobs and investment.
- A commitment to devolve retrofit funding from 2025, to allow the WMCA, and partners, to set priorities for investment in insulation and green energy for homes. This will provide the certainty and consistency to build confidence in the marketplace and accelerate the delivery of warmer homes and net zero targets.
- A commitment to a new partnership with national arts and culture organisations to shape their investment in regional cultural priorities.

3 Who is the proposal likely to affect?

People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
All	Yes	All people of the West Midlands, including Walsall will be able to access and benefit from the proposed devolution commitments through the implementation of the Deeper Devolution Deal. Targeted projects, employment opportunities and service changes / improvements arising from the deal will affect specific groups. For example, bus/ public transport users, home and business owners, low-income households, cultural/ leisure users, etc. Further detail on impacts will be identified as initiatives are developed and implemented following ratification of the deal.
Specific group/s	Yes	
Council employees	Yes	
Other (identify)		

4 Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer’s protected characteristics.

The deal aims to reboot the economy, provide vital housing, jobs and skills, build on existing strengths in transport, and drive net zero ambitions – generating economic growth and levelling up outcomes for all Walsall’s residents, businesses and communities. The deal builds upon previous devolution benefits and successes and marks a new phase of devolution by bringing new powers and control over investment to the region. It is recognised that protected groups can be disproportionately economically disadvantaged, so activity to reduce deprivation and increase employment opportunities will have a positive impact on these groups. For example, the deal includes specific commitments that will lead to activities to support delivery of affordable homes; improve bus service accessibility; tackle digital exclusion; deliver careers advice and targeted employment support; and investing in insulation and green energy for homes.

The development of new interventions from the deal will have a positive impact on the following characteristics, individuals and the wider residents of Walsall.

- Out of the 317 local authorities, Walsall is the 25th most deprived area and 17th most deprived affecting children.
- The median annual wage income (2021) is lower in Walsall (£28,500) compared with the West Midlands region (c. £30,000) and the national average (c. £31,250).
- Walsall performs significantly worse in terms of GVA per head at c. £16,000 compared with the UK average (c. £29,000) and is the lowest across the Black Country Authorities.
- 26.3% of residents have no education qualifications.
- The proportion of residents with a qualification of NVQ4 or above is falling and at 26.9% is 16% points lower than the national average.
- 28.6% of residents are of non-white ethnic group. People of South Asian background (Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi) for the largest proportion of BAME in Walsall.
- 28.6% of households in Walsall are one-person households.
- Walsall's crime rates have been increasing since 2013 following a previous long period of decrease.
- Walsall's housing stock has grown in line with or above the UK average since 2001. Instead issues lie with the quality of the existing housing stock.
- 23.7% of households are social rented and 16.5% are private rented.
- 25% of households have no access to car or van.

(Statistics from ONS 2021 and Walsall ESAP(2022)).

5 Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).

Consultation Activity
Establishment of the West Midlands Combined Authority

Type of engagement/consultation	Survey- online and paper copies made available	Date	Aug-Sept 2015 Jul-Aug 2016
Who attended/participated?	General public		
Protected characteristics of participants	Unknown- surveys did not breakdown responses by protected characteristics.		

Feedback

Between 3 August and 11 September 2015 the seven West Midlands local authorities undertook engagement with key stakeholders on the proposals to form a combined authority and the draft governance review. 305 responses were received, a response rate of 65% of which;

- 69% believed that the WMCA provided a platform for better joined up working with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's)
- 67% believed that the WMCA would make an improvement to economic development and regeneration and impact growth and prosperity
- The positive impact on economic development was ranked the highest priority by Walsall at 77%.

The Seven Metropolitan Constituent Councils, led by the WMCA carried out public consultation on the 'Scheme' document – Functions required to deliver the devolution agreement in the West Midlands, from 4th July 2016 – 21st August 2016. The consultation survey was hosted on the front page of the Constituent Councils websites and the WMCA website. The survey consisted of 9 key questions, two profile based questions and a free text option to provide any further feedback. 1309 responses were received through this medium.

Paper copies of the consultation were available in public buildings, 19 responses were received through this medium.

The scheme outlines the functions required for the West Midlands to deliver the devolution agreement. This started with Devolution Deal's 1 and 2 and is continued and expanded through the third Devolution Deal.

Public consultation was undertaken between 18 January and 8 February 2016 asking all stakeholders (public, businesses partners) what their views were of the establishment of the Combined Authority with 1907 responses received.

There was no strong evidence that suggested there was public concern that the proposal is being operated in a discriminatory manner, however the public consultation survey results did not break down responses by different equality protected characteristics.

6	Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation		
<p>The Council is seeking Cabinet approval in September 2023 for the WMCA Deeper Devolution Deal (DDD) and Implementation Plan prior to ratification by the WMCA Board in October. This EqlA has been prepared to support the decision-making process.</p> <p>As the delivery of the deal commitments begin to develop, including specific project related activity, there will be a need for further consultation activity and specific detailed EqlAs. The type of activity and timescales are, as yet unknown, however they will be designed to identify key stakeholders and, dependent upon the proposed work programme, will be rolled out to a wider consultative base. For example, the devolution of the Bus Services Operator Grant (BSOG), including the transfer of powers from the Transport Secretary of State to the Mayor, will be subject to a formal consultation and legislative process. Further bus bye laws will also be subject to a detailed EqlA and public consultation exercise.</p> <p>The WMCA Inclusive Growth Board and Overview and Scrutiny Committee will ensure that any major initiatives within the Devolution Deal programme will be assessed and monitored in order to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).</p>			
7	How may the proposal impact each protected characteristic or group? The impact may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed.		
Characteristic		Impact Yes / No	Reason
Age		<p>The Combined Authority through the latest proposed Devolution Deal will be delivering and working up interventions, projects and funding delivery that will benefit the people and businesses of Walsall. The Implementation Plan is structured around 9 thematic summaries and 25 different workstreams. The range of these proposals is wide and covers many aspects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport planning, innovation & mass transit • Bus and Bus Services • Roads • Rail Partnership • Affordable Homes Programme • Skills • Employment support • Energy and retrofit • Culture • Tourism • Homelessness • Health • Early years <p>It is expected that these initiatives / funding streams will have a positive effect / impact on all Characteristic</p>	
Disability			
Gender reassignment			
Marriage and civil partnership			
Pregnancy and maternity			
Race			
Religion or belief			
Sex			
Sexual orientation			
Armed Forces			
Care responsibilities			
Health, Social and economic inequalities			
Other (Give Detail)			

		groups. Action will be required to ensure that the positives from these workstreams/ programmes are maximised for the people of Walsall.		
8	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.		(Delete one) Yes / No	
	The devolution proposals will be considered in detail for each workstream as delivery of the Implementation Plan progresses. Opportunities to actively link delivery and consultation to relevant and complimentary council projects and programmes funded will be explored and applied where appropriate. For example, projects being implemented as part of the Town Deal funds and other council strategies.			
9	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?			
A	No major change required Yes, this is applicable to the majority of the proposals.			
B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality Yes, proposals which will have an impact on specific groups (e.g. devolution in relation to bus services) will be subjected to individual detailed EqIAs and that there is an on-going action and monitoring plan to mitigate impacts.			
C	Continue despite possible adverse impact N/A			
D	Stop and rethink your proposal N/A			
Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
On-going	Review and monitor delivery of deal commitments as set out in the Implementation Plan.	Staff within the Economy, Environment & Communities directorate, plus other directorates subject to the workstream	On-going	Inform the development and delivery of workstreams, including ensuring best practise consultation approaches and the identification of any impacts on protected characteristics and ensure appropriate mitigate where required. Maximise outputs for Walsall and its residents, communities and businesses.

On-going	Review benefits and impacts to Walsall as a result of the deal and implementation plan commitments.	Staff within the Economy, Environment & Communities directorate	On-going	Qualitative and quantitative analysis of benefits to Walsall.

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail
tbc	Individual detailed EqIAs to be prepared for specific projects and workstreams as required.

Contact us

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Inside Walsall: [http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Service information/Equality and diversity](http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Service_information/Equality_and_diversity)