

Election of Mayor for the West Midlands Combined Authority Area

Thursday 2 May 2024



- How to vote
- The Candidates
 - Who they are
 - What they say

wmcaelects.co.uk



West Midlands Combined Authority Mayoral Election

On Thursday 2 May 2024, electors in the West Midlands Combined Authority Area¹ will have the opportunity to vote for the person they want to be Mayor until 2028.

What does the Mayor do?

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) was established in 2016 and consists of the seven constituent authorities Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Each of the constituent authorities appoints two of its elected members as a member of the WMCA.

The Mayor chairs the Combined Authority Board and has various powers and responsibilities, including transport, regeneration, economic development and acts as an ambassador for the area.

About this booklet

This booklet must be sent to you by law². It includes:

- information about the election.
- an Election Address (i.e. a statement) from each of the Mayoral candidates who wish to be included.
- information on how you can vote, how to complete your ballot paper, voter ID requirements and what to expect at your polling station.
- frequently asked questions.

Your vote will be important in deciding who is the future Mayor for the West Midlands Combined Authority area.

Julie Newman
Combined Authority Returning Officer

¹West Midlands Combined Authority area consists of the seven constituent local authorities of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

²One booklet must be distributed to each registered elector. This booklet has been produced in accordance with The Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.

Mayoral Candidates

There are 6 candidates standing for the Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority. Election Addresses from 5 of them appear in this booklet. All candidates are listed in alphabetical order below. This is the order in which they will appear on the ballot paper.

Siobhan Bridget Harper-Nunes

Green Party

Richard Parker

Labour and Co-operative Party

Andy Street

**The Conservative Party
Candidate**

Sunny Virk

Liberal Democrats

Elaine Ruth Williams

Reform UK

Akhmed Yakooob

Independent

All candidates submitted an election address apart from Sunny Virk - Liberal Democrats



Voting

Every registered elector will receive an official poll card which will explain when, where and how to vote. Details of your polling station can be found on your poll card, on your local council's website or alternatively by contacting your local elections office. Polling stations will be open between 7am and 10pm. You do not need to take your poll card with you. However, you will be required to show an accepted form of Voter ID when voting in a polling station.

How to cast your vote

You must vote for ONE candidate only, by putting a cross in the box next to the candidate of your choice. Put no other mark on the ballot paper or your vote may not be counted.

If you are a registered elector, you will receive up to three ballot papers.

- One is for the Local Elections
- One is for the Mayoral Election
- One is for the Police and Crime Commissioner
- The Local ballot paper will be either **LILAC OR SALMON**.
- The Mayoral ballot paper will be **YELLOW**.
- The Police & Crime Commissioner ballot paper will be **GREEN**.



Example ballot paper

Postal Voters

If you have registered for a postal vote, a pack will be delivered to your home after **17 April**.

If you have not received it by **26 April**, you should contact your local authority.

It is now too late to opt for a new postal vote for this election.

Follow the instructions in your postal vote pack, ensuring that you provide your signature and enter your date of birth on the security statement that must be returned with your ballot papers.

Please ensure that your completed postal ballot papers and security statement are returned in the same envelope as soon as possible. Your pack must be received by the Local Returning Officer by no later than 10pm on 2 May 2024. If you take your postal pack to the local council offices' or a polling station in your area, please ensure that you hand it to a member of staff who will get you to complete a postal vote return form. **Do not place your postal vote in the council offices letter box as this may result in your vote not being counted.**

Key Dates



Postal Packs start to arrive. If you haven't received your pack by **26 April** please email or call your local authority elections team. Your Local Returning Officer must receive your postal vote by 10pm on 2 May for it to be counted.



Last date for proxy vote request – If you are a registered voter and you wish to apply for a new application to vote by proxy (someone to vote on your behalf).

Last date to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate - if you require an accepted form of ID. The deadline for both is 5pm on **24 April**.



Voting day – You can vote from **7am–10pm** in person at your local polling station, which may have changed and is detailed on your poll card. You will be required to show an accepted form of Voter ID to receive a ballot paper in the polling station.

Postal votes must be submitted by **10pm** and can be dropped off at a polling station in your local authority area if necessary.



Mayoral election count and result declared.

The Candidates

The following pages contain the candidates' Election Addresses for those who have chosen to opt into this booklet. Every candidate was given the opportunity to include an Election Address in this booklet. Candidates who have included an Election Address were required to pay £5,000 each towards the booklet's production costs.

The content is the responsibility of the candidate themselves. The views expressed are theirs, and cannot be attributed to the Combined Authority Returning Officer or the West Midlands Combined Authority.

The order in which the Election Addresses appear in this booklet has been determined by the drawing of lots by the Combined Authority Returning Officer.



FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

Akhmed YAKOOB

for West Midlands Mayor

YAKOOB, Akhmed
Independent

X

AKHMED'S PLEDGES

- 1) Housing shortage - I will work with partners, to build new homes and increase social housing.
- 2) Ensure burial services meet religious requirements, by working with councils to ensure swift funeral processing
- 3) Improve Public Transport: Public ownership; reduce fares, reduce congestion; allow private hire taxis to use bus lanes
- 4) Employment: Create more green jobs initiatives and apprenticeships

Why I'm standing...

I'm a lifelong resident of the West Midlands, a lawyer by profession. As an officer of the court I can advocate to be your voice.

I want to fight to restore essential public services

I have been a lifelong Human Rights activist for **#Gaza** **#Kashmir** **#Khalistan** and this has informed my politics to stand up for justice

I pledge to be a voice for the voiceless

Lend me your vote and be part of the change that The West Midlands deserves.

with thanks,

Akhmed Yakoob

 **@Akhmed_Yakoob**

 **@AkhmedYakoob**

 **07398 763 867**

Prepared by Mr. Bilaal Hussain agent of Mr. Akhmed Yakoob both of
182, Soho Hill, Handsworth, Birmingham B19 1AG.

SIOBHAN HARPER-NUNES

GREEN PARTY



@harpernunesays



Siobhan 4 WM Mayor



siobhan4wmmayor.co.uk

NO ONE AND NOWHERE LEFT BEHIND

The West Midlands is the worst region in the country for child poverty. I will invest more in our left-behind communities, creating jobs and business opportunities in those areas.

CLIMATE ACTION THROUGH WARMER HOMES

We need climate action now. I'll prioritise getting homes insulated to make them warmer, bring down energy bills, reduce emissions and create green jobs.

YOUR REGION, YOUR VOICE

People still don't know what the Combined Authority is or what it does. As Mayor, I will give communities a stronger say in how it spends your money.



**Green
Party**

VOTE SIOBHAN

Vote Siobhan to send a message:

**We need more investment in our left-behind communities
and more urgent action on the climate crisis.**

- Siobhan knows the challenges our communities face and what support they need to thrive.
- 20 years supporting people in our most left-behind communities across the West Midlands.
- Founded a successful business to support women in personal and professional development.

VOTE FOR A MAYOR WHO WILL WORK FOR US ALL

ANDY STREET

LOTS DONE FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

- ✓ Delivering the biggest expansion of our transport network in a generation
- ✓ Delivered 100,000 jobs & trained over 135,000 people in just 2 years
- ✓ Built thousands of homes on brownfield land to protect our green spaces
- ✓ Made us proud with the best ever Commonwealth Games

MORE TO DO...

Putting the West Midlands first

Dear Resident,

Since 2017 it has been the greatest honour of my life serving as your Mayor. Using my non-partisan, business-like approach, we have made huge strides.

With £10 billion of additional Government funding and record levels of private sector inward investment, we're transforming the region. Delivering a better and more sustainable transport network, building the homes we need, and creating over 100,000 new jobs in just two years.

We've also faced the climate emergency head on, invested in our culture, and helped halve the number of rough sleepers on our streets.

This has been achieved through cross-party working, sound financial management with no Mayoral tax, and sticking to my number one promise - place before party.

But the job isn't done. That's why we will:

- Invest the £6bn we've already secured to supercharge progress on my ambitious 2040 Transport Plan, while keeping fares low.
- Create 425,000 jobs and training opportunities, and get our economy growing faster than London. With major investment in apprenticeships, keeping our training free for those earning less than £30k, and new careers advisors for the 40 schools in toughest areas - we will bear down on youth unemployment.
- Spend £400m to triple the number of social rental homes being built, and continue to meet our target of 16,000 new homes every year, while protecting our greenbelt.

The challenges facing Birmingham City Council show it is more important than ever that the West Midlands has a leader who can be trusted to get it right - and at the right price.

I hope you will see the progress we've made over the last seven years, and keep your faith in me to be that leader.



Andy Street, West Midlands Mayor



Conservatives

RICHARD PARKER

A FRESH START FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

I have lived and worked here all my adult life. My dad was a dock worker and my mum a school secretary. I left school at 16, determined to make something of myself.

I worked my way up in business. I have worked with the Japanese government and on the Olympics. I was part of the team that set up the West Midlands Combined Authority and have already brought £1 billion of investment to our region.

Now I want to deliver as your Mayor. After 14 years of Conservative government and seven years of a Conservative Mayor, people in the West Midlands are paying the price.

I have never been a politician before, but I am not prepared to sit on the sidelines anymore. I have a track record of delivering for our region.

It is time for a fresh start.



Vote  Labour



RICHARD'S PLAN:

- ✔ **Create 150,000 jobs** and training opportunities across the West Midlands
- ✔ **Revitalise our high streets** and bring back pride in our towns
- ✔ Work with councils and the Police & Crime Commissioner to **tackle crime and anti-social behaviour**
- ✔ **Bring buses back into public control**
- ✔ **Fix the housing crisis** and crack down on rogue landlords



**SCAN TO
FIND OUT
MORE**

Thursday 2 May



Elaine Williams

WEST MIDLANDS METRO MAYOR CANDIDATE



My name is Elaine Williams and I am Reform UK's candidate to become the next West Midlands Metro Mayor. I am a solicitor and I care passionately about our people and our quality of life. My key priorities for our region are employment, health, wellbeing and social care, transport, crime, the environment, and you.

Like you, I want our region to be a first-class place to live and work, but our elected representatives have failed us, and we deserve better.

Business: Local businesses are being severely affected by the introduction of 'Low Traffic Neighbourhood schemes', 'Clean Air Zones', imposed road closures and arbitrary traffic restrictions, all of which reduce public access to their businesses. These schemes also make travel around our towns and cities unnecessarily difficult. I will change these detrimental measures, invest in our town centres and revitalise our high streets to allow our businesses to flourish and thrive, and seek to encourage more businesses to invest in the West Midlands.

Net Zero, the Environment and Pollution: Much is spoken about the drive to Net Zero and the negative impact of pollution on the environment. Energy policies pursued across the region are making everyone poorer and colder as a result of soaring fuel prices and green energy levies inflating our energy costs. West Midlands water companies discharged untreated sewage into our waterways over 60,000 times during 2023, a 54% increase in the number of sewage spills over 2020-2022. Measures must be taken to stop this practice, clean up our rivers and waterways and prosecute offenders. Excessive shareholder profit-taking must be stopped, and the money invested into reducing leaks, developing the water infrastructure, and combating pollution.

Transport: As predicted, HS2 has proved to be the white elephant we all thought it would be. It was heralded as the stimulus for transport and travel in the West Midlands, but has failed to deliver any tangible benefits, leaving a trail of destruction and devastation to the countryside in its wake. Instead of vanity projects, we need a complete rethink on travel to deliver a fully integrated, efficient, safer and more effective transport system for the West Midlands.

Crime: Crime is on the increase, particularly violent crime, with the West Midlands being one of the highest crime areas in the country. More measures are needed, as well as an increase in police officers on the ground. Working in partnership with the seven local authorities and the Police and Crime Commissioner, I will bid for additional funding to address these urgent needs.

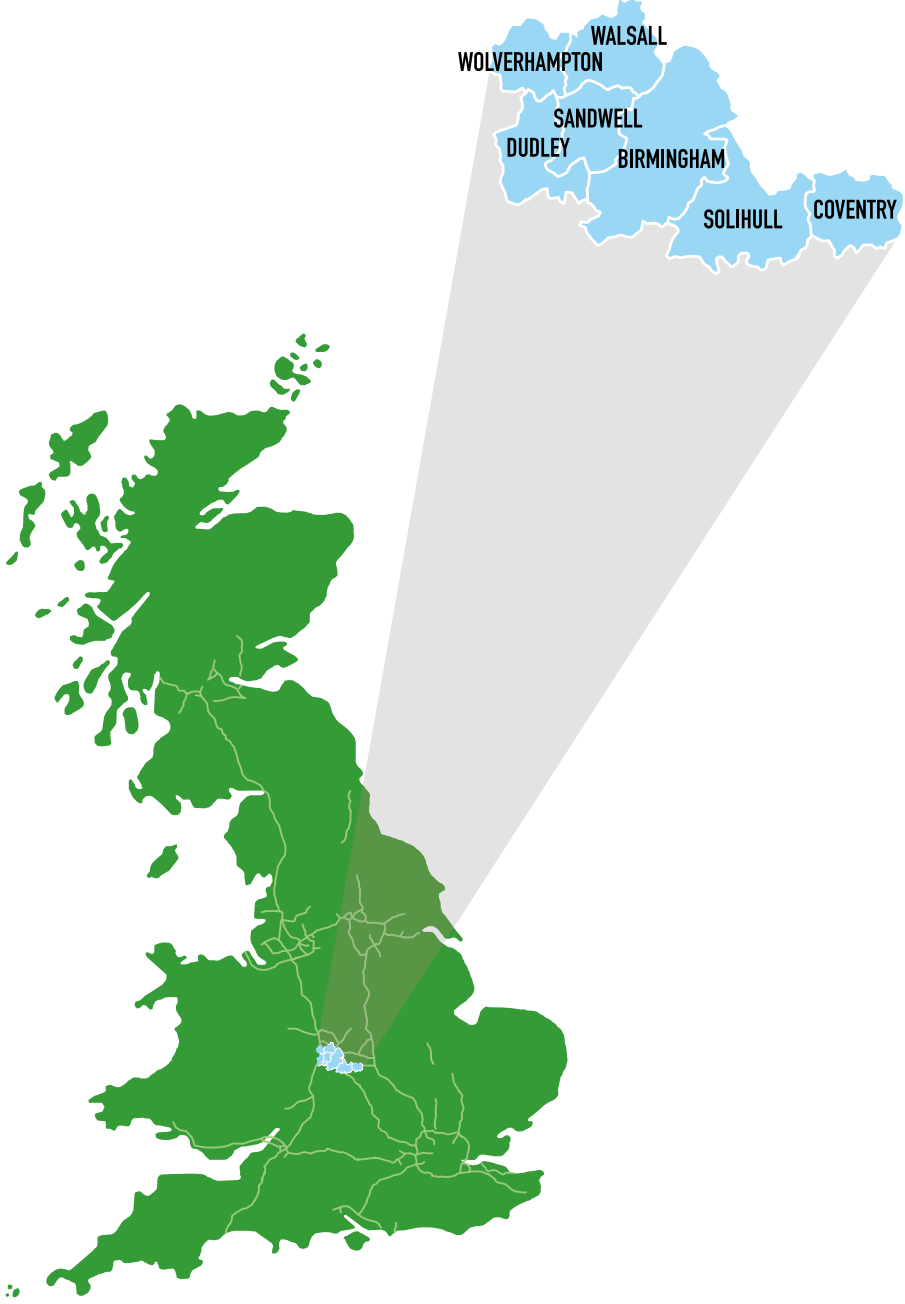
Health and Wellbeing: Levels of care and access to services should be equally available to all. One of the most pressing issues is mental health, where levels of service and support vary dramatically across the region. I want to ensure that everyone has access to the services they need, including GP Practices. I will work closely with the NHS and Social Care providers to make this a reality.

Social Housing: There are too many homes in the region where significant repairs are outstanding, and many properties are affected by black mould and other environmental health threats. I will introduce stringent checks to ensure that existing tenants are living in decent accommodation, and work with Housing Associations to build more affordable homes. There are many former brownfield industrial sites that can be recovered for housing, reducing the need to build on Green Belt land. I will also work with industry to repurpose buildings that are no longer in use, which can be converted into housing accommodation and training centres for the homeless and our service veterans.

If elected as your mayor, your hopes, your needs, and your concerns will be my highest priorities. I will act in the best interests of everyone living in the West Midlands Combined Authority region.

So, TALK TO ME, I'M LISTENING

Election of Mayor for the West Midlands Combined Authority Area



Electoral Registration Officer contact details

Constituent council	Address	Contact details
Birmingham City Council	Elections Office Council House Victoria Square Birmingham B1 1BB	Email: electionsoffice@birmingham.gov.uk Tel: 0121 303 2731
Coventry City Council	Electoral Services Council House Earl Street Coventry CV1 5RR	Email: electoral.services@coventry.gov.uk Tel: 024 7683 3034
Dudley MBC	Electoral Services Council House Priory Road Dudley DY1 1HF	Email: elections@dudley.gov.uk Tel: 01384 814740
Sandwell Council	Elections Office Sandwell Council House Freeth Street Oldbury B69 3DB	Email: electoral_services@sandwell.gov.uk Tel: 0121 569 3244
Solihull MBC	Elections Office Council House Manor Square Solihull B91 3QB	Email: election@solihull.gov.uk Tel: 0121 704 6042
Walsall Council	Elections Office Civic Centre Darwall Street Walsall WS1 1DA	Email: electionoffice@walsall.gov.uk Tel: 01922 652502
City of Wolverhampton Council	Elections Office Civic Centre St. Peter's Square Wolverhampton WV1 1RG	Email: electoral.services@wolverhampton.gov.uk Tel: 01902 551177

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a directly elected Combined Authority Mayor?

The directly elected Mayor chairs the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board and is elected by the residents of the West Midlands Combined Authority area.

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is made up of seven constituent authorities – Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

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Why does the West Midlands Combined Authority Area have an elected Mayor?

The Mayor, in partnership with the Combined Authority, exercises the powers and functions devolved from Government set out in the West Midlands devolution deal.

More devolution means greater accountability and the role of Mayor helps to ensure that there is clear accountability over existing and future devolved functions and funding from the national to the local level.

A key part of the role is to act as an advocate and global ambassador for the West Midlands Combined Authority area and to chair the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board.

What is devolution?

England is one of the most centralised countries in the developed world. Devolution is a process that transfers powers and funding from central Government to a local area.

It means decisions can be made closer to the people affected, involving them more directly.

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What powers does the Mayor have?

The Mayor leads the Combined Authority, working with partner authorities and stakeholders, and chairs the WMCA Board. The main functions of the authority relate to transport, housing, regeneration, employment and skills, economic and industrial strategy, investment and public service reform.

As the devolution agenda develops so the role of the Mayor is also expected to evolve, working with Combined Authority colleagues to deliver the best possible outcomes for the residents and businesses of the West Midlands.

The Mayor and the Combined Authority work with partners and central government to identify powers and functions that could be better exercised locally, in addition to those already devolved, with the overall aim of embedding inclusive growth across the West Midlands area.

How do I mark my vote?

Mark your vote in the usual way, with a single **X** in the box next to the candidate you wish to vote for.

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When will the polling stations be open?

Polling stations will be open on 2 May 2024 from 7am–10pm. The location of your polling station is printed on your poll card. This may have changed since the last time you voted, so please look carefully at your poll card.

Please remember to take an accepted form of Voter ID with you to the polling station. You can find out more information about what ID is acceptable on the Electoral Commission's website – www.electoralcommission.org.uk

For help finding or identifying your polling station, please call your local authority's elections helpline or visit www.wmcaelects.co.uk.

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Why has every voter in the household been sent a booklet? It seems to be a waste of money.

The law says that everyone registered to vote must be sent their own copy so that they get a chance to see the booklet, who is standing for election and what the candidates are saying.

I have not received any information on the candidates standing in the other elections.

Through this booklet you have received information on the West Midlands Combined Authority Mayoral candidates, as we are required to send this to you by law.

For information on the Police and Crime Commissioner candidates please go to www.choosemypcc.org.uk

For local elections, it is the decision and responsibility of the candidate or their agent to provide and send out further information to you.

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What is an accepted form of Voter ID?

There is a whole list of documents which can be used as an accepted form of Voter ID eg passport, driving licence, older person's bus pass. You can find a full list on your poll card or the Electoral Commission's website. If you do not have an accepted form of Voter ID you can apply for a free voter authority certificate online or by contacting your local elections office.

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Will there be any additional support at polling stations for people with disabilities?

The Returning Officers across the seven authorities in the West Midlands area are committed to supporting electors in exercising their vote. Additional support and equipment is provided at polling stations. For more information visit: www.wmcaelects.co.uk.

Statement by the Combined Authority Returning Officer for the West Midlands Combined Authority

This booklet contains information about the candidates and other information useful to voters. The information provided by the candidate is their responsibility and may not reflect the opinions of myself or my council. As the Combined Authority Returning Officer, I am responsible for coordinating the election and announcing the result for the West Midlands.

The election for Mayor for the West Midlands Combined Authority area will be held on 2 May 2024. The result will be declared on Saturday 4 May 2024.

Contact information

I can be contacted at:

Julie Newman
Coventry City Council
Council House
Earl Street
Coventry
CV1 5RR

caro@coventry.gov.uk

024 7683 3034

Further information is
also available at:

wmcaelects.co.uk

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