Frequently Asked Questions for Election of Mayor for the West Midlands Combined Authority
Frequently Asked Questions

What is a directly elected combined authority Mayor?
The combined authority Mayor will be elected by voters in the seven constituent members of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) – Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton. The Mayor will chair the combined authority and have powers and responsibilities to make strategic decisions across the whole region. This is in contrast to local council leaders who only make decisions for, and on behalf of, their local authority.

What powers will the Mayor have?
The Mayor will control a £1.1bn, 30-year investment fund, an adult skills budget and have compulsory purchase powers over housing and planning. The Mayor will also control the consolidated transport budget, the local roads network, bus franchising and smart ticketing on the transport network.

Previously the majority of these powers lay either with individual local authorities, such as most planning or local transport decisions, or with national decision makers, such as the adult skills budget administered through the Skills Funding Agency.

Why is the West Midlands having an elected combined authority Mayor?
The new combined authority Mayor is being introduced as part of the Government’s devolution agenda, which allows combined authorities to take on functions over and above those they were allowed under previous legislation. The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 states that for a combined authority to be given these powers, a combined authority Mayor must be elected for the area.

The combined authority Mayor’s powers are determined by the devolution deal that the West Midlands agreed with government. The majority of city regions around the country are, like the West Midlands, focusing on
gaining powers over skills, housing and transport.

Over time, the powers of the combined authority Mayor may increase, as has happened in London. The Cities and Local Government Act is a deliberately non-prescriptive and enabling piece of legislation that allows for the devolution of almost anything to a local level. The limit to the level of devolution under this model will be the willingness and ability of local and national politicians to reach agreement on what other functions may be devolved in the future.

**Why two votes for one Mayor?**

The law states the voting process for the Mayoral elections must be done this way. It also allows you to say who would be your second choice for Mayor if your first choice is not in the top two after the first round of counting, and if there is not an outright majority winner at that stage.

**How do I mark my vote?**

Mark your vote in the usual way, with a single \( \text{X} \) in each of the columns indicated. You have two votes – one for your first choice and one for your second choice of candidate.

**What happens if I don’t make a second choice?**

Your first choice vote will still be counted.

**What happens if I only mark an \( \text{X} \) in the second choice column?**

Your vote will not be counted because no-one will know who was your first choice candidate.

**What if I mark an \( \text{X} \) in the first choice column for more than one candidate?**

Your vote will not be counted as it is unclear who you wanted to vote for.

**When will the polling stations be open?**

Polling stations will be open on 4 May 2017 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.

For help finding or identifying your polling station, please call your local authority’s elections helpline or visit our website [www.wmcaelects.co.uk](http://www.wmcaelects.co.uk)
## Electoral Registration Officer contact details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituent council</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Birmingham City Council**  | Elections Office Council House Victoria Square Birmingham B1 1BB        | **Email:** electionsoffice@birmingham.gov.uk  
**Tel:** 0121 303 2731                                                      |
| **Coventry City Council**    | Room 14 Council House Earl Street Coventry CV1 5RR                      | **Email:** electoral.services@coventry.gov.uk  
**Tel:** 024 7683 3034                                                      |
| **Dudley MBC**               | Electoral Services Old Crown Court Priory Street Dudley West Midlands DY1 1EY | **Email:** elections.cexec@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 Council House Lichfield Street Walsall WS1 1AE          | **Email:** electionoffice@walsall.gov.uk  
**Tel:** 01922 652502                                                      |
| **City of Wolverhampton Council** | Elections Office Civic Centre St. Peter’s Square Wolverhampton WV1 1RG | **Email:** city.direct@wolverhampton.gov.uk  
**Tel:** 01902 551177                                                      |