

Westminster Social Policy Forum keynote seminar:

Next steps for West Midlands devolution

Timing: Morning, Tuesday, 29th October 2024

Taking place online



**WESTMINSTER
SOCIAL POLICY
FORUM**

Agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.05 **Next steps for the West Midlands devolution deal - key opportunities and challenges**
Professor Donald Houston, Professor of Regional Economic Development, University of Birmingham
- 9.15 **Planning reform and increasing housebuilding to meet local and national targets**
priorities for new planning targets | practicalities for boosting housebuilding | spreading the benefits fairly across the West Midlands | options for social housing expansion | improving rental market conditions | tackling homelessness in the region | effective cooperation between local and national government | involving stakeholders in the planning process | incentivising the private housing sector | considering environmental concerns
Elizabeth Froude, Group Chief Executive, Platform Housing Group
Dr Steve McCabe, Housing and Communities Board, Centre for the New Midlands
Peter Forrest, Director, Programmes, Act on Energy
Councillor Adrian Andrew, Deputy Leader, Walsall Council
Rico Wojtulewicz, Head, Policy and Market Insight, National Federation of Builders
- 9.45 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.15 **The vision for the West Midlands region moving forward under the new Mayoralty and Government**
Richard Parker, Mayor, West Midlands; and Chair, West Midlands Combined Authority
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.40 **Chair's closing remarks**
Professor Donald Houston, Professor of Regional Economic Development, University of Birmingham
- 10.45 Break
- 10.55 **Chair's opening remarks**
Alex Ballinger MP
- 11.00 **Priorities for achieving effective delivery of public transport services**
priorities for new infrastructure projects | enhancing connectivity of the region | cross-sector approach to regional transport system | collaborating with communities and other regional authorities | de-privatisation of bus services | improving, timetables, service reliability and affordability | increasing transport safety
Asiya Jelani, Business Development Director, Worldline
Mike Bull, Programme Director, Midlands Connect
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.45 **Opportunities for collaboration and improving accountability within the region**
Councillor Ian Courts, Leader and Lead Member, Business and the Economy, Solihull Council
- 12.00 **Driving enablers of economic growth in the West Midlands - regional-specific skills, education and investment**
priorities for policy and the new Government | identifying investment opportunities | attracting private investment and securing national funding | supporting regional clusters | assessing the Invest 2035 industrial strategy | increasing international trade | supporting SMEs | improving education opportunities | strategies for job creation | fostering regionally-specific skills education | widening diversity and participation | addressing skills shortages and infrastructure needs | improving strategic industry partnerships
Dr Benjamin Silverstone, Associate Professor and Director, WMG Skills Centre, University of Warwick
Rupert Lyle, Fund Principal, Midven
Jack Tasker, Business Engagement Partner, Birmingham Digital Futures, University of Birmingham
Lorraine Mackin, UK Government and Public Sector Lead, Risk Advisory, Deloitte
- 12.20 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Social Policy Forum closing remarks**
Alex Ballinger MP
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Social Policy Forum