



## Environment & Energy Board

**Date:** Tuesday 26 September 2023

**Time:** 1.00 pm **Public meeting** Yes

**Venue:** Room 116, West Midlands Combined Authority, 16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD

### Membership

Councillor John Cotton (Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Rob Clinton	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Craig Collingswood	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Gary Flint	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Peter Hughes	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Andy Mackiewicz	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Majid Mahmood	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Jim O'Boyle	Coventry City Council
Matthew Rhodes	Energy Capital
Suzanne Ward	Environment Agency

Quorum for this meeting shall be the Portfolio Lead for the Environment, Energy & HS2 *and* at least three other members.

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact:

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# AGENDA

No.	Item	Presenting	Pages
<b>Items of Public Business</b>			
1.	Welcome and Introductions	Chair	None
2.	Apologies for Absence	Chair	None
3.	Declarations of Interest Members are reminded of the need to declare any disclosable prejudicial interests they have in any item being discussed during the course of the meeting. In addition, the receipt of any gift or hospitality should be declared where the value of it was thought to have exceeded £25 (gifts) or £40 (hospitality).	Chair	None
4.	Minutes - 12 July 2023	Chair	1 - 4
5.	Air Quality Framework and Action Plan	Jackie Homan	5 - 44
6.	Energy Capital Programme Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devolved retrofit funding</li> <li>• Strategic partnerships for energy infrastructure</li> <li>• The new Regional Energy Systems Planner function and how it relates to local area energy planning</li> </ul>	Cheryl Hiles	45 - 58
7.	Any Other Business	Chair	None
<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>			
8.	Thursday 21 December 2023 at 11.00am	Chair	None



## Environment & Energy Board

Wednesday 12 July 2023 at 11.00 am

### Minutes

#### Present

Councillor John Cotton (Chair)

Birmingham City Council

#### Present via MS Teams

Councillor Rob Clinton

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Councillor Craig Collingswood

City of Wolverhampton Council

Councillor Majid Mahmood

Birmingham City Council

#### Item No.

#### 1. Minutes - 1 March 2023

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

#### 2. Community Engagement Update: Greener Together Citizens' Panel and Greener Together Forum

Jackie Homan presented on the Greener Together Forum and Citizens' Panel. She provided context for the Citizens' Forum, sharing the aims and the operations of the forum and how it functioned within the community. Topics discussed included tree planting, retrofitting and fuel poverty. Councillor Majid Mahmood asked if more work could be done to increase representation of the region in the forum and asked how diversity was reflected in the forum. Jackie Homan confirmed that work was being done to increase engagement. She then said that from an equality and diversity perspective, the forum was hoped to be reflective of those living in the region and diversity was sought to be increased through its engagement, as the forum was held in a different area of the region each time it met.

Jackie Homan then went on to share the aims of the Greener Together Citizens' Panel before sharing the panel's selection criteria and its logistics. She then reported on the outcome of the air quality sessions that the panel held that were due to be considered when implementing the air quality framework actions. Jackie Homan then introduced Deepu and Alison who shared their experiences of being on the panel and their reasoning for joining. They both focused on their desire to protect future generations. Alison expanded to say that she also desired to have a voice, the experience and a general curiosity in making a difference.

In response to a question from Jackie Homan, Deepu and Alison both confirmed that was important to the panel that the panel's voice was heard. Deepu shared some achievements of the panel. He highlighted the input that the panel had on the air quality framework. Finally, Alison shared the common themes included the reduction of social inequality and that implementation should be fair, transparent, and driven by data.

In response to a question from Councillor Robert Clinton, Alison stated that face-to-face sessions were imperative to the team working together and that the panel had excellent facilitators that ensure every voice was heard in the process. Councillor Majid Mahmood commended the WMCA on the work that had been completed to date and shared that Birmingham City Council would be hoping to implement some of the outputs of the panel's discussions.

Resolved:

(1) The work of the Greener Together Citizens' Panel be noted and their recommendations and concerns that informed the WMCA's energy and environment programme be noted.

### **3. Air Quality Framework**

Jackie Homan and Alex Jones presented the Air Quality Framework. Jackie Homan shared the history and aims of the framework. She made references to the air quality actions plans led by constituent local authorities. Alex Jones then highlighted air quality in the West Midlands and the negative impact poor air quality had on the population of the region. He then shared feedback and consultation already completed and shared key themes such as an out of date approaches and gaps in monitoring of air quality and lack of clean air zones in specific areas. He shared the framework methodology and talked through the timeline to launch, including the RAG rating of the options appraisal and the consultation timelines for which approval was being sought.

Jackie Homan then shared next steps, from July to October. She stated that the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs would be providing an air quality grant to implement quick wins and mitigate resourcing issues. She shared that a framework delivery group would be mobilised to improve governance and incorporate a 5-year review programme. Jackie Homan then closed by highlighting successes, funding wins and activity to date as detailed in the report before she shared some questions with the board for them to feedback to the air quality team.

The Chair commended the team on the level of information provided on the work being done but noted that additional resource was required. He asked how the WMCA would plug the funding gap, and Jackie Homan acknowledged this and stated that while some funding was in place, some aspects of funding would require business cases or lobbying from DEFRA.

In response to Councillor Majid Mahmood, Jackie Homan confirmed that more work was required to understand the true picture of indoor air quality and gave examples of log burners and gas hobs, and work was being conducted to identify synergies with current programmes such as retrofitting. She also confirmed that a platform was being sourced in order to hold the air quality data produced by the region. Alex Jones seconded the importance of this.

Councillor Rob Clinton noted the increase of wood companies providing wood as a result of the energy crisis and highlighted it would have a negative impact on the environment. He then asked what work could be done in order to reinforce road surfaces and what research was being conducted on solutions to support suggestions for change, for example, road signs. Jackie Homan responded to say that work was being done to identify what actions could be taken to support behaviour change and this was supported by funding from DEFRA.

Resolved:

(1) The draft Air Quality Framework be endorsed for consultation with key stakeholders.

(2) It be agreed to pursue WMCA-wide air quality targets that exceeded the nationally established targets.

(3) The proposed next steps for finalising the framework be approved and the points around resourcing and governance be noted.

#### **4. Natural Environment Update**

Mike Webb provided an update on the Local Investment in Natural Capital (LINC). He shared the challenges of the current biodiversity and climate crisis, before sharing the opportunities of how these challenges could be resolved. He reported on the government response, Green Finance, to improvements to the environment within society. He continued and stated that the WMCA was a part of the national LINC pilot study which involved a £1million grant over the course of two years designed to develop a pipeline of projects, including building inhouse capacity, become self-sustaining and increase integration with other key strategies.

He talked the committee through how Green Finance worked, he shared information on the region's current nature markets and highlighted where there were gaps in the market for possible future nature markets. He then highlighted that biodiversity net gain would be a requirement from September 2023.

Councillor Majid Mahmood raised the Bankers without Boundaries initiative and Mike Webb confirmed awareness of the initiative and agreed with Councillor Majid Mahmood that aggregation was important in order to gain funding. Mike Webb also confirmed, in response to the Chair, that projects would be ready to trade within around two years.

Resolved:

The report be noted.

**5. West Midlands Forest Partnership**

Jeff Grant delivered a presentation on the West Midlands Forrest Partnership. He provided insight on his role as Partnership Co-ordinator. He then shared that a study had been procured to identify the urban forest structure, eco-system, service and economic value of trees in the region. He stated that the results of the commissioned study would result in being able to develop a tailored approach to mitigation. He also shared that a study was being conducted in order to develop a case for a tree nursery that will increase both the number and diversity of trees within the region.

Councillor Majid Mahmood commented that Birmingham City Council had been involved with the West Midlands Forrest Partnership initiative and highlighted that the survey was the biggest of its kind to be conducted in the UK. He continued, stating that the tree nursery should contain trees that would adapt to the changes to the climate and that would reduce the amount of sap that weeps on to cars. Jeff Grant confirmed that both these items would be taken under consideration.

Councillor Robert Clinton asked if the Black Country map could be provided and asked that the maturity of the trees planted are also considered in order to increase their chances of survival, to which Jeff Grant agreed.

Resolved:

The report be noted.

**6. Environment & Energy Board Terms of Reference**

Jackie Homan presented the Terms of Reference for an annual review.

Resolved:

The terms of reference be noted.

**7. Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 26 September 2023 - 1.00pm

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm.



## Environment and Energy Board

<b>Date</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
<b>Report title</b>	Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan
<b>Portfolio Lead</b>	Cllr John Cotton Portfolio Holder for Environment, Energy and HS2
<b>Accountable Chief Executive</b>	Laura Shoaf, Chief Executive, West Midlands Combined Authority email: <a href="mailto:laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk">laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk</a>
<b>Accountable Employee</b>	Ed Cox, Director of Strategy, Integration and Net Zero email: <a href="mailto:ed.cox@wmca.org.uk">ed.cox@wmca.org.uk</a>  Jackie Homan, Head of Environment <a href="mailto:jackie.homan@wmca.org.uk">jackie.homan@wmca.org.uk</a>

### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

#### The Environment and Energy Board is recommended to:

- a) Endorse the draft Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan for approval at the November 2023 WMCA Board.
- b) Endorse this paper for presentation to the WMCA Board in November 2023, subject to any updates made by the Environment and Energy Board.

### 1. Purpose

The Environment and Energy Board previously considered the West Midlands Air Quality Framework at the meeting in July 2023. The Framework was taken forward for consultation over the summer; this included a prioritisation of measures into an Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan to take forward over the next 2 years. This Plan will be presented to the WMCA Board in November 2023 for approval, with a link being made to the more extensive Framework for information and context.

### 2. Background

2.1 An Air Quality Options Paper was taken to WMCA Board in February 2022 that outlined the challenges the region is facing in relation to air pollution. The options paper highlighted the inequality of exposure to poor air quality across the region and drew attention to the need to address pollution from particulate matter with more urgency. The options paper outlined 122 possible interventions that could be adopted to improve regional air quality, taken from the literature and work undertaken by Public Health England (now the UK Health Security Agency), but also recognised that a more detailed piece of work would be needed to develop these further, or to add any additional interventions. As a result, the Air Quality

Framework has been produced (a fully designed version will be made available ahead of the WMCA Board paper send out on the WMCA Environment and Energy web pages – current link to the draft is here:

<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s11066/DRAFT%20WM%20AQ%20Framework.pdf>). This document is not a strategy, but a review of all the measures possible to accelerate improvements to regional air quality. It is accompanied by an Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan (AQFIP), which is a shorter document prioritising the measures to be implemented/ commenced over the next 2 years. The AQFIP is attached to this Board paper as Appendix 1.

### Summary of the issues

2.2 There are a number of different air pollutants that affect the West Midlands and have implications for human and public health. The main ones are nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (especially PM<sub>2.5</sub>). Both of these have environmental, social and economic impacts for the region that have previously been set out in our Air Quality Options Paper.

2.3 Since the Air Quality Options Paper was produced, DEFRA has published the national air quality targets (following on from the Environment Act 2021) and the National Air Quality Strategy. The targets are as follows:

- NO<sub>2</sub> 40 µg m<sup>-3</sup> [this is a retained target]
- PM<sub>2.5</sub> 20 µg m<sup>-3</sup> [new Env Act: 10 µg m<sup>-3</sup> (by 2040)]

There have been questions about the level of ambition in these targets, which have predominantly been established to accommodate the challenges faced by London in reaching them. It would be feasible for the West Midlands to achieve these targets sooner and then reduce exposure even further. For context, the World Health Organisation Air Quality Guidelines (which are not legal limits) are as follows:

- NO<sub>2</sub> 10 µg m<sup>-3</sup>
- PM<sub>2.5</sub> 5 µg m<sup>-3</sup>

2.4 To put this in a West Midlands context:

- The highest annual average PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations in the West Midlands are modelled in central Birmingham, Coventry, Sandwell and Walsall.
- DEFRA provide air pollution estimates of pollution concentrations at 1km resolution. When averaged to ward level, these data show annual average PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels in 72 of the 192 wards within the West Midlands exceed 10 µg m<sup>-3</sup>
- 1.2m people or ca. 40% of the West Midlands' population live in wards exceeding PM targets of 10 µg m<sup>-3</sup>.
- The least advantaged areas (highest IMD score) tend to have the worst air quality.

2.5 The constituent local authorities have been working to address this through measures identified in Air Quality Action Plans (as required by DEFRA) or, in the case of Solihull MBC, an Air Quality Strategy. The focus of these is largely the reduction of NO<sub>2</sub>, which is produced (and can be reduced) locally. PM<sub>2.5</sub> is different because it lives longer in the atmosphere and therefore spreads further geographically – this means that regional approaches may be more appropriate in addressing it.



## Scope of the West Midlands Air Quality Framework

- 2.6 In terms of cost or time taken for deployment, nothing is off the table, but the means of assessing the implementation opportunities (described in the Methodology section below) has taken account of these factors in terms of likelihood of deployment. The main consideration in determining if a measure is in or out of scope is the principle of subsidiarity, i.e. is it the case that there is (or could be) added value from adopting a regional approach to delivery.
- 2.7 In terms of defining 'regional' we mean where a measure could be better delivered by more than one authority acting alone. This has meant that anything that is clearly within local remit to deliver has been excluded, likewise anything that would need a national intervention has also been removed.
- 2.8 There are some 'grey areas' in that, of course. Communications and behaviour change initiatives, for example, can be delivered by a local authority independently. However, from the work undertaken in developing the Framework, it has become clear that there are advantages in consistent messaging to business and the public and collaborating to deliver behaviour change programmes. There might also be instances where economies of scale make a difference for procurement, for example on the purchase of low-cost sensors.

## Methodology

- 2.9 In preparing the Air Quality Framework, all options outlined within the initial Air Quality Options Paper, and other key sources (such as from DEFRA), were considered at the outset. These were supplemented with additional options identified at the initial consultation stage of the Framework development with TfWM, constituent local authorities and partners such as WM-Air. Any options which were clearly outside of the Framework scope, or were unlikely to be in the future, were excluded from the long list. All options which may be at all feasible or within the scope of the Framework were carried forward.
- 2.10 There is a total of 156 measures identified in this Framework that could be taken to tackle air pollution across the region; 143 were taken forward to full appraisal following an initial assessment with consultees identified in Section 2.11 below. They have been grouped into the following categories (although there is synergy between many of these):
- Engagement and behaviour change
  - Domestic emissions and indoor air quality
  - Transport
  - Natural and built environment
  - Commercial, industrial and agriculture
  - Public health
  - Planning, policy, governance and mechanisms for change
  - Monitoring and digital
  - Climate/net zero considerations
- 2.11 Each of the measures identified within these thematic groups has been assessed against the following criteria:

- Health outcomes, including direct improvement to human health and reducing health inequalities.
- Spatial impact, including whether a regional approach brings benefit.
- Alignment with local and national policy.
- Cost, implementation and timescales, assessing measures against feasibility, timescales and cost.
- Co-benefits – do the measures have any additional environmental or economic benefit?

2.12 The tables produced in each of the sections of the Framework highlight the measures that deliver most effectively against the criteria identified. The entire list of measures is provided in a technical appendix to the Framework. Each of these summary tables gives:

- Where a particular measure ranked in the overall theme, as well as the score it was given against all the criteria
- The outcome that we would look to achieve through its implementation
- The potential approach to implementing it
- First implementation costs and indicative timescales
- Any constraints

This has been taken into account in relation to the preparation of an Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan (see 2.15 – 2.21 below).

2.13 Extensive consultation has been involved in developing the Framework. These include: WMCA Directorates; WMCA panels/groups (e.g. Strategic Transport Officers Group and WM Environmental Protection Group); TfWM; Birmingham University/WM-Air team; constituent local authorities; non-constituent local authorities; external organisations (e.g. Asthma and Lung UK, Clean Air Justice Network, EarthSense, Friends of the Earth and Mums for Lungs); and the Greener Together Citizens' Panel. A consultation event took place on 17<sup>th</sup> August to review the Framework, which is being updated in response to feedback received – 48 people from the organisations referenced above attended.

2.14 The measures identified in the Framework are comprehensive, and we do not expect them to become out of date in the short-term. However, we would expect to build in a review process every five years to ensure that they are still supporting regional ambition to reduce air pollution in total, and inequality of exposure overall. We would also want to make sure that the Framework is taking account of innovations in technology, as well as national policy.

### **Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan**

2.15 The Air Quality Framework provides us with an extensive list of measures that could be put in place to address poor air quality across the region. To make a start on delivery will require a focused list of priorities for collaboration. This has been developed into a two year Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan, which will be overseen by an Air Quality Framework Delivery Group (see 2.17 – 2.19 for more on proposed governance).

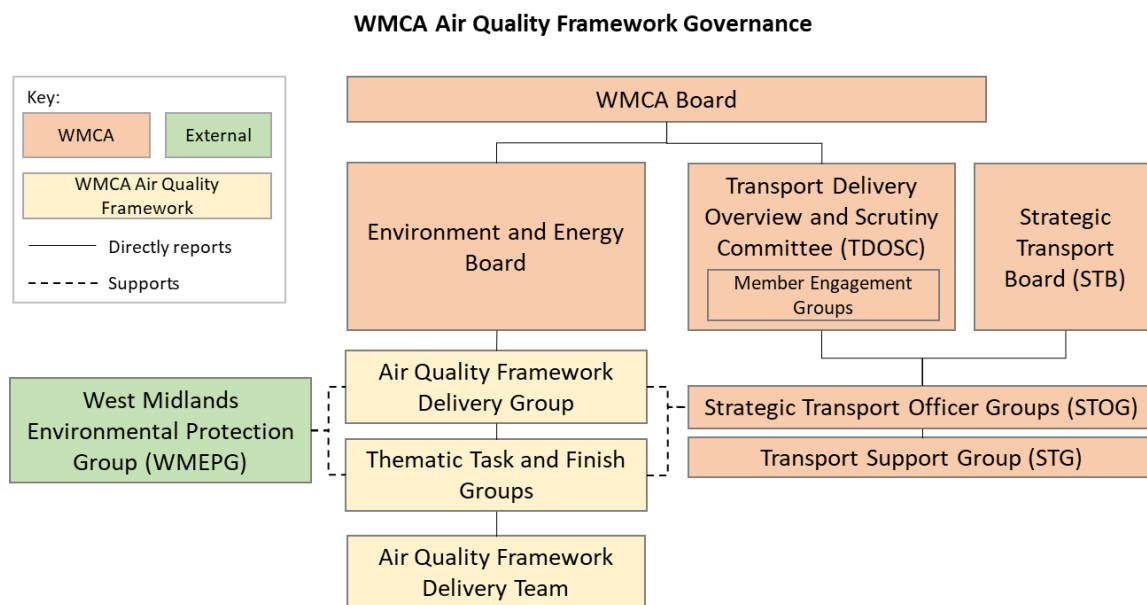
2.16 The measures included in the Framework have been assessed to consider potential impact on addressing air pollution. However, it was also important to take into account the views/ expertise of regional stakeholders in prioritising what should be

taken forward over the next 2 years. This was done at the Framework consultation event on 17<sup>th</sup> August. All the measures were made available for people and a simple prioritisation exercise was undertaken. This was then considered alongside input from colleagues in local authorities, TfWM and the Framework prioritisation. The result is an Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan, consisting of 9 packages of work and 10 standalone measures.

- 2.17 In addition to the measures themselves, the consultation also gave participants the opportunity to discuss potential governance for delivery. To ensure that the Framework is delivering for the whole WMCA, we will establish an Air Quality Framework Delivery Group. This is something that has been flagged in conversations with constituent local authority partners as a helpful route to continue coordination. This will also facilitate engagement with air quality partners (as identified in the Environment Act, 2021) as well as bringing additional expertise on board to support different air quality issues that are common to all partners.
- 2.18 The Framework Delivery Group membership would comprise the 7 constituent local authorities, WMCA and TfWM as well as other relevant partners with a focus on public health, environment, research and innovation. Suggestions made through the consultation process include:
- Public health (Directors of Public Health as well as the UK Health Security Agency),
  - Community group representation
  - A member of the University of Birmingham's WM-Air Team
  - Business representative
  - Birmingham International Airport
  - National Highways
  - National Express/ National Rail
  - West Midlands Fire Service

We would envisage that some of these organisations would be involved in specific task and finish groups (outlined in 2.19 below) rather than as part of the ongoing group. A terms of reference will be established, following approval from the WMCA Board, with a proposal to meet quarterly.

2.19 The Framework Delivery Group will sit within existing governance in the following way:



2.20 In terms of the measures, and delivery, there is no proposition here to change roles and responsibilities for local authorities. We have assumed that this work will continue as previously, although there may be opportunities to bring economies of scale/ benefits from collaboration. In addition, we also assume that actions related to TfWM, and its governance and actions, will continue to be delivered through existing routes. Where it has become clear that the WMCA could add immediate value is through behaviour change/ awareness raising and scaling up of monitoring capability and data collection.

2.21 Annual progress reports on the delivery of measures in the Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan will be brought to the Environment and Energy Board.

### Progress to date and ongoing work

2.22 In parallel to producing the Air Quality Framework, we have secured **funding from DEFRA** to begin to collaborate on behaviour change projects, as well as on monitoring and data transparency. This project will be delivering the following:

- Installation of 30 low-cost sensors where there is modelled to be high population exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub>. These monitors will bring consistent data, currently lacking, across the WMCA.
- Creation of a public facing regional air quality platform. The sensor data will feed into a centralised dashboard for the public to see near real time air quality data. The website will be a hub of educational and campaign resources, including toolkits on anti-idling campaigns, domestic combustion reduction campaigns and general awareness raising. We are also going to procure a solution that can accommodate existing sensors already deployed across the region.
- Regional air quality awareness campaign. This project will begin by raising awareness and to start a regional conversation on air quality. There will be

community engagement events (3 in each local authority) to provide information on why clean air is important.

- Behaviour change campaigns in the local community. Design and implement a package of different types of projects to improve awareness of air quality in their communities and implement interventions to reduce exposure and pollution; this will use the outcomes from the awareness-raising activity.
- Air quality literacy programme. We will use this project to develop training materials for politicians and organisations to understand the need for action.
- Communications toolkit. Develop a communications toolkit to be used more broadly by all the local authorities across the region. It will include social media assets, communication materials and key messages that will be co-produced and shared with stakeholders to present a consistent message across the region.

2.23 In addition to this, we have taken air quality as an issue to the **Greener Together Citizens' Panel**. This provided us with a set of considerations that we should take into account when thinking about if, when and how we implement any of the measures from the Air Quality Framework/ Framework Implementation Plan. The Panel met as we were developing the Framework itself, but we are planning to support a future session of the Panel to test the measures that we are initially focusing on through the Framework Implementation Plan, particularly those that may be more challenging to instigate or that require trade-offs to be made.

### **Resourcing delivery of the Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan**

2.24 The DEFRA Air Quality grant, secured in March 2023, will support the implementation of some of the priority measures, especially in relation to behaviour change and establishment of a low-cost sensor network, and availability of data to support decision-making across the region. The successful delivery of other measures will be dependent on resourcing and business cases and subject to the WMCA Board approval.

2.25 In order to drive the delivery of measures in the Framework forward, we have secured initial funding from DEFRA to put in place an Air Quality Lead. This role will work across all the constituent local authorities to support roll out of a low-cost sensor network and implementation of behaviour change programmes. Resourcing to support delivery of the AQFIP beyond this grant funding will need to be evaluated in due course.

## **3. Financial Implications**

There are no immediate financial implications within this paper, as any costs associated with the wider consultation will be covered from existing budgets.

Once the wider consultation is complete, the final Air Quality Framework will be brought to WMCA Board for approval later this year. This will contain financial assessments and priorities where recommended measures will require further funding to be sought and agreed.

## **4. Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications as a result of this paper. Any legal implications will be considered on a project-by-project basis.

## **5. Equalities Implications (\*)**

Having clean air to breathe should be enjoyed by all communities across the West Midlands. The current picture indicates that this is not the case, with many communities suffering from poor air quality that leads to harmful impacts on health and other social and economic outcomes. The aim of this Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan is to complement the work already happening in local authorities to address poor air quality across the region, but also to accelerate action in areas that have a regional dimension, especially around particulates.

## **6. Inclusive Growth Implications**

This report links to a number of the WMCA's eight inclusive growth priorities, which are identified as 'a catalyst for improved and sustained outcomes for people place, co-designed with partners and beneficiaries'. The Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan will support outcomes around:

- reduction of health inequalities;
- improving understanding, awareness and knowledge of environmental issues;
- supporting the principle of powerful communities through providing support to deliver change and create better places; and,
- equality (reducing the numbers of people living in deprivation).

## **7. Geographical Area of Report's Implications**

The Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan covers all constituent local authorities. There is also potential to collaborate with non-constituent authorities on some of the communications tools and messaging being developed through the Framework.

## **8. Other Implications**

None.

## **9. Schedule of Background Papers**

Appendix 1: West Midlands Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan

# **West Midlands Combined Authority Air Quality Framework – Framework Implementation Plan (2023 – 2025)**

[This document will be fully designed following the consultation process]

September 2023 (Version 1)



**West Midlands  
Combined Authority**



DRAFT



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## Executive Summary

The Framework Implementation Plan has been developed to summarise priority measures from WMCA's Air Quality Framework that will be progressed/delivered between 2023 and 2025. The implementation of these priority measures will see progress towards WMCA's vision:

*"The West Midlands will have air quality that is safe for all people, no matter where you live in the region, resulting in significantly improved public health and environmental outcomes."*

These priority measures have been identified and narrowed down (from the full list of 143 measures identified within the Air Quality Framework) through engagement and consultation with relevant partners, charities, and organisations. This engagement included a consultation event which sought the views of attendees regarding the options/measures that should be the focus of activities over the next two years.

The options have been categorised into the following work packages:

- Monitoring and digital engagement;
- Air quality communications;
- Schools engagement;
- General air quality engagement and behaviour change (including dedicated measures for domestic combustion);
- Net zero and retrofitting;
- Planning and air quality assessment;
- Natural Environment; and
- Research.

In addition, there are standalone measures that do not fit into a logical work package at this stage. The measures/work packages target improvements in both nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter and look beyond road transport emissions. This reflects the shifting focus to particulate matter and associated health effects from both road transport and other sources. Notably, WM-Air estimate that annually in the West Midlands, up to 2311 early deaths are attributable to long term PM<sub>2.5</sub> exposure.

The implementation of the priority measures will not replace, but compliment, the existing activity that is being delivered by both Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and the region's local authorities to support improvements in air quality.

Whilst this document has been produced by the WMCA, working with its constituent local authorities, it will need a collaborative approach to enable delivery. This will include local and regional government, but also the commitment of local businesses and communities. The Framework will also need financial investment in order to implement, and then sustain, the different measures identified. As air pollution is both produced and experienced locally and regionally, any emissions reduction (by industry, transport, and housing) as a result of the implementation of the Framework will have immediate local and regional benefits.

We have begun our road to delivery through a DEFRA-funded air quality grant and we look to continue working with our regional partners, local businesses and communities as the Framework is delivered.

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# 1. Introduction: Purpose and Scope of the Plan

## The Air Quality Framework and need for an Air Quality Implementation Plan

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has developed an Air Quality Framework (available here: *weblink will be inserted when a fully designed version of the Framework is available*). This comprehensive document comprises a list of 143 potential 'options' that could be put into place to address poor air quality and inequality of exposure. The options vary in terms of their likely impact, timescale for implementation and cost but focus on measures that can be implemented at a regional level. The Air Quality Framework recognises the role and responsibility of the constituent<sup>1</sup> and non-constituent local authorities<sup>2</sup> to local air quality management (LAQM), instead supporting them through the provision of a strategic framework for the region. This directly aligns with the Environment Act 2021 which suggests that more regional co-operation should be undertaken.

Given the scale of the task, this Air Quality Implementation Plan has been developed alongside the main Framework document to provide focus for work packages and measures to be prioritised during the initial two-year work programme.

It has been developed in conjunction with organisations from the public sector (including health, public health, and local authorities); research organisations and third sector organisations that have an interest in environment and air quality. Their feedback and input were gained through an interactive consultation process that allowed the identification of priority measures to be implemented.

The outcomes that we hope to achieve through the implementation of the Framework include, but are not limited to:

1. Reduced exposure to both nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub> - particles that are less than 2.5 micrometres (µm) in diameter) striving to achieve better health outcomes for people living and working in the West Midlands, especially in area.
2. Increased awareness amongst people, communities, politicians, and policymakers of the need to tackle poor air quality in the West Midlands.
3. Improved monitoring and data collection and where possible, use it to understand the impact of measures. This can then be used to inform discussions about which measures should subsequently be prioritised to address poor air quality (including both soft measures such as behaviour change campaigns and/or infrastructure solutions).
4. Increased regional and national co-working and cooperation to improve air quality outcomes in the most efficient way possible. This will build upon the work undertaken by local authorities and use the lessons learnt to make the implementation and outcomes as effective as possible.

The delivery of this Framework Implementation Plan will require collaboration across a wide range of stakeholders; it is not something that one organisation (i.e. WMCA) can tackle alone. As a result, we plan to establish a Framework Delivery Group (FDG) that will complement existing governance arrangements. This will enable wider integration of regional stakeholders through focused task and finish groups tackling particular issues. More on this is outlined in **Section 7**.

Finally, engagement and involvement of West Midlands people and communities is fundamental to helping assess, prioritise, and implement measures. The Greener Together Citizens' Panel has already provided input on the things we should consider when deciding to move forward with a particular measure or policy. We plan to continue working with the Panel to support the roll out of the Framework Implementation Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Birmingham City Council, City of Wolverhampton Council, Coventry City Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council.

<sup>2</sup> Cannock Chase District Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Redditch Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Shropshire Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Tamworth Borough Council, Telford and Wrekin Council, Warwickshire County Council and Warwick District Council.

## Scope of the Plan

### Geographical Scope

The Air Quality Framework, and subsequent Air Quality Implementation Plan, are applicable to the seven constituent local authorities and 11 non-constituent local authorities which make up the WMCA region. For the purposes of this work, we have focused on the role of the constituent local authorities but, as with many other environmental issues, there is scope to collaborate across different geographies. For example, the Coventry and Warwickshire Air Quality Alliance have been a stakeholder in developing the Framework.

Anything that can be delivered by WMCA, constituent local authorities or partners is considered within the scope of the Framework. Options which fall outside of the scope of the Framework typically are those which rely upon Government to promote or are not implementable within the current powers.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Table 1.1 lists the organisations involved within the development of the Air Quality Framework and their respective roles and responsibilities. There is a need to for a multi-disciplinary approach when considering measures to be implemented to improve air quality within the region (from transport, environmental and public health to planning etc.).

**Table 1.1: Roles and Responsibilities Within the West Midlands**

Organisation	Responsibilities					
	Transport	Planning	Public Health	Environment (excluding air quality)*	LAQM	Clean Air Zone (CAZ)
WMCA	✓			✓		✓
Local Authorities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Environment Act (2021) Air Quality Partners**	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Notes:						
* This is a responsibility that is shared across regional and local authorities. There are currently no statutory obligations (that sit outside planning), but the WMCA is expecting to be appointed responsible authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (as outlined in the Environment Act, 2021).						
** Air Quality Partners may be a neighbouring local authority; a designated Relevant Public Authority (such as National Highways); the Environment Agency.						

### Role of WMCA

Each option within the Framework has an indicative WMCA role assigned to it, which is as follows:

- **Lead** – WMCA would have direct responsibility and would take action;
- **Enable** – WMCA can enable the option to go forward in some capacity (i.e. undertaking preliminary assessment work, providing physical items (i.e. trees) to enable the work to go forward); and
- **Convene** – Bring parties together to discuss an issue/option and how it can be resolved. This could include providing inputs on challenging issues and then finding the mechanisms to enable them.

The workplan in **Section 5** is a combination of Framework options in complimentary packages and standalone measures. It includes proposed ownership and delivery partners, as well as the targeted delivery stage by the end of the two-year period. This is one of the strengths of a framework approach where the options within the Framework can be initially assessed, then drawn upon when required for more comprehensive and targeted assessment on a case-by-case basis.

## 2. Air Quality, Policy, and Regional Summary

### 2.1 Pollutants of Concern

This Framework is primarily dealing with two ambient (i.e. outdoor) pollutants:

- NO<sub>2</sub> is essentially a primary pollutant (directly emitted to the air). As such, it is typically emitted directly from or formed following high-temperature combustion (notably, road transport).
- PM (particularly PM<sub>2.5</sub>) - PM has both primary and secondary elements (pollutants which are formed in the atmosphere, from the processing of other primary emissions.). Direct emission sources include biomass (wood) burning, combustion, resuspended dust and dust from construction; secondary sources include particle formation from the atmospheric processing of NO<sub>2</sub>, sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), volatile organic compound (VOC) gases, and ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>).

### 2.2 National Legislation, Policy, and Targets

There are several regulatory and advisory limits on air pollutants, as well as suggested policy approaches and measures for tackling poor air quality. For local authorities and the region, the most recent update to air quality limits and policy was part of the Environment Act 2021<sup>3</sup>, its subsequent regulations (The Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023<sup>4</sup>) and other strategy such as the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023<sup>5</sup>.

The current targets are higher than the WHO Air Quality Guideline Values in **Table 2.1**, and therefore seen by many as not being ambitious enough and that the Government should do more to protect health. It was noted that all areas within England should be able to reach the revised target within the timescales set. However, transboundary pollution, especially in London and the south-east, was used to justify not setting a more ambitious target. As such, there is a disparity between what the Government considers an achievable target for England (a requirement of the Environment Act) and what in effect the World Health Organization considers a ‘safe’ level of PM<sub>2.5</sub> to be.

**Table 2.1: Key Ambient Air Quality Standards (for England) and Guideline Values Set by the World Health Organization**

Pollutant	Averaging Period	Government Objective in England (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	WHO Air Quality Guideline Values (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )
NO <sub>2</sub>	Annual mean	40	10
	1-hour (hourly) mean	200 (not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year)	N/A
	24-hour (daily) mean	N/A	25 (not to be exceeded more than 3 to 4 times a year)
PM <sub>10</sub>	Annual mean	40	15
	24-hour (daily) mean	50 (not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year)	45 (not to be exceeded more than 3 to 4 times a year)
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	Annual mean (in 2023)	20	5
	Annual mean (2028 interim target)	12	5
	Annual mean (2040 target)	10	5

<sup>3</sup> Environment Act 2021, c.30. Online: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents>

<sup>4</sup> The Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023 (SI 2023/96). Online: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/96/contents/made>

<sup>5</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2023) Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. Online: Environmental Improvement Plan (publishing.service.gov.uk)

## Local Air Quality Management

Local authorities have had long standing responsibilities due to the *Local Air Quality Management* (LAQM) regime under the Environment Act 1995. There were amendments to the LAQM regime in the Environment Act 2021, alongside more defined responsibility for tackling local air pollution. The responsibility for addressing local air quality is now shared between designated relevant public authorities, all tiers of local government and neighbouring authorities. The key expectations have been further defined within the DEFRA policy paper<sup>6</sup> which includes statements such as “*If the government considers local action has not gone far enough, we will consider introducing a statutory duty on local authorities*”. For context, Appendix B details what the government’s priorities and actions are and provides some context on what will be done nationally.

The LAQM regime requires every district and unitary authority to review and assess air quality in their area on a regular basis and present the findings in an Annual Status Report (ASR). The ASRs will identify if objectives have been or, or will be, achieved at relevant locations by the required date. If an air quality management area (AQMA) is designated on the back of an ASR, an Action Plan should be prepared within 12 months following the declaration of the AQMA.

There have been varying mechanisms and measures to reduce pollutant concentrations in areas with exceedances of the air quality objectives. However, typically these are in the form of transport schemes, smaller scale mitigation, behaviour change and wider geographical controls such as Smoke Control Areas (SCAs). More recently there have been measures such as Clean Air Zones (CAZs) that can be used as a mechanism to meet the legally binding NO<sub>2</sub> air quality objective in the shortest possible time. However, such wide scale and drastic measures such as CAZs can have varying impacts on concentrations depending on the restrictions imposed. They can also exacerbate social and economic inequality.

Now with the defined responsibility to improve local air quality, it is imperative that regional solutions are implemented. This is a departure from most LAQM approaches, which have been primarily locally targeted when not included within a regional plan (such as a Local Transport Plan). Most local authorities have extensive experience in improving air quality within their area, however there are potential benefits to using this knowledge to expand measures across the region and implement new ones.

## 2.3 Impacts, Sources and Regional Picture

### Air Quality Impacts on Health and the Environment

Traditionally for **ambient air pollution**, the focus has been on NO<sub>2</sub> and the larger particle sizes (such as PM<sub>10</sub>). However, there is a substantial evidence base that concludes<sup>7</sup> PM<sub>2.5</sub> is more dangerous to human health, as the particles can penetrate more deeply into the body, lungs and even bloodstream. As such, the Framework options have a particular focus on reducing emissions and exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub>. However, pollutants such as NH<sub>3</sub> should not be ignored as they have both a direct impact on the natural environment and play a part in secondary PM<sub>2.5</sub> formation, with emissions largely coming from agriculture.

The mortality burden of long-term exposure to outdoor air pollution (i.e., an estimate of how many people die from long-term outdoor air quality exposure) in England is estimated to be equivalent to 26,000 to 38,000 deaths a year<sup>8</sup>. Most of these deaths attributable to outdoor air pollution are related to long-term exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub>. WM-Air estimate that annually in the West Midlands, up to 2311 early deaths are attributable to long term PM<sub>2.5</sub> exposure. In addition to the mortality burden, there is the causation and exacerbation of both avoidable and unavoidable chronic illnesses, such as asthma, along with associated impacts on mental health and cognitive function. As such,

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<sup>6</sup> DEFRA (2023) *Air quality strategy: framework for local authority delivery*. Online:

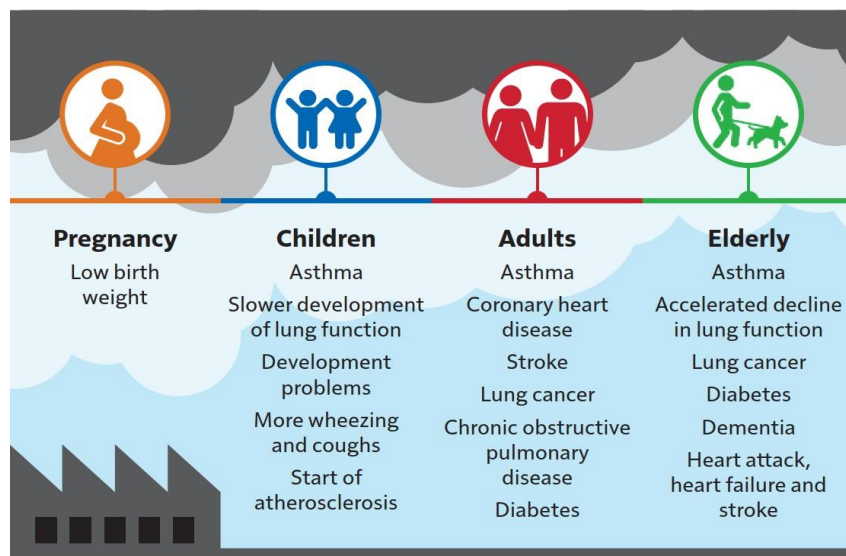
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-air-quality-strategy-for-england/air-quality-strategy-framework-for-local-authority-delivery>

<sup>7</sup> An extensive evidence base on the impact of PM<sub>2.5</sub> on health is outlined within the Chief Medical Officer’s annual report 2022. Online: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1124738/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-air-pollution-dec-2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1124738/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-air-pollution-dec-2022.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Mitsakou C et al. (2022) *UK Health Security Agency Chemical Hazards and Poisons Report Issue 28 – June 2022: Updated mortality burden estimates attributable to air pollution*. Online:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1083447/CHaPR\\_AQ\\_Special\\_Edition\\_2206116.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1083447/CHaPR_AQ_Special_Edition_2206116.pdf)

exposure to poor air quality has a significant impact on quality of life, public health, and the economy, when considering associated healthcare costs. As shown in **Figure 1**, the impact of poor air quality can affect anyone during their lifetime, and impacts are typically not equal. Air quality inequality can stem from a variety of factors



**Figure 1: Health effects of air pollution throughout life. From Chief Medical Officer’s 2022 Annual Report: Air Pollution**

including socio-economics, ethnicity, age and other medical factors (such as pregnancy and pre-existing conditions).

Ambient air pollution also has an impact on the natural environment, with pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and NH<sub>3</sub> having an impact on sensitive plants. Through processes such as nitrogen deposition and direct toxicity, increased pollution can lead to a decrease in biodiversity and even crop damage, because some plants can adapt to the changes better than others.

**Indoor air pollution** is affected by both actions that happen indoors, and the quality of the air outdoors entering the space in question. Sources of indoor air

pollution include combustion sources (such as gas boilers/hobs and solid fuel appliances like log burners), household products, furniture mould, cooking and outdoor pollutants. Indoor air quality is a much less established field of study than outdoor air quality. However, with improvements to outdoor air quality, it is expected that there will be an increased focus on indoor air quality, especially given the time that people spend indoors, and that there are many things that can be done to reduce and mitigate exposure.

### Pollutant Sources Within the West Midlands

Primary NO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions in the West Midlands are dominated by road transport. Within this, as typical for UK urban environments, emissions are dominated by older diesel vehicles. PM, with a lifetime of a few days, bridges this divide: PM levels in the West Midlands reflect both local emissions, and transported pollution from elsewhere (i.e. transboundary pollution). Primary PM emissions in the West Midlands also have a much wider spread of sources – including commercial and domestic combustion, industrial production and road transport. The largest single source of PM emissions in the West Midlands is domestic and commercial combustion.

Air pollutants are dispersed and transported by the wind. Weather conditions can also affect their deposition and removal. Their rate of removal from the air – or lifetime – reflects the importance of transported pollution relative to local emissions. Notably, levels of short-lived species will be dominated by local or regional emissions (e.g. NO<sub>2</sub>); at the opposite extreme levels of very long-lived species depend upon emissions globally (e.g. carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)).

Whilst we are expecting NO<sub>2</sub> to decrease with the move to electric vehicles, projections from the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory indicate that we cannot currently anticipate an equivalent reduction in PM<sub>2.5</sub> without additional interventions (related to tyre and road wear due to increased vehicle weight).

### Regional Ambient Air Quality Overview

Ambient air quality has significantly improved over the past 50 years, particularly with notable reductions in pollutants like NO<sub>2</sub>. This trend is expected to continue as the transportation industry shifts towards lower and zero-emission vehicles. However, the decrease in particulate matter (PM) concentrations has slowed in the last decade. Moreover, PM emissions are not solely from transportation; domestic combustion, especially in the West Midlands, remains a primary source of PM emissions, and an increase in solid fuel combustion in recent years has hindered overall emission reductions.

NH<sub>3</sub> is typically more relevant to the natural environment but is gaining importance in terms of human health. It can contribute to increased secondary PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations through chemical reactions in the atmosphere. Ammonia emissions have not decreased to the same extent as other pollutants.



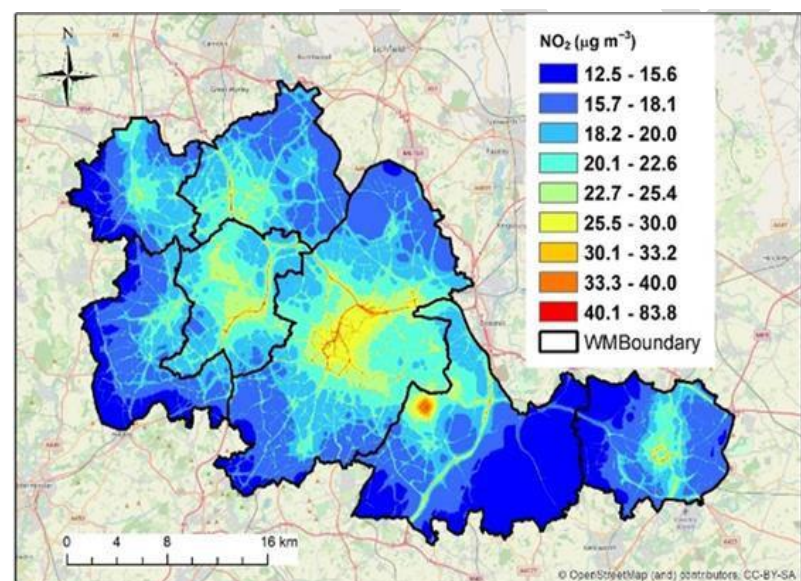
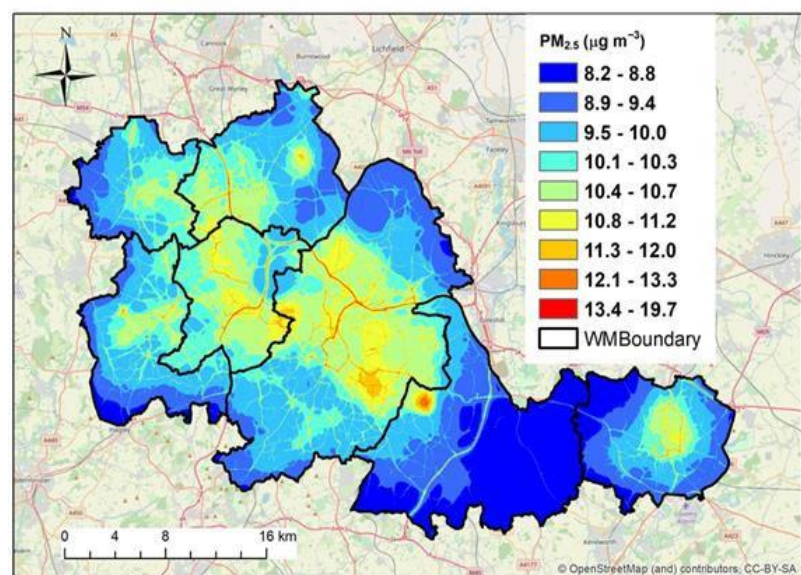
The highest annual average PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations in the West Midlands are modelled in central Birmingham, Coventry, Sandwell and Walsall (as shown in **Figure 2**). This is largely supported by the monitoring undertaken by the WMCA constituent local authorities and published within their Annual Status Reports (ASRs).

Across the region, monitored concentrations of PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> are below their respective objectives, with monitored PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations being below the 2040 target (10µg/m<sup>3</sup>) in recent years. This indicates that in comparison to the government’s objectives, monitored PM concentrations are acceptable (although this may not capture all pollution hot spots). However, all areas exceed the WHO Air Quality Guideline Value (5µg/m<sup>3</sup>); this is the situation across England, due to the combination of urban, rural, and transboundary pollution, from a mixture of natural and human origins. DEFRA mapping data indicates that annual average PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels in 72 of the 192 wards within the West Midlands exceed 10µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Modelling by WM-Air<sup>9</sup> suggests that that 1.2m people or ca. 40% of the West Midlands’

population live in wards exceeding 10µg/m<sup>3</sup>. What emerges from this data is that the least advantaged areas (highest indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) score) tend to have the worst air quality and that the picture varies depending on the data source and methodology used.

Across the WMCA area in 2021, the estimated *fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution* was higher than the West Midlands average (includes non-WMCA local authorities) and English average (both 5.5%). Sandwell is predicted to have the highest fraction at 6.5%, whilst Coventry, Dudley, Solihull and Wolverhampton have the lowest fraction of WMCA constituents at 5.7%. Although the regional PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitoring results are promising when compared to the Government’s 2040 target, meeting more ambitious targets will reduce the burden and promote a wide array of benefits to the region. These include but are not limited to improvements in health, reduction in inequality and financial benefits of a healthier and more productive West Midlands.

For NO<sub>2</sub>, there have been historical exceedances of the annual mean objective prior to COVID-19, however there were locations in the West Midlands which exceeded the objective during covid affected years (2020 and 2021). In line with the national trends, the number of locations exceeding the annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> objective has been decreasing over the past 15 years,



**Figure 2: Predicted annual average concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> (top) and NO<sub>2</sub> (bottom) in the West Midlands. Drawn from NAEI emission data & WM-Air modelling.**

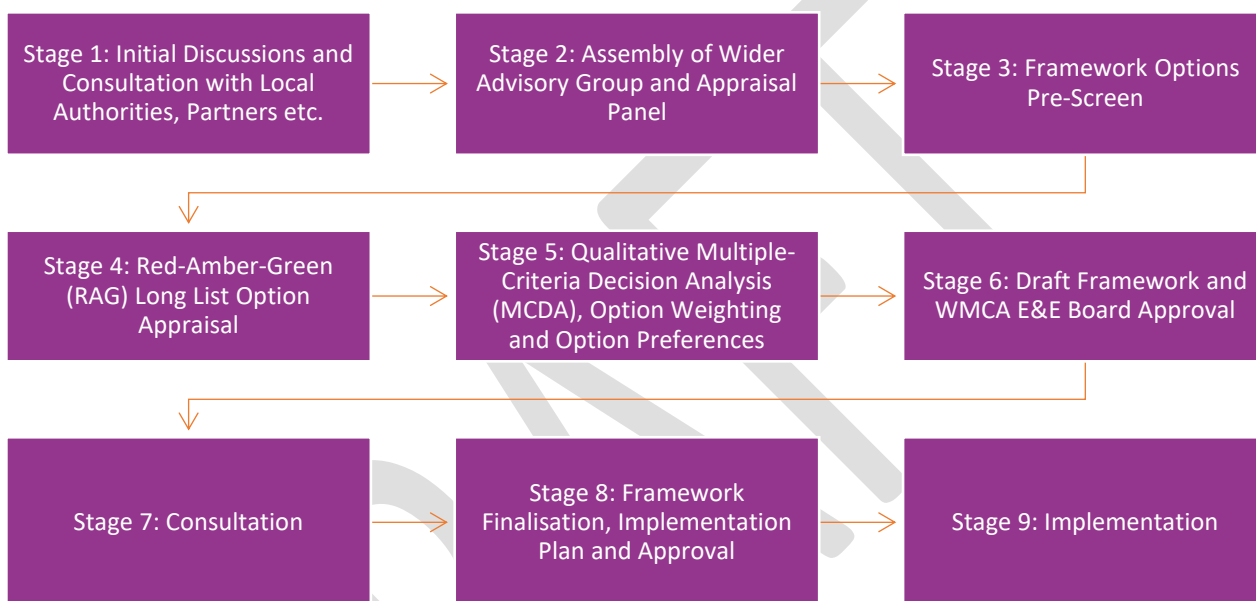
however in some urban locations, the concentrations are not decreasing at the same rate elsewhere within the region. The results for 2022 (the first year to not have significant COVID-19 related impacts) are currently being prepared by local authorities, so this will provide further update on the progress made in dealing with road-source NO<sub>2</sub> emissions and exceedances of the annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> objective.

<sup>9</sup> Zhong J et al. (2021) *Atmosphere* 2021, 12(8), 983: *Using Task Farming to Optimise a Street-Scale Resolution Air Quality Model of the West Midlands (UK)*. Accessed online: <https://www.mdpi.com/2073-4433/12/8/983>

### 3. Framework Overview

In response to member questions on air quality, WMCA in conjunction with the WM-Air project at the University of Birmingham, prepared an Air Quality Options paper<sup>10</sup>, which was presented to the WMCA Board in February 2022.

An initial overview of actions was identified in this paper, but there was recognition that this needed to be translated into an Air Quality Framework comprising a list of options assessed and prioritised against criteria including health outcomes, wider benefits, feasibility of implementation, cost, and timescales as well as the likelihood to deliver air quality improvements. The Air Quality Framework took these options and included additional options following discussions with constituent local authorities and research from other key sources (such as from DEFRA<sup>11</sup>). The main Framework document details the each of the stages in the Framework process, however **Figure 3** below provides a summary of the stages of work undertaken.



**Figure 3: Framework Stages and Workflow**

At the inception of the Framework and throughout the process, regular discussion and consultation were undertaken with TfWM, constituent local authorities and partners such as WM-Air. Details of the contributors and consultees for the Framework are given in **Appendix C**. These discussions shaped the Framework’s scope and direction, along with specific options which had not been previously identified. The WMCA’s Greener Together Citizens’ Panel also led the development of ‘tests’ that should be used to guide the detailed assessment and implementation of options outlined in this Framework Implementation Plan. More detail on how the Air Quality Framework options were appraised can be found in the document here (*weblink will be inserted when a fully designed version of the Framework is available*).

A targeted consultation process was undertaken in August 2023, culminating in an in-person workshop event. Organisations from the public sector (including health, public health, and local authorities); research and third sector organisations that have an interest in environment, health and air quality were invited to the event. The workshop event allowed for decision makers and other key organisations to provide feedback on the draft Framework document, discuss air quality issues and make recommendations on the options they would like included within this document. Following the consultation event, feedback and comments were collated along with the option recommendations for inclusion within this Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan. The resultant list of priorities within **Section 5** provides a challenging, but realistic set of packages and measures to improve air quality within the region.

<sup>10</sup> WM-Air (2022) Air Quality in the West Midlands: Option Paper Online: <https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s6510/Appendix.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Wood Group UK (2022) Study to identify potential measures to reduce future PM2.5 concentrations to inform PM2.5 target development. Online: [https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cats/2022/25627\\_Wood\\_Sector\\_Review\\_Report.pdf](https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cats/2022/25627_Wood_Sector_Review_Report.pdf)

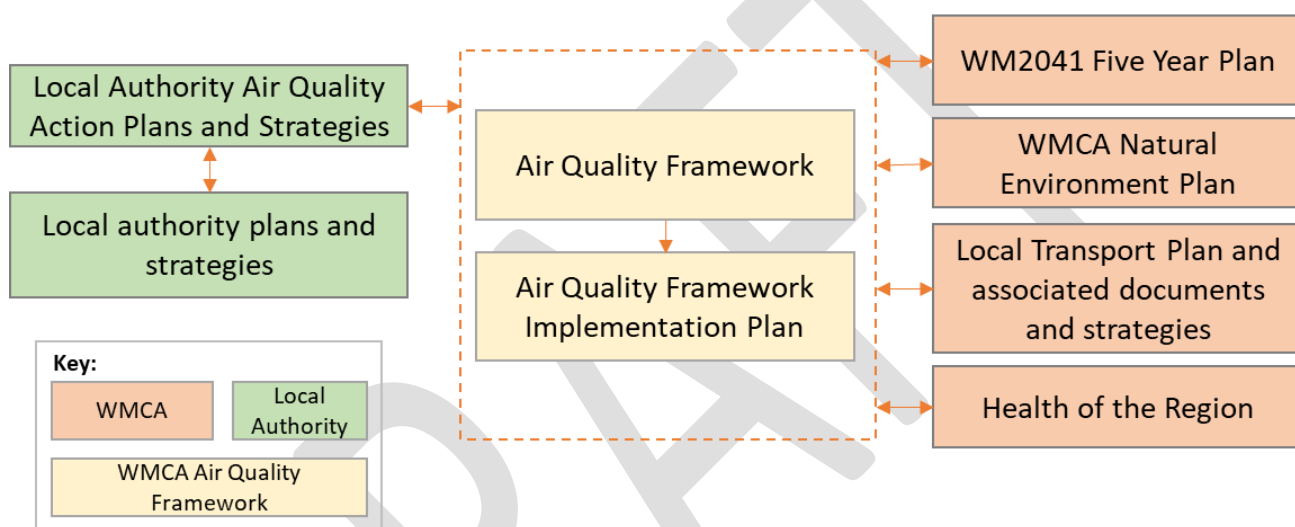
## 4. Wider West Midlands Strategic Approach

The Air Quality Framework, and this Framework Implementation Plan, do not sit within a policy vacuum. Strategic approach, and delivery, is dependent on effective coordination across other WMCA and local authority functions. These predominantly relate to:

- Existing air quality plans (especially local authority Air Quality Action Plans and strategies)
- Transport plans, including the TfWM Local Transport Plan (LTP), and associated area strategies and implementation plans.
- Net zero plans. At a regional level this is the WM2041 plan (and the associated Five-Year Plan) as well as local authority net zero strategies.
- Other linked area of work, e.g. regional and local public health and natural environment plans.

These are represented in the diagram below (**Figure 4**). We expect the Air Quality Framework Delivery Group to work with all of these areas as part of delivery (also see governance in **Section 7**).

### WMCA Air Quality Framework – strategy alignment



**Figure 4: Alignment of the WMCA Air Quality Framework to Regional Strategies**

Within the boxes in the above diagram, there are specific plans and strategies that will be relevant to the successful delivery of air quality improvements. For example, the local authority plans and strategies box represents planning, local net zero plans, public health strategy, transport, natural environment, and net zero plans. We will be relying on the work with local authorities to identify areas where the Air Quality Framework can support on delivery and consistency.

Further, each of these plans/ strategies will be on a different cycle of renewal, approval, and adoption. As a result, the aim would be for the Air Quality Framework to support the provision of up-to-date information and action on addressing air quality for inclusion where appropriate.

## 5. Our priorities 2023 – 2025

This section outlines the priorities of the Framework for the next two years by providing a set of work packages (WP) and measures to progress. The tables within this section provide an overview of the following:

- What each package or measure will deliver;
- Expected stage of delivery for the next two years;
- Cross references to the Framework options;
- Ownership for delivery and stakeholders/consultees;
- Indicative costs; and
- Risks and dependencies.

The overall scope, tasks required to progress, and funding requirements vary across the work packages and measures. As such, there are varied levels of delivery targeted within the two-years this document covers, these are:

- Feasibility;
- Business case prepared;
- Funding sought/secured;
- Early stage implementation; and
- Full implementation.

The Framework options vary in scope and granularity, with some options within the Framework having logical synergies with others. Where this is the case and there is benefit to a combined delivery, they have been grouped together into a work package. These include:

- WP1 - Monitoring and Digital Engagement (Table 5.1);
- WP2 - Air Quality Communications (Table 5.2);
- WP3 - Schools (Table 5.3);
- WP4 - General Air Quality Engagement and Behaviour Change (Table 5.4);
- WP5 - Dedicated Engagement and Behaviour Change Package for Domestic Combustion (Table 5.5);
- WP6 - Net Zero and Retrofit (Table 5.6);
- WP7 - Planning and Air Quality Assessment (Table 5.7);
- WP8 - Natural Environment (Table 5.8); and
- WP9 - Research (Table 5.9).

Many of the work packages are interconnected with common themes and actions, so there will be both opportunities for reduced overheads when it comes to resourcing, finances, and delivery. Key aspects such as the building of communication channels and monitoring of outcomes can be applied across all work packages.

Those options that represent larger distinct works by themselves or do not naturally fit into a work package have been retained as a standalone measure. These standalone measures have the potential to be incorporated into existing or future work (such as the TfWM LTP) and the Framework Delivery Group will have a role in optimising the delivery of these measures, whether that be processing with a measure in isolation or have it incorporated into other packages. Tables 5.10 (Transport for West Midlands and local authority standalone transport measures) and 5.11 (additional standalone measures for WMCA, Transport for West Midlands and local authorities) summarise the measures that have not been placed into a work package. In all the tables below, the Framework options which make up the work packages or measures are stated, with the option description, followed by the Framework option identifier (such as 'MON1') in brackets.

Regarding finances and funding sources, an assumption has been made that officer time will be available from local authorities, supported by a WMCA officer post (currently financed by DEFRA). Some work packages and measures can be delivered in conjunction with existing projects and work (with some additional funding or officer time), but others will need standalone funding. Indicative resource requirements for the next 2 years have been put against these.

Much of the engagement and behaviour change work can be delivered through officer time and by leveraging the benefits of having more of a regional approach. Other work packages, those relating to transport and infrastructure, will be

much more complex to estimate financially and will have to be determined once allocated to a delivery partner and a scope is defined. The Framework Delivery Group will play an integral role in financing and resourcing the delivery of the work packages and measures. In advance of this, it has already been demonstrated that the WMCA and seven constituent local authorities are able to attract funding through DEFRA grants and DLUHC funding. There is also the scope for Section 106 (S106) funding and funds raised through damage cost calculations to support specific work packages in the future.

Where the costs of stand-alone measures and work packages are not yet known, the following scale has been applied based on professional judgement:

- £ - Officer time, or below £50,000
- ££ - Between £100,000 and £250,000
- £££ - Above £500,000

### Proposed Work Packages

**Table 5.1: WP1 - Monitoring and Digital Engagement**

Monitoring and Digital Engagement			
<b>Package Summary</b>	Establish a West Midlands wide low-cost sensor network, along with an associated standalone website, network standard and behaviour change elements.		
<b>Expected Delivery</b>	Full implementation		
<b>Consisting of Framework Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish, manage, and maintain a West Midlands wide low-cost sensor network, with an associated standalone website that includes existing regional data and air quality information that is effective for behaviour change. (MON1)</li> <li>▪ Establish regional standards on air quality monitoring covering all monitoring types to ensure that the data being acquired is robust and the equipment used is to a minimum standard. (MON2)</li> <li>▪ Use a centralised West Midlands air quality network website as a data store to enable various analyses. (MON4)</li> <li>▪ Use low-cost sensors to capture high level domestic combustion data to be used in effective behavioural change advertisement and create real life stories/case studies. (EBC9)</li> <li>▪ Provide a centralised online public resource and/or platform for engagement and behaviour change co-ordination across the West Midlands. (EBC30)</li> <li>▪ Use a regional air quality website to deliver key air quality information and effective information to facilitate behavioural change through a single point for the West Midlands. (EBC31)</li> <li>▪ Interactive online resources to demonstrate air quality issues. (EBC32)</li> </ul>		
<b>Proposed Ownership</b>	WMCA, with local authority and partner input.	<b>Stakeholders/ Consultees</b>	Local authorities, TfWM, communities and businesses.
<b>Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources</b>	£640k (already secured through DEFRA grant and DLUHC funding), likely to cover up to five years.	<b>Risks</b>	Long term viability without long term funding. Dating of equipment due to adoption of new technologies/fragmentation of technologies.
<b>Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources</b>	TBC following finalisation of scope and procurement, however existing funds expected to provide support to five years (££-£££).	<b>Dependencies</b>	External funding, local authority highways/TfWM support for installation on lampposts where required and property owner consent.

**Table 5.2: WP2 - Air Quality Communications**

Air Quality Communications	
<b>Package Summary</b>	Produce a communications strategy and materials to harmonise and maximise the effective delivery of air quality communications throughout the West Midlands. This would include both using existing channels of communications (such as local authority communication teams) and leveraging trusted advisors to disseminate key information to those that need it the most. Having coordinated and harmonised air quality messaging will be key to increasing awareness and leading to changes in behaviour.
<b>Expected Delivery</b>	Early stage to full implementation

Air Quality Communications			
<b>Consisting of Framework Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage campaigns for public transport, walking and cycling to promote the various co-benefits. (EBC10)</li> <li>Use health professionals to educate and disseminate targeted air quality information to vulnerable and at-risk patients. (EBC27)</li> <li>Work with existing public health channels to deliver consistent messaging across the West Midlands. (EBC29)</li> <li>Use trusted advisors to disseminate air quality messaging, including faith leaders, GPs, nurses, fire service etc. (EBC34)</li> <li>Ensure that air quality communication and engagement are consistent and inclusive across the West Midlands (and modified where necessary) to make messaging as clear as possible with the best chance of behavioural change. (EBC38)</li> <li>Roll out tools to warn and update residents of poor air quality and supported by regional/local healthcare system. (PH1)</li> </ul>		
<b>Proposed Ownership</b>	WMCA, with local authorities supporting on local implementation.	<b>Stakeholders/ Consultees</b>	Local authorities (air quality, public health, and communication teams), TfWM, healthcare, communities, and external organisations.
<b>Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources</b>	Set up and initial delivery of the work package expected to be in the region of £50,000.	<b>Risks</b>	Poor public reach due to lack of coordination in communications, no agreement on messaging and key messages, conflicting messaging, lack of support within communities.
<b>Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources</b>	TBC following feasibility – Expected to be officer time + any identified promotional costs (£).	<b>Dependencies</b>	Establishment of strong communication channels, agreement on messaging, frequency, and style. Lessons learnt and outputs from the WMCA led DEFRA behaviour change project.

**Table 5.3: WP3 - Schools**

Schools			
<b>Package Summary</b>	Produce a coordinated approach to engaging with West Midlands schools on air quality. Several local authorities already undertake schools' engagement. However, utilising existing experience, lessons learnt and contacts to deliver a consistent engagement programme and accreditation scheme should provide better air quality outcomes in a more time and financial efficient way. Working with a wide range of partners and local organisations will allow for greater access to secondary and further education establishments, which are historically difficult to engage with (due to such factors as resourcing, time, and curriculum relevancy).		
<b>Expected Delivery</b>	Early-stage implementation		
<b>Consisting of Framework Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a West Midlands schools accreditation and education scheme for air quality. (EBC28)</li> <li>Develop and deliver a consistent regional schools engagement programme across the West Midlands, with flexibility to account for variations across the area (such as city vs suburban locations). (PH4)</li> </ul>		
<b>Proposed Ownership</b>	WMCA, with local authorities supporting on local implementation	<b>Stakeholders/ Consultees</b>	Schools, local authorities (air quality, public health, and communication teams), TfWM, communities and external organisations.
<b>Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources</b>	Establishment of the region wide programme and initial delivery of the work package expected to be in the region of £100,000.	<b>Risks</b>	Low uptake by schools (particularly secondary schools) because of lack of time/resourcing, duplication of work. Lack of officer time leading to fewer schools and a smaller programme.
<b>Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources</b>	TBC following feasibility – Expected to be officer time + any identified promotional costs (£). Potential Section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding streams. Potential funding request from DEFRA etc.	<b>Dependencies</b>	Sufficient officer time and promotion to provide and effective programme.

**Table 5.4: WP4 - General Air Quality Engagement and Behaviour Change**

General Air Quality Engagement and Behaviour Change	
<b>Package Summary</b>	Produce a public health toolkit (a collection of authoritative and adaptable resources) and toolbox of measures (a package of measures for implementation) to raise the awareness of air quality issues and how changes in behaviour can have both personal and wider benefits. The toolkit and toolbox approach will aim to reduce the

General Air Quality Engagement and Behaviour Change			
	ongoing resourcing burden, as resources and measures are collated for easier implementation. Linkages to the air quality communications package is key to disseminate information and ensure the information reaches everyone within the West Midlands. There will be key interactions with the DEFRA behaviour change project regarding campaigns that could be implemented, and the lessons learnt.		
<b>Expected Delivery</b>	Early stage to full implementation		
<b>Consisting of Framework Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Raise awareness of wider general indoor air quality issues, how to manage and potential solutions. (EBC4)</li> <li>▪ Provide information on how to reduce personal exposure to poor air quality outside of the home and what can be benefits can be. (EBC25)</li> <li>▪ Develop a small public health toolkit between stakeholders which standardises air quality communications and phrases across the West Midlands to ensure that communications are consistent and effective. (EBC26)</li> <li>▪ Develop a toolbox of measures that local authorities can easily implement and have pre-packaged communications packages that local authorities can use to promote the measures. (PH3)</li> </ul>		
<b>Proposed Ownership</b>	WMCA, with local authorities supporting on local implementation.	<b>Stakeholders/ Consultees</b>	Local authorities (air quality, public health, and communication teams), TfWM, healthcare, communities, external organisations, and businesses.
<b>Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources</b>	£350,000 funding secured through DEFRA for a seven behaviour change programmes across the WMCA area (covering themes in WP4 and WP5)	<b>Risks</b>	Poor public reach due to lack of coordination in communications, no agreement on messaging and key messages, conflicting messaging, lack of support within communities. Lack of officer time leading to a smaller programme.
<b>Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources</b>	TBC following feasibility – Expected to be officer time + any identified promotional costs (£). Potential Section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding streams.	<b>Dependencies</b>	Establishment of strong communication channels, agreement on messaging, frequency, and style. Lessons learnt and outputs from the WMCA led DEFRA behaviour change project.

**Table 5.5: WP5 - Dedicated Engagement and Behaviour Change Package for Domestic Combustion**

Dedicated Engagement and Behaviour Change Package for Domestic Combustion			
<b>Package Summary</b>	Produce an effective regional engagement and behaviour change campaign to raise the profile of domestic combustion issues, particularly log burning, and the steps that can be taken to reduce non-essential emissions and exposure. Many residents are unaware of the health risks that even DEFRA approved appliances can have on their household's health and others within the region. Using lessons learnt from the DEFRA behaviour change project and others (such as the London Wood Burning Project), the package will aim to inform and promote small changes in behaviour to reduce a major source of PM <sub>2.5</sub> emissions within the region. Reducing the level of misinformation and misconceptions regarding log burning and domestic combustion will be key, as will driving home the real-world health risks.		
<b>Expected Delivery</b>	Early-stage implementation		
<b>Consisting of Framework Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To raise awareness of specific air quality issues and potential solutions associated with the use of log burners, fireplaces, and bonfires. (EBC1)</li> <li>▪ Raise awareness of air quality issues and potential solutions associated with general domestic combustion. (EBC2)</li> <li>▪ Raise awareness for when solid fuel combustion is required, to ensure the correct fuels are used (i.e. dry seasoned wood). (EBC3)</li> </ul>		
<b>Proposed Ownership</b>	WMCA, with local authorities supporting on local implementation	<b>Stakeholders/ Consultees</b>	Local authorities (air quality, public health, and communication teams), healthcare, communities, external organisations, and businesses.
<b>Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources</b>	£350,000 funding secured through DEFRA for a seven behaviour change programmes across the WMCA area (covering themes in WP4 and WP5)	<b>Risks</b>	Poor public reach due to lack of coordination in communications, no agreement on messaging and key messages, conflicting messaging, lack of support within communities. Lack of officer time leading to a smaller programme. Adverse

Dedicated Engagement and Behaviour Change Package for Domestic Combustion			
			publicity when targeting non-essential combustion.
<b>Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources</b>	TBC following feasibility – Expected to be officer time + any identified promotional costs (£). Potential Section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding streams. Potential funding request from DEFRA etc.	<b>Dependencies</b>	Establishment of strong communication channels, agreement on messaging, frequency, and style. Lessons learnt and outputs from the WMCA led DEFRA behaviour change project.

**Table 5.6: WP6 - Net Zero and Retrofit**

Net Zero and Retrofit			
<b>Package Summary</b>	Leverage existing WMCA and local authority net zero initiatives to promote the co-benefits of addressing air quality and Net Zero at the same time, for example through the WMCA Net Zero Neighbourhood programme. The incorporation of air quality as a greater component and recognising both the benefit and disbenefits of climate and net-zero action will promote air quality issues and promote changes that reduce emissions and exposure when implemented. The retrofit scheme will also have the potential to target more deprived areas and reduce the exposure of those most affected by poor air quality. There are also opportunities for the new WM-Net Zero research project to support and provide outputs.		
<b>Expected Delivery</b>	Full implementation		
<b>Consisting of Framework Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Metrics for improving air quality, to capture co-benefits from net zero actions and for policy to reduce regional health inequalities. (CNZ1)</li> <li>▪ Reduce Fuel Combustion by Improving home Energy Efficiency. (DOM1)</li> <li>▪ Supporting the transition from gas central heating. (DOM4)</li> <li>▪ Support landlords and homeowners in accessing grants to retrofit. (DOM6)</li> </ul>		
<b>Proposed Ownership</b>	WMCA, with local authorities supporting on local implementation	<b>Stakeholders/ Consultees</b>	Local authorities (air quality, public health, net zero and planning teams), TfWM, WM-Net Zero, businesses, housing organisations, healthcare, and communities.
<b>Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources</b>	Officer time (£) from an air quality perspective, but tying into existing packages with significant funding.	<b>Risks</b>	Potential costs to lead to meaningful change when based on air quality grounds. Message getting lost in the net zero messaging. Lack of officer time.
<b>Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources</b>	TBC following feasibility – Officer time (£) from an air quality perspective, but tying into existing packages (£££). Potential Section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding streams.	<b>Dependencies</b>	Continuation of current net zero programmes, net zero neighbourhoods' expansion.

**Table 5.7: WP7 - Planning and Air Quality Assessment**

Planning and Air Quality Assessment Considerations	
<b>Package Summary</b>	Air quality is a material planning consideration and ensuring that the planning process both promotes and addresses air quality issues is a key aspect of delivering better air quality outcomes. By having specific aspects of planning best practice consistent throughout the West Midlands, standards can be raised, and developers know what is required. Some aspects such as air quality positive/neutral (i.e. ensuring that new developments' transport and building emissions do not worsen air quality; and maximising air quality benefits, while minimising exposure) and health impact assessments may require a longer-term approach, however they can be powerful tools to reduce future emissions and exposure for both new and existing residents. There is the potential to expand existing requirements for damage cost assessments to fund air quality initiatives and promote higher standards of development.
<b>Expected Delivery</b>	Business case to early-stage implementation
<b>Consisting of</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a region wide planning and design for air quality best practice document which will be kept updated with local, regional, and national changes in guidance and legislation. (PPG1)</li> </ul>



Planning and Air Quality Assessment Considerations			
<b>Framework Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce air quality neutral and/or air quality positive assessments into the planning process across the West Midlands. (PPG2)</li> <li>Including Health Impact Assessments (HIA) in planning applications and containing air quality. (PPG8)</li> <li>Ensure that there is the sufficient assessment/integration of transport plans and projects (such as area transport strategies and mitigation schemes) to ensure that the air quality impacts are quantified and where necessary, mitigated. (TRN1)</li> <li>Land use planning – strongly promote development locations that minimize the need to travel and promote public transport use, and ensure sufficient sustainable transport provision is provided up-front of development opening. (NBE8)</li> </ul>		
<b>Proposed Ownership</b>	Local authorities, supported by WMCA	<b>Stakeholders/ Consultees</b>	Local authorities (air quality, public health and planning teams), TfWM and communities
<b>Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources</b>	£60,000 to bring in external delivery support	<b>Risks</b>	Patchy implementation, evolving planning processes, legislation, guidance etc. Political support for additional planning processes and policy. Lack of officer time.
<b>Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources</b>	Officer time (£)	<b>Dependencies</b>	Proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), emerging local plans including enhanced air quality considerations.

**Table 5.8: WP8 - Natural Environment**

Natural Environment			
<b>Package Summary</b>	Through its role as the Responsible Authority to deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Natural Environment Plan, the WMCA is best placed to coordinate on natural environment aspects. To begin with, this will involve promoting the best ways to use the natural environment to improve air quality within the West Midlands, but also finding ways in which existing methods (such as biodiversity net gain (BNG)) can be leveraged to promote better air quality outcomes.		
<b>Expected Delivery</b>	Early-stage implementation		
<b>Consisting of Framework Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage modified biodiversity net gain (BNG) metrics to improve urban design and reduce exposure to poor air quality. (NBE1)</li> <li>Working through the Natural Environment Plan to identify best uses of green infrastructure for air quality. (NBE5)</li> </ul>		
<b>Proposed Ownership</b>	WMCA, with local authorities supporting on local implementation and policy	<b>Stakeholders/ Consultees</b>	Local authorities (air quality, public health, planning and natural environment teams), partners, communities, and developers.
<b>Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources</b>	Officer time (+ DEFRA funding through Local Nature Recovery Strategy Responsible Authority function)	<b>Risks</b>	Uptake from constituent local authorities, developers (due to costs). Willingness for developers to engage. Lack of officer time.
<b>Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources</b>	Officer time (£)	<b>Dependencies</b>	Local Nature Recovery Strategy, adjustment to BNG metrics

**Table 5.9: WP9 - Research**

Research	
<b>Package Summary</b>	Further detailed research into real-world emissions and population exposure in the West Midlands is key in understanding the best measures and policy that can be applied. Extensive work is already being by WM-Air within the West Midlands, but additional research will enable us to determine the best path to better air quality outcomes. Additionally, creating new links with research institutions and commercial partners will allow for the research into more complex issues within the region such as increased road wear and improving road surface materials.
<b>Expected Delivery</b>	Funding secured to early-stage implementation

Research			
<b>Consisting of Framework Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the relative importance of within-region emissions and transported air pollution for WMCA air quality. (MON5)</li> <li>Research into the real-world exposure of West Midlands residents (including the differences in exposure based on age and socio-economic situation) and what measures can be effectively implemented based on the findings. (PH5)</li> <li>Research on the effectiveness of new technologies for reducing pollutant concentrations in the built environment. (NBE12)</li> <li>Research the sources and methods for effective secondary aerosol formation reduction and how these can be implemented across commercial, industrial and agriculture. (CIA21)</li> </ul>		
<b>Proposed Ownership</b>	WM-Air, University of Birmingham	<b>Stakeholders/Consultees</b>	Research institutions, WMCA, Local authorities (air quality, public health, and communication teams), TfWM, healthcare, communities, businesses, and industry.
<b>Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources</b>	Utilising existing research streams (£)	<b>Risks</b>	Potential difficulty in providing the resolution required across the region. Additional data may be required for particular sources which may be expensive.
<b>Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources</b>	TBC depending on funding coming forward and existing funding streams - ££-£££	<b>Dependencies</b>	Ongoing WM-Air funding and capacity within the workstreams. Finding research institutions with existing complementing workstreams or where there is funding available.

Tables 5.10 and 5.11 overleaf provide a summary of the measures that have not been put into a work package but are still a delivery target.

**Table 5.10: Transport for West Midlands and Local Authority Standalone Transport Measures**

Framework Option	TRN4	TRN8	TRN11	TRN15	TRN16
<b>Measure</b>	Introduction of new Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and local area environmental traffic management measures.	Achieve a zero emission West Midlands bus fleet by 2030 and consider use which brings greatest benefit to areas with poor air quality in the deployment strategy.	Explore the case for workplace parking levies and other effective demand management measures as part of area strategies for the West Midlands.	Speed limit reduction (or dynamic speed limits) on high-speed roads.	Investigate the lowering and enforcement of speed limits in urban centres and residential areas to address localised transport related air pollution. This includes further roll-out of 20 mph speed limits.
<b>Expected Delivery Stage</b>	Feasibility	Early-stage implementation	Feasibility	Business case prepared	Feasibility
<b>Proposed Ownership</b>	TfWM and local authorities	TfWM and local authorities	TfWM and local authorities	TfWM and local authorities	TfWM and local authorities
<b>Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources</b>	Officer time (£)	TBC - Dependant on implementation timescales, but most implementation expected to be outside of two years (£-££)	Officer time and dependant on appraisal required (£-££)	Delivery of a business case, estimated to be in the region of £30,000.	Delivery of a business case, estimated to be in the region of £30,000.
<b>Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources</b>	Dependant on specific scheme. Will have associated assessment and feasibility costs. Local Transport Plan or Section 106 agreements (£££)	Some funding available - ZEBRA funded 124 zero emission buses and Coventry All Electric Bus City (£££)	Officer and management time (£-££)	Dependant on scope scheme. However, officer time and assessment costs will be primary costs (££-£££).	Dependant on scope. Will have associated assessment and feasibility costs. Local Transport Plan or Section 106 agreements (£££)
<b>Stakeholders/ Consultees</b>	Communities and local businesses	Communities, local businesses, and transport companies	Communities and local businesses	National Highways, communities, local businesses	Communities and local businesses
<b>Risks</b>	Community and business reception. Will require detailed assessment to identify any issues with redistribution.	Increase to ticket prices. May not always target the most deprived areas or those with the highest pollutant concentrations. Potential for unknown changes in PM emissions due to heavier vehicles, but the change depends on the existing fleet.	May be difficult to promote politically across the West Midlands as it will be an additional cost to businesses/workers.	Would require political sign off and National Highways support. Unknown level of upgrades required to enforce.	Potentially lower speeds in urban areas may worsen air quality. May need street feature changes instead and risks road safety
<b>Dependencies</b>	Promotion by local authorities and appropriate assessment.	LTP implementation	Promotion by local authorities and appropriate assessment.	National Highways support	Promotion by local authorities and appropriate assessment.

**Table 5.11: Additional Standalone Measures for WMCA, Transport for West Midlands and Local Authorities**

Framework Option	NBE11	NBE2	NBE9	PPG14	PPG19
Measure	Construction of new high quality cycle tracks and other cycle infrastructure in accord with West Midlands cycle network planning, including links between key developments and key services to promote mode shift from car.	Promote transport schemes and road alterations that include effective green infrastructure to reduce exposure to poor air quality.	Creation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and local area environmental traffic management as part of the design of new developments which promotes sustainable transport use.	Continue to roll out school streets programmes to reduce traffic and emissions in the vicinity of schools when there is transient exposure.	Provide training for members/decision makers through a standalone air quality literacy training programme to ensure they are up to date on air quality matters.
Expected Delivery Stage	Business case prepared	Early-stage implementation	Business case prepared	Full implementation	Full implementation
Proposed Ownership	TfWM and local authorities	TfWM, local authorities and WMCA	TfWM and local authorities	TfWM and local authorities	WMCA
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	Dependant on specific scheme. Will have associated assessment and feasibility costs. Local Transport Plan or Section 106 agreements (£££).	Officer time (£)	Officer time (£)	Dependant on specific scheme. Will have associated assessment and feasibility costs. Local Transport Plan or Section 106 agreements (£££).	Potential costs for delivery within FIP period estimated to be in the region of £40,000.
Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources	TBC	Officer time (£)	Dependant on specific scheme. Local Transport Plan or Section 106 agreements (£££)	TBC	Officer time and programme running costs (£)
Delivery Stakeholders	Communities, local businesses, local and national cycling groups.	Communities, local businesses, research institutions.	Communities and local businesses	Communities, local businesses, and transport companies	Members, local authorities
Risks	Getting the required funding. Ensuring that the cycle lanes are fit for purpose and that modal shift occurs due to changes in behaviour. Minimising impacts on existing congested areas. Lack	Promoting green infrastructure that is effective. Long term maintenance costs. Space constraints.	Will require detailed assessment to identify any issues with redistribution. Investment in alternative transport and cycle lanes etc.	Impacts on parents where there aren't viable alternatives to travel to school safely. Ensuring issues are displaced.	Promotion will be required to ensure uptake.
Dependencies	LTP implementation.	LTP and Natural Environment Plan implementation.	Promotion by local authorities through transport and planning, and appropriate assessment.	Continued support and implantation by TfWM and local authorities.	None

## 6. Delivery and Ways of working

We are committed to making the work delivered through this Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan as open and transparent as possible. The WMCA is in the process of developing an air quality website where progress against our different projects/programmes will be shared. This will include a map illustrating the location of sensors across the region with near to real time data on air quality across the WMCA region. We will also look to publish data through the WMCA Environment and Energy Dashboard (which will be live in 2024).

Throughout our delivery, we will be evaluating the success of our projects and programmes. Given the diverse nature of our projects, there will not necessarily be a single approach to monitoring and evaluation, therefore, for each project/programme a methodology for monitoring and evaluation will be devised. There is also a commitment to provide regular updates to both the Environment and Energy Board, Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny and the Strategic Transport Board (outlined in the governance below).

### Greener Together Citizens' Panel

The Greener Together Citizens' Panel has also developed a number of 'tests' for our air quality project implementation and we are committed to working with these and the Panel hereon in. Bringing a representative group of citizens together is a powerful way to understand both acceptability and need for putting particular programmes and infrastructure in place, as well as to shape the way we deliver them. An initial report from the Greener Together Citizens' Panel on air quality is available here (*web link to be inserted once initial report is finalised*). For wider input and consultation, we also have the opportunity to discuss air quality related issues with the Greener Together Forum, a quarterly meeting open to anyone to attend.

### Implementation and Action

The establishment of a Framework Delivery Group, defined ways of working and defined governance will guide the Framework programme forward in an efficient manner. This will ensure that there is representation from relevant stakeholders and that work is driven forward in a responsible way, whilst maximising outcomes across the West Midlands. More details on the Framework Delivery Group can be found in **Section 7**.

Some packages and measures will require additional assessment, consultation, and funding. As such, there are varied levels targeted delivery within the two-years this document covers. Typically, the implementation target for the larger and more complex packages and measures will be more towards feasibility and securing funding. This is to ensure that the packages and measures are appropriately appraised for impacts, communities are consulted and that the funding and resourcing is in place. This should not be seen as a lack of ambition, but as a drive to proceed with more complex action across the region as quickly as possible, but in a way that is measured and can have the most meaningful impact. Detailed feasibility studies and business cases will also enable partner organisations such as WM-Air to assist with complex package appraisal to quantify the changes on communities and optimise health and economic outcomes.

Many of the engagement and behaviour change, communications and monitoring and digital packages can begin quickly and achieve early-stage to full implementation within the two-year period covered by this document. These packages have the potential to provide cost-efficient changes in behaviour that can reduce health impacts and make small changes to reduce emissions. Through secured DEFRA funding and the Framework, the increase in regional cooperation and coworking will provide a strong base to implement the larger regional packages and measures in the shortest timescales.

Finally, any projects and programmes will be subject to sign-off through the **WMCA's Single Assurance Framework**.

## 7. Governance and financing

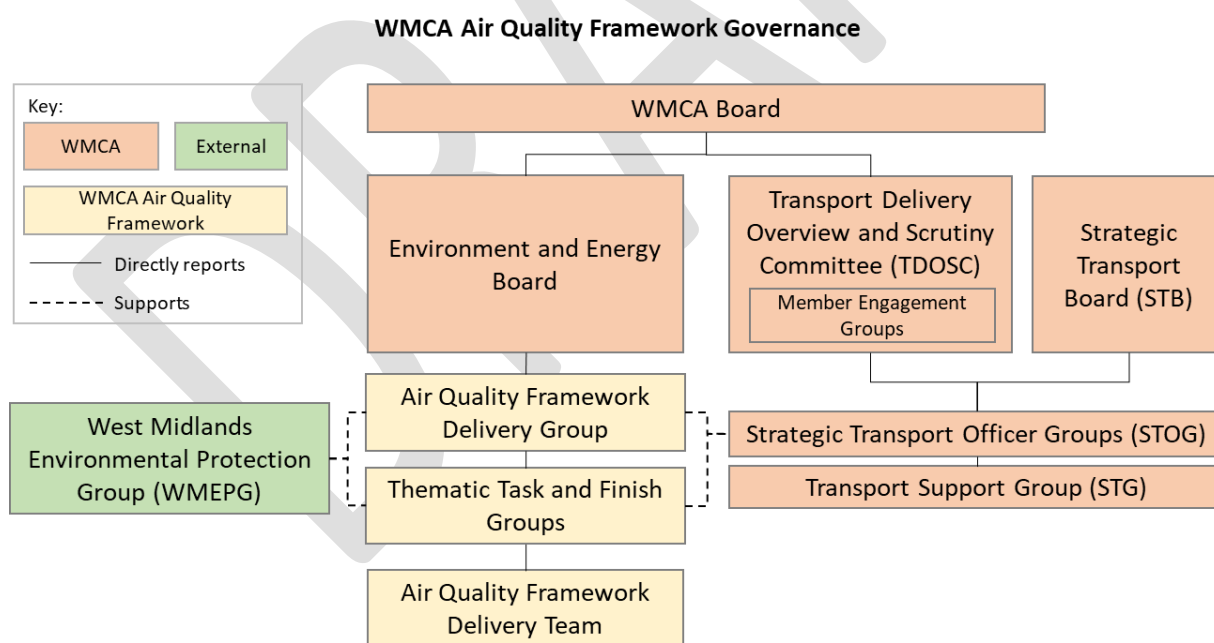
To ensure that the Framework is delivering for the whole WMCA, we will establish an Air Quality Framework Delivery Group. The Group will form a core membership comprising the 7 constituent local authorities, WMCA and TfWM. This will also facilitate engagement with air quality partners (as identified in the Environment Act, 2021) as well as bringing additional expertise on board to support different air quality issues that are common to all partners.

Other relevant partners will either be included in the Framework Delivery Group itself or brought into task and finish groups to bring specific expertise forward as necessary. These additional partners could bring experience in relation to public health, environment, research and innovation. Suggestions made through the consultation process include:

- Public health (Directors of Public Health as well as the UK Health Security Agency),
- Community group representation
- A member of the University of Birmingham’s WM-Air Team
- Business representative
- Birmingham International Airport
- National Highways
- National Express/National Rail
- West Midlands Fire Service

Terms of reference for the Framework Delivery Group will be established with a proposal to meet quarterly. The task and finish groups will enable specific stakeholders to come together around focused/ technical issues such as planning, procurement or monitoring and data.

It is important that the Framework Delivery Group compliments existing governance arrangements – this has been outlined in the **Figure 6** below. This recognises that air quality is of interest to both the environment and transport portfolios at the WMCA.



**Figure 6: Proposed WMCA Air Quality Framework Governance Structure**

Resourcing of the Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan will be critical for success. The DEFRA Air Quality grant, secured in March 2023, will support the implementation of some of the priority measures, especially in relation to behaviour change and establishment of a low-cost sensor network, and availability of data to support decision-making across the region. Bringing in experience from lessons learned in other project delivery, as well as consolidating the learning and sharing from projects delivered through the Framework Implementation Plan will be key. The successful delivery of other measures will be dependent on resourcing and business cases and subject to the WMCA Board approval. Financing and investment into delivery will be a central element of the Framework Delivery Group work.

## 8. How you can get involved

Delivery of the actions in the Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan will need to be a collaborative effort. As highlighted in **Figure 6**, there are multiple stakeholders that will be important in supporting action over the two years of this Plan, and then delivering the remaining ambition set out in the West Midlands Air Quality Framework.

We will seek to provide opportunities for information-sharing and collaboration as we deliver the Framework Implementation Plan. Some of these, including community engagement events and a conference, are part of an existing DEFRA-funded project.

If you would like to be kept up-to-date on our work on air quality, or would like to find out about how you could get more involved with delivery, then please email the WMCA Environment Team: [environment@wmca.org.uk](mailto:environment@wmca.org.uk)

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# Appendices

## Appendix A – Glossary

**Table A.1 – Glossary of Terms**

Term	Meaning
AQAP	Air Quality Action Plan
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
ASR	Annual Status Report
BEV	Battery electric vehicle
CAS	Clean air strategy
CAZ	Clean air zone
Constituent local authorities	WMCA member local authorities with full voting rights. This is comprised of Birmingham City Council, City of Wolverhampton Council, Coventry City Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council.
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
EV	Electric vehicle
FDG	Framework Delivery Group
Greener Together Citizens' Panel	A group of 30 citizens of the West Midlands who are participating in a Panel to deliberate on some of the climate and environmental issues facing the West Midlands. More information on the Panel, and the selection process, can be found here: <a href="http://wmca.org.uk">Greener Together Citizens Panel (wmca.org.uk)</a>
LA	Local authority
LAQM	Local air quality management
LEZ	Low emission zone
LTP	Local transport plan
MCDA	Multi-criteria decision analysis
Measure	A Framework option that has been selected for implementation.
NAEI	National atmospheric emissions inventory
NH <sub>3</sub>	Ammonia
NO <sub>2</sub>	Nitrogen dioxide - a gaseous component of air pollution and is often produced by the combustion of fossil fuels, such as in car engines and power plants.
Non-constituent local authorities	WMCA member local authorities with reduced voting rights. This is comprised of Cannock Chase District Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Redditch Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Shropshire Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Tamworth Borough Council, Telford and Wrekin Council and Warwickshire County Council. It also includes Warwick District Council as an observer with no voting rights.
NO <sub>x</sub>	Nitrogen oxides - NO <sub>x</sub> is a collective term used to refer to a group of reactive nitrogen oxide, primarily nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> ).
Option	A proposed action within the Framework that can be selected for use as a standalone or combined into a work package for implementation.



Term	Meaning
PM	Particulate matter - a complex mixture of tiny solid particles and liquid droplets suspended in the air. These particles vary in size, composition, and origin and can have significant effects on air quality, human health, and the environment.
PM <sub>10</sub>	Particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of less than 10 micrometres.
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	Particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of less than 2.5 micrometres.
Primary pollutants	Pollutants that are emitted directly into the atmosphere because of human activities or natural processes. These pollutants are released in their original form and are not the result of chemical reactions in the atmosphere. An example of a primary pollutant are gases such as NO <sub>2</sub> producing during combustion.
RAG	Red-amber-green. A traffic light rating system is a system for indicating the status of a variable using red, amber or green.
SCA	Smoke control area – a designated area where you cannot release smoke from a chimney; and you can only burn authorised fuel, unless you use an appliance approved by Defra. There are also penalties that can be applied if your chimney releases smoke in a smoke control area or if you buy unauthorised fuel to use in an appliance that's not approved by Defra.
Secondary pollutants	Pollutants that are not emitted directly into the atmosphere but are formed in the atmosphere through chemical reactions involving primary pollutants, atmospheric constituents (like sunlight, water vapor, and oxygen), and sometimes natural sources. An example of this is secondary particulate matter that is formed from ammonia due to reactions in the air.
TfWM	Transport for West Midlands is the public body responsible for co-ordinating transport services within the WMCA area
UK	United Kingdom
µm	Micrometre - one thousandth of a millimetre
VOC	Volatile Organic Compounds
WM-Air	The West Midlands Air Quality Improvement Programme – WM-Air is a NERC funded initiative, led by the University of Birmingham.
WMCA	West Midlands Combined Authority
Work package	A group of measures brought together to form a larger package of work.

## Appendix B – Proposed Government Priorities and Actions

The *Air quality strategy: framework for local authority delivery* policy paper provides an overview of the government's priorities and actions to address air quality issues. The actions will shape changes on a national scale and the West Midlands Air Quality Framework sits below it to realise change on a regional scale.

The priorities are:

- *Planning reforms helping to deliver on air quality.*
- *Building capacity in local councils through training, guidance and knowledge sharing.*
- *Reducing emissions from industrial sources through improved enforcement of environmental permits.*
- *Reducing pollution from domestic burning through smoke control areas and cleaner fuels.*
- *Raising awareness within local communities of air quality impacts and how to reduce them.*
- *Boosting active travel and public transport to improve air quality.*

The actions for the government are as follows:

- *“The government will align air quality reporting zones with local government boundaries, to empower councils, increase transparency and accountability.*
- *The government will work with local authorities to improve the UK-Air website and other air quality web services.*
- *The government will look to strengthen the effect of Smoke Control Areas. We will consult on tougher stove standards for Smoke Control Areas, potentially lowering the smoke limit for newly installed stoves from 5g smoke per hour.*
- *We will consult on tougher emission standards for Manufactured Solid Fuels reducing both smoke emissions and sulphur levels.*
- *We will explore policies to incentivise a shift from older, more polluting devices towards newer appliances which meet our tough new emission standard.*
- *We will provide updated guidance, templates, and information to support local authorities in reducing emissions from domestic burning.*
- *We will continue to roll out the UK best available techniques framework for large and medium industry, and develop it further to cover new technologies*
- *We are exploring a similar approach for smaller industrial installations, allowing out-dated regulatory standards to be updated more frequently.*
- *We will consider closer alignment between the Local Air Quality Management and permitting regimes, so that swifter, more complementary action can be taken to resolve local air quality issues.*
- *We will consider how to boost local authority regulatory capacity and capability including exploring how the fees and charges system can be improved to provide better cost recovery.*
- *We will require that an increasing proportion of car and van sales from each manufacturer are zero tailpipe emission from 2024 onwards.*
- *We are investing in research programmes to develop methods to prevent or reduce emissions from non-exhaust vehicle sources, such as brake and tyre wear.*
- *Through Active Travel England, we will continue to support cycling and walking.*
- *We will consider actions to improve air quality on the Strategic Road Network as part of developing the next Road Investment Strategy 2025 to 2030.*
- *The government will consult on bringing dairy and intensive beef farms within scope of environmental permitting.*
- *We will continue to issue funding to invest in slurry storage infrastructure to reduce ammonia emissions, with an increased budget of £33.9 million made available in April 2023 and two further rounds to follow.*
- *We will consult on new rules to reduce ammonia emissions from organic manure, including requirements for low emission techniques for slurry and digestate spreading.*
- *The government will develop new guidance on mould and damp for the housing sector.*
- *The government has launched the Air Quality Information System review in December 2021. The remit of the two-year review is to provide a series of actionable, evidence-based improvements which could be made to the government's provision of air quality information.*

- *The government will develop a best practice guide on outdoor burning that can be provided to members of the public to help reduce emissions.*
- *The government will share communications assets and other material of wider relevance with local authorities to use in their own communications.*
- *We will consult further on the detail of a combined design stage emission prevention and quantitative assessment approach.*
- *The government will continue considering the responses to the recent National Planning Policy Framework consultation which closed on 2 March 2023.*

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## Appendix C – Framework Contributors and Consultees

Table C.1 - Core Contributors and Consultees (to date)

Organisation	WMCA	TfWM	WM-Air at the University of Birmingham	Constituent Local Authorities (Air Quality)	WSP
<b>Members</b>  Alex Jones (WMCA Air Quality Framework Lead/WSP), Jackie Homan (Head of Environment) and Mike Webb (Natural Capital Programme Manager)	Jake Thrush (Associate Policy Adviser)	William Bloss (WM-Air Lead), Joe Acton (WM-Air Impact Fellow) and Catherine Muller (Project Manager)	<b>Birmingham:</b> Mark Wolstencroft (Operations Manager Environmental Protection), Paul Burns (Environmental Protection Officer) and Peter Mackintosh (Air Quality Projects Officer) <b>Coventry:</b> Neil Chaplin (Principal Environmental Protection Officer) and Steve Dewar (Environmental Health Officer) <b>Dudley:</b> Ruth Burgin (Pollution Control Officer) and Ian Grove (Principal Environmental Health Officer) <b>Sandwell:</b> Elizabeth Stephens (Senior Environmental Health Officer) and Sophie Morris (Public Health Specialist- Air Quality and Climate Change) <b>Solihull:</b> Nick Laws (Senior Public Health Specialist) and Amanda Clover (Senior Development Officer) <b>Walsall:</b> John Grant (Environmental Protection Manager) and Curtis Dean (Environmental Protection) <b>Wolverhampton:</b> Shaun Walker (Service Lead – Environmental Crime)	<b>Air Quality:</b> Bethan Tuckett-Jones (Head of Profession for Air Quality), Joanna Rochfort (Air Quality Team Lead), Peter Walsh (Technical Director), Andy Talbot (Associate Director), Sioni Hole (Principal Consultant) and Lee Shelton (Principal Consultant) <b>Behaviour Change:</b> James Knoll-Pollard (Behavioural Design Lead) <b>Planning:</b> Michael Wood (Technical Director) <b>Ecology:</b> Joe Franklin (Associate Director), Vaughn Lewis (Consultant)	
<b>Framework working group</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Option Pre-Screen</b>	✓				
<b>Optioneering and Advisory</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>RAG</b>	✓	✓			
<b>MCDA</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓ (Represented by Sophie Morris)	✓ (Represented by Andy Talbot)
<b>Option Preferences</b>	✓				

**Table C.2 - Additional Contributors and Consultees (to date)**

Organisation	Members
<b>WMCA</b>	Katie Jepson ( <i>Environment Behaviour Change Project Officer</i> ), Ed Cox ( <i>Executive Director - Strategy, Integration and Net Zero</i> ) Richard Rees ( <i>Senior Programme Manager – Environment</i> ), Tatum Matharu ( <i>Strategic Lead for Health Inequalities</i> )
<b>WMCA Panels/Groups</b>	Transport Support Group ( <i>TSG - Heads of Service of the local authority transport departments and TfWM policy officers</i> ), Strategic Transport Officers Group ( <i>STOG - Directors of Transport Departments and TfWM Policy, Strategy and Innovation Department Director</i> ) and Transport Delivery Committee (TDC) Air Quality, Congestion and Environmental Sustainability Member Engagement Group, West Midlands Environmental Protection Group (WM-EPG)
<b>TfWM</b>	David Harris ( <i>Transport Strategy and Place Manager</i> ), Alex Greatholder ( <i>Principal Policy and Strategy Officer</i> ), Liam Edge ( <i>Transport Data Researcher</i> ), Claire Williams ( <i>Head of Cycling and Walking</i> ), Mitchell Robinson ( <i>Cycling and Walking Development Officer</i> ), Stuart Lester ( <i>Head of Transport Data</i> ), Helen Osborn ( <i>Travel Behaviour Specialist</i> ) and Gill Hunt ( <i>Travel Behaviour Specialist</i> )
<b>WM-Air at the University of Birmingham</b>	Suzanne Bartington ( <i>WM-Air Health Effects Strand Lead</i> ) and Jian Zhong ( <i>WM-Air Model Development</i> ).
<b>Constituent Local Authorities – Non air quality Officers</b>	<b>Birmingham:</b> Maria Dunn ( <i>Head of Development Policy</i> ), Sarah Scannell ( <i>Planning Assistant Director</i> ), Uyen-Phan Han ( <i>Planning Policy Manager</i> ), Chris Baggot ( <i>Public Health Service Lead</i> ) and Claire Humphries ( <i>Senior Public Health Officer</i> ) <b>Coventry:</b> Alicia Phillips ( <i>Programme Manager for Inequalities in Built Environment</i> ), Emily Stewart ( <i>Programme Officer for Inequalities in Built Environment</i> ) and Angelia Baker ( <i>Consultant in Public Health and Inequalities</i> ) <b>Dudley:</b> Joanne Todd ( <i>Development Manager</i> ) <b>Solihull:</b> Mark Andrews ( <i>Head of Planning, Design and Engagement Services</i> ) <b>Wolverhampton:</b> Perminder Balu ( <i>Head of Green Cities and Circular Economy</i> )

**We acknowledge and thank the attendees of the Framework consultation workshop. The full list of attendees on the day is as follows:**

Maddy Dawe (Asthma + Lung UK), Maria Dunn (Birmingham City Council), Claire Humphries (Birmingham City Council), Peter Mackintosh (Birmingham City Council), Stephen Arnold (Birmingham City Council), Ian Braddock (Birmingham City Council), Waseem Zaffar (Clean Air Justice Network), Emily Stewart (Coventry City Council), Ruth Burgin (Dudley MBC), Ian Grove (Dudley MBC), Christopher King (Dudley MBC), Gordon Allison (DustScanAQ on behalf of South Coast Science), Chris Taylor (EarthSense Systems Limited), David Green (EarthSense Systems Limited), Greg Lewis (EarthSense Systems Limited), Kirsten de Vos (Mums for Lungs), Charlotte Harris (NHS England), Sophie Morris (Sandwell Council), Lucy Bastin (School of Computer Science, Aston University), Nick Laws (Solihull MBC), Amanda Clover (Solihull MBC), Tim Egan (Sustrans), David Clasby (Sustrans), Ninette Harris (The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust), David Harris (Transport for West Midlands), Jake Thrush (Transport for West Midlands), Catherine Muller (University of Birmingham), Joe Acton (University of Birmingham), William Bloss (University of Birmingham), Zongbo Shi (University of Birmingham), Sue Jowett (University of Birmingham), James Hall (University of Birmingham), Damilola Agbato (Walsall MBC), Pat Fleming (Walsall MBC), Matthew Griffin (West Midlands Combined Authority), Bethany Haskins-Vaheesan (West Midlands Combined Authority), Jordan Gerrard (West Midlands Combined Authority), Nathan Morrison (West Midlands Combined Authority), Grace Scrivens (West Midlands Combined Authority), Jackie Homan (West Midlands Combined Authority), Katie Jepson (West Midlands Combined Authority), Ritz Nagar (West Midlands Combined Authority), Alex Jones (West Midlands Combined Authority/WSP), Liz Hopkins (West Midlands Fire Service), Ian Greatbatch (West Midlands Fire Service), John Newson (West Midlands Friends of the Earth), Joanna Rochfort (WSP)

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## Environment and Energy Board

<b>Date</b>	26th September 2023
<b>Report title</b>	WMCA Energy Programme Update
<b>Portfolio Lead</b>	Cllr John Cotton, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Energy and HS2
<b>Accountable Chief Executive</b>	Laura Shoaf, Chief Executive, West Midlands Combined Authority Email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk
<b>Accountable Employee</b>	Ed Cox, Director of SINZ Email: ed.cox@wmca.org.uk  Cheryl Hiles, Director Energy Capital Email: Cheryl.hiles@wmca.org.uk

### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

**1. The Environment and Energy Board is recommended to:**

- Note the progress across the WMCA energy programme
- Endorse the principles of retrofit devolution that will be used to guide negotiations with Government, set out below
- Endorse the expansion of WMCA Strategic Partnerships to include partnerships with energy infrastructure providers
- Identify topics for future updates at the Environment and Energy Board meetings

**2. Purpose**

To provide a six month update for the Board on the progress of the energy programme by the Energy Capital team at the WMCA, following approval of the 2023 /4 work programme by the Environment and Energy Board in March 2023.

**3. Background**

**3.1 The Energy Programme**

Building on the foundations of the Regional Energy Strategy adopted by the WMCA in January 2019, and the subsequent highly acclaimed WM2041 Strategy and Five-Year Plan, the West Midlands's regional energy priorities are now fully integrated into WMCA operations. Through Energy Capital's national reputation for excellence in innovation and the teams' deep roots into the sector

through the Energy Capital Partnership, the team have made huge strides since their incorporation into the WMCA.

The energy team's vision is 'a just energy transition, where investment is appropriately channelled to meet the needs of our diverse communities – enabling timely decarbonisation and creating a thriving market for clean-tech innovation and economic growth.' The programme is now deeply integrated into the objectives of directorates across WMCA, including transport decarbonisation, zero carbon housing, green skills and fair and green growth.

The current energy programme breaks down into three core areas set out below, with a full summary in the appendix. In March it was agreed that the Energy Team's top priorities would be to:

1. Establish Local Area Energy Planning as a mechanism to remove barriers to low carbon infrastructure investment across the region
2. Deliver high quality retrofit solutions and technical support to member authorities and housing providers to reduce fuel poverty
3. Demonstrate Net Zero Neighbourhoods as an effective mechanism to attract investment into local communities
4. Lobby Government, OfGEM and National Grid to empower the West Midlands to influence the energy system across the region



Theme and lead	Aim and objectives	Workstreams	Key milestones met to date
<p><b>Energy Infrastructure</b></p> <p><i>Led by Kate Ashworth, Energy Infrastructure Lead</i></p>	<p><b>Aim</b> - To ensure our energy infrastructure facilitates the timely and cost-effective, decarbonisation of our industry, businesses, homes and transport systems and supports economic growth.</p> <p><b>Objective</b> - To remove barriers and enable investment in clean energy assets, by facilitating a smarter, place-based approach to investment in energy efficiency, renewable energy and storage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local Area Energy Planning</li> <li>- Smart Local Energy Systems</li> <li>- Heat Network delivery and zoning</li> <li>- Non-domestic energy solutions, including energy efficiency, renewables and storage</li> <li>- Infrastructure for Zero Emission Vehicles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A region wide <b>Local Area Energy Planning Co-ordination Group</b> is now operational, following some initial engagement workshops. It has been agreed that the WMCA can add value by focusing on providing expertise and insights from learning elsewhere, with a programme targeted at the provision of a sound data foundation and using their relationships and reputation with energy infrastructure providers to establish a useful governance structure to support region wide decision making on energy infrastructure investment.</li> </ul> <p>Following the successful delivery of Project PRIDE phase 1 in June, a <b>funding application</b> has recently been approved for the second phase of this work through the OfGEM Strategic Innovation Fund. This will provide enable the data foundation for local area energy planning for each local authority. This includes incorporation into a digital tool called <a href="#">LAEP+</a> that will provide approved access to the data for all interested parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Innovation <b>Project Equinox</b> is underway. It is a Network Innovation Competition collaboration with National Grid Electricity Distribution, SP Energy Networks (SPEN), Octopus Energy, PassivUK, Welsh Government, Sero, Guidehouse and ourselves. The project will test new billing</li> </ul>

			<p>schemes to reward households for temporarily altering their heating choices without compromising on comfort. This will pave the way for a smarter energy system where DNOs will be able to leverage <b>flexibility from heat</b>, to manage increasing network demand, and will enable us to employ an additional team member to work on flexibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Energy Capital is developing a <b>heat network programme</b> in response to a changing market for heat network development to reflect the governments ambition for 20% of heat demand to be connected to a heat network by 2050 and the current legislation going through Parliament on Heat Zoning (of which there are pilots in both Birmingham and Coventry), which will require businesses in designated zones to connect to heat networks. This is being informed by working closely with each Local Authority to identify where the WMCA can add value. The WMCA is currently sponsoring the Walsall Heat Network which is scheme which is being investigated for feasibility.</li><li>- Energy Capital are also supporting the economy team in the development of a <b>Business Energy Advisory service</b> looking to support the Industrial and Commercial sector with decarbonisation and energy security. This programme is part of the</li></ul>
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			<p>funding secured through the 2023 Devolution Deal. The ambition is to provide 4000 businesses with energy audits with a complimentary grant scheme for energy efficiency measures. This will help to alleviate immediate impacts of energy cost volatility as well as provide much needed data to help further target initiatives in future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The findings of the <b>Infrastructure for Zero Emissions Vehicle (IZEV)</b> work as reviewed by the Prime Ministers Business Council are being incorporated into the refresh of the WMCA's EV Strategy, currently being updated by CENEX. This should be available from October 2023 and will help to ensure the planning of the underlying energy infrastructure to support the decarbonisation of transport is built into our wider processes. In the meantime, we are supporting colleagues delivering the EVCATS (ultra-rapid charging) and LEVI (community charging) programmes as well as the ZEBRA bus programme and All-Electric Bus Coventry.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Domestic retrofit (SMART Hub)</b> <i>led by George Simms</i></p>	<p><b>Aim</b> – To prove that we can reduce fuel poverty and create warmer homes through area-based solutions whilst securing net zero and economic growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Domestic retrofit delivery</li> <li>- Retrofit market development</li> <li>- Net Zero Neighbourhood demonstrator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Wave 1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)</b> programme valued at £6.7m grant &amp; £7.6m match funding, total project cost of £14.34m has been successfully delivered by Rob Johnson, Retrofit Consortium Manager and the</li> </ul>

	<p>through supply chain development.</p> <p><b>Objective</b> - To support LAs to access funding, intelligence and expertise to retrofit homes, reduce carbon emissions and work with partners to develop and deliver projects that tackle fuel poverty in the region.</p>		<p>SMART Hub team, to time and budget, resulting in a range of retrofit measures being installed to 513 properties across the West Midlands. Funding for Wave 2 has also been secured and programme set up is underway, with the Consortium Agreement having now been signed by all 13 member partners. The programme valued at £17.7m grant &amp; £34.4m match funding, achieving a total project cost of £52.18m delivering cost efficiency measures to 2076 homes across the West Midlands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The contract has now been signed between Dudley MBC and their delivery partner EQUANS to take forward the <b>Brockmoor Net Zero Neighbourhood pilot</b>, where the WMCA is investing over £1m in demonstrating a neighbourhood approach to retrofit.</li> <li>- A <b>monitoring and evaluation framework</b> based upon the WMCA Inclusive Growth Framework has been developed to ensure we are able to demonstrate impact and maximise learning from this initiative.</li> <li>- Under this programme the region's LAs have come together to share knowledge, lessons learned on delivery and get access to industry expertise through the <b>Net Zero Neighbourhoods Working Group</b> and <b>LA Retrofit Officers Group</b>.</li> </ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A <b>funding application</b> for further £5m of funding to support the next cohort of Net Zero Neighbourhoods across the region to move forward has been submitted to Innovate UK. This project is called CAMPOS (Creating a Market for Place-based OutcomeS). At a minimum an additional £150k will be secured through this route.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy and positioning (energy)</b></p> <p><i>led by Director Cheryl Hiles</i></p>	<p><b>Aim</b> - To give the West Midlands power and influence in the energy system, as a national pathfinder and to attract investment into energy infrastructure across the region.</p> <p><b>Objective</b> - Develop policies and projects to ensure the energy infrastructure of the region supports competitive, clean and inclusive growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lobbying for place-based energy solutions</li> <li>- 'Partner of choice' for government and private sector; innovation; and green finance</li> <li>- Embedding energy across WMCA programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The outputs of our Regional Energy Systems Operator (RESO) innovation project have proved hugely valuable in influencing OfGEM to see the value in taking a place-based approach to energy system planning. We have responded to a host of consultations and workshops on their concept of <b>introducing a Regional System Planner</b> to the currently highly centralised energy system, and an announcement is expected at the end of October 2023, that this model will be adopted.</li> <li>- OfGEM are considering hailing our newly established regional energy governance structure, including the <b>Net Zero Infrastructure Delivery Panel</b>, which we have set up to support regional energy planning, as a national pilot to support and inform their development of a new Regional System Planner role.</li> </ul>

This paper provides deep dives on a selection of WMCA energy programme initiatives from the above programme areas for discussion at the Environment and Energy Board.

### **3.2 Deep Dive 1: Devolved Retrofit Funding**

Through the 2023 West Midlands Devolution Deal, a commitment from Government to provide a single funding pot with a multi-year settlement that includes funding for retrofit directly from Treasury, has been agreed.

Work has begun, developing some key principles to base our negotiations upon. These have been explored with net zero officers within WM Local Authorities through the LA Retrofit Bi-Monthly group.

The principles which have been agreed with officers are as follows:

1. Build and maintain capacity to develop and deliver retrofit projects in the region through the Local Authorities, Combined Authority and Registered Providers
2. Improve the investment case for retrofit to reduce reliance on grant funding
3. Use grant funding as leverage to bring in additional investment and grow scale in retrofit activity
4. Stimulate demand in the willing to pay market
5. Support innovation to overcome market and financial barriers
6. Balance value for money with actions that are harder to fund
7. Develop skills provision and supply chain capacity to meet rising demand
8. Improve the quality of retrofits and customer satisfaction
9. Measure real world impact where possible to show what works and what provides best value
10. Deliver and measure wider benefits of retrofit beyond carbon and fuel bill savings (e.g. health)
11. Link into the outcomes of Local Area Energy Planning and Place Based projects as they develop.

The main issues that will have to be overcome through negotiations with Government are:

- whilst the single settlement opens the door to agreeing a deal directly with Treasury to potentially allow us to widen the scope of the funding, the Department for Energy Security will likely still want some oversight / control given their statutory objectives relating to carbon reduction and fuel poverty alleviation.
- whilst the region wants certainty of funding, Government wants certainty of delivery, and to be sure that there will not be large underspends which will put their targets at risk, so we need to agree a funding formula which works for the region and also allows us to balance ambition against capacity increases over time.

The quantum of funding is currently uncertain, as a funding formula will need to be agreed with Government. A starting point for negotiations will be a percentage of departmental budgets based on the proportion of English fuel poor households that are in the West Midlands area, which currently stands at 7.5%. Based on an estimated £6bn budget for Home Upgrade Grant and Social

Housing Decarbonisation Fund, this would give the region @£450m over 5 years - @£90m per year, compared to an estimated £4.1m per year secured from previous allocations.

The funding structure currently under consideration would be broken down into 3-5% for capacity building across local Authorities and the Combined Authority, providing a minimum of 4 FTE's per local authority; 20-25% for market development, including pipeline development and innovation and 70-75% for retrofit delivery by local authorities, housing associations and communities.

### **3.3 Deep Dive 2: Strategic Partnership for energy infrastructure**

The WMCA has entered into strategic partnerships with a variety of businesses to support the development of housing schemes across the West Midlands. A process for establishing Strategic Partnerships has been tried, tested and approved, which we would now like to extend to support our collaboration with energy infrastructure providers.

Pressure on our electricity infrastructure is increasing. The Government's commitment to decarbonise by 2050 is meaning that much of our built environment, including our transport system, is switching to electricity, away from fossil fuels such as petrol, diesel and gas, either to use directly or to generate hydrogen. However, the main focus of national investment into the electricity grid is to connect new large scale green energy generation, such as offshore wind. Government policy is also encouraging investment into new infrastructure, such as heat networks, to supply low carbon heat to homes and businesses. There is an important role for the WMCA, identified in the devolution deal, to ensure that investment is appropriately channelled into our energy infrastructure to support our economic growth, new development and decarbonisation.

Whilst it will be local authorities who will procure many of the solutions directly, the WMCA is seeking to work at a strategic level with technology agnostic partners who will help us to assess barriers to growth and identify solutions that are right for the place, including establishing when it will be necessary to challenge the decisions of incumbent network operators.

We have therefore sought to identify which companies in the market:

- have Board sign off to invest and own energy assets
- take a technology agnostic approach to find the right solutions for a place – which could include energy efficiency/ smart controls, generation and storage solutions to overcome grid constraints by an independent network operator (IDNO); the development of heat networks; the installation of charging capacity or electrolysis to produce hydrogen; or a fully integrated smart local energy system solution
- a commitment to working in the West Midlands and helping us to achieve our wider social, environmental and economic objectives.

The first company that has come forward which meets these three criteria is SSE Energy Solutions. We have been building this relationship for 18 months

and are now in a position to sign a 'Memorandum of Understanding' (MOU) with them setting out our commitment to working collaboratively to develop the region's first Strategic Energy Partnership.

Teams from both organisations will commit to work together to review a potential pipeline of opportunities with engagement and collaboration formalised through an MOU, building on the strong track record of establishing strategic partnerships with key development and growth partners, such as Legal & General, Segro and Keepmoat.

It is hoped that the model will attract other partners to take a similar approach and partner with us to unlock further benefits.

### **3.4 Deep Dive 3: The New Regional System Planner function**

Since its inception, Energy Capital has been actively lobbying for a greater voice for the region in energy system planning.

To support our position, we undertook an Innovate UK funded innovation project with Coventry City Council entitled Regional Energy System Operator or RESO, which was completed in December 2021 and provided solid evidence of the value of taking a place-based approach to whole energy system planning. A value of @£720m NPV over 30 years was identified for a place such as Coventry.

This evidence has been hugely valuable and used to support our national lobbying position. We have responded to multiple consultations and calls for evidence from the Department for Energy and OfGEM and have held a series of workshops with OfGEM as they explore the potential for a new Regional System Planner (RSP) model. An announcement from OfGEM on their preferred direction of travel regarding the RSP is expected in early November 2023, marking a fundamental change in policy direction in our favour.

We are continuing to maintain our position as leaders in local energy system governance nationally and have established a new governance structure to support the region to influence how energy infrastructure investment is channelled in the West Midlands. It is hoped that this will again provide valuable insights to shape OfGEMs policy and regulation. This work is funded by the OfGEM Strategic Innovation Fund as is called Project PRIDE – Planning Regional Infrastructure in a Digital Environment, led by National Grid Electricity Distribution (formerly WPD). The project brings together three key elements; a data foundation to support regional energy system planning - a digital twin tool to aid local engagement with energy system planning – and a governance structure to bring together all parties involved to support collective decision making that provides the best outcome for the place in question. This governance structure is now live and is beginning to explore whole system energy solutions for places, starting with an examination of UK Central.



#### **4. Financial Implications**

There are no immediate financial implications from this update report.

#### **5. Legal Implications**

None from this report. The legal team are already supporting the team with the completion of the Strategic Partnership MOU.

#### **6. Equalities Implications (\*)**

Energy costs are increasingly exacerbating inequalities across the WMCA area, increasing the importance of action to be taken in this area.

#### **7. Inclusive Growth Implications**

The team have been working closely with inclusive growth colleagues to ensure the development of all programmes support our inclusive growth objectives and have recently found the inclusive growth framework hugely valuable in helping to shape the monitoring and evaluation framework for the NZN programme.

#### **8. Geographical Area of Report's Implications**

The whole WMCA geography, including non-constituent authorities will benefit from various aspects of the Energy programme set out in this paper.

#### **9. Other Implications**

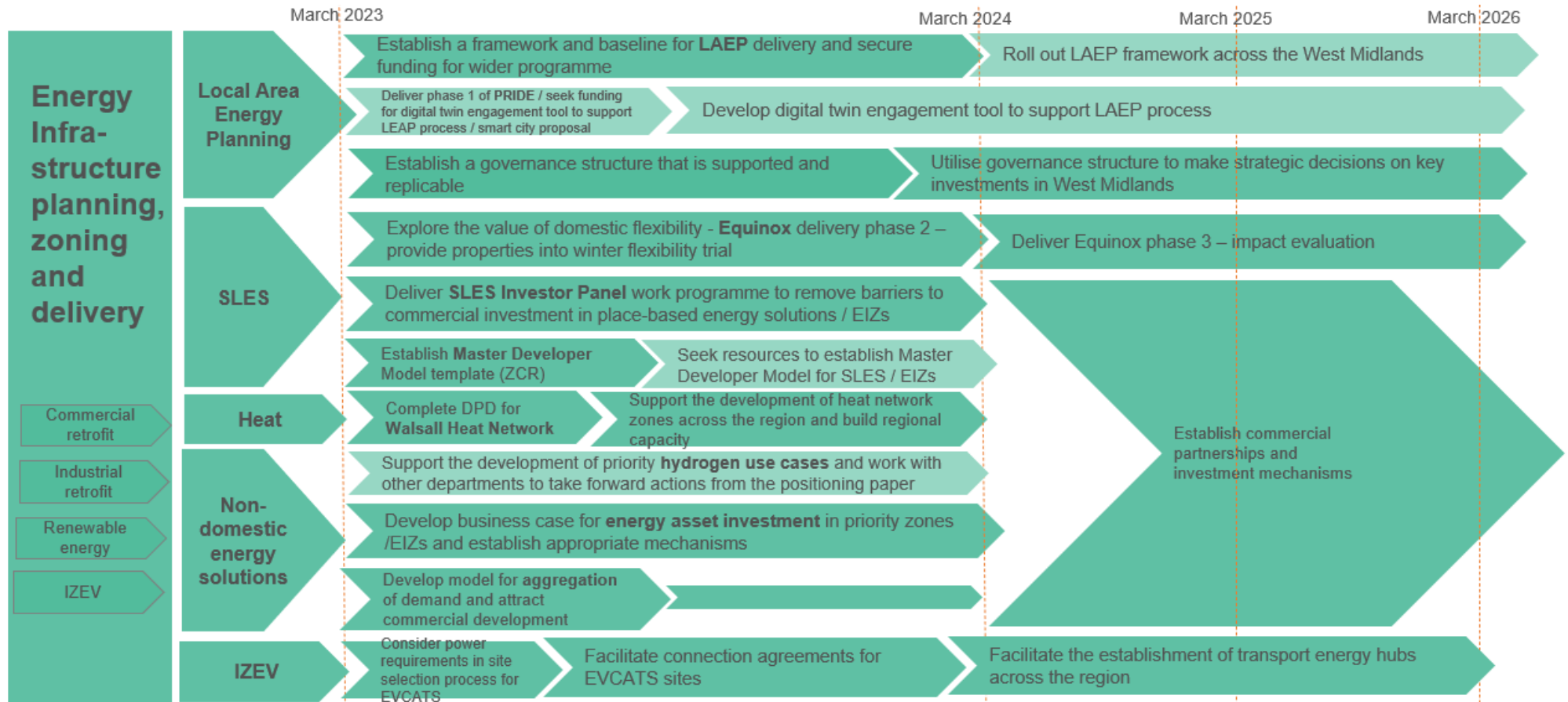
None.

#### **10. Schedule of Background Papers**

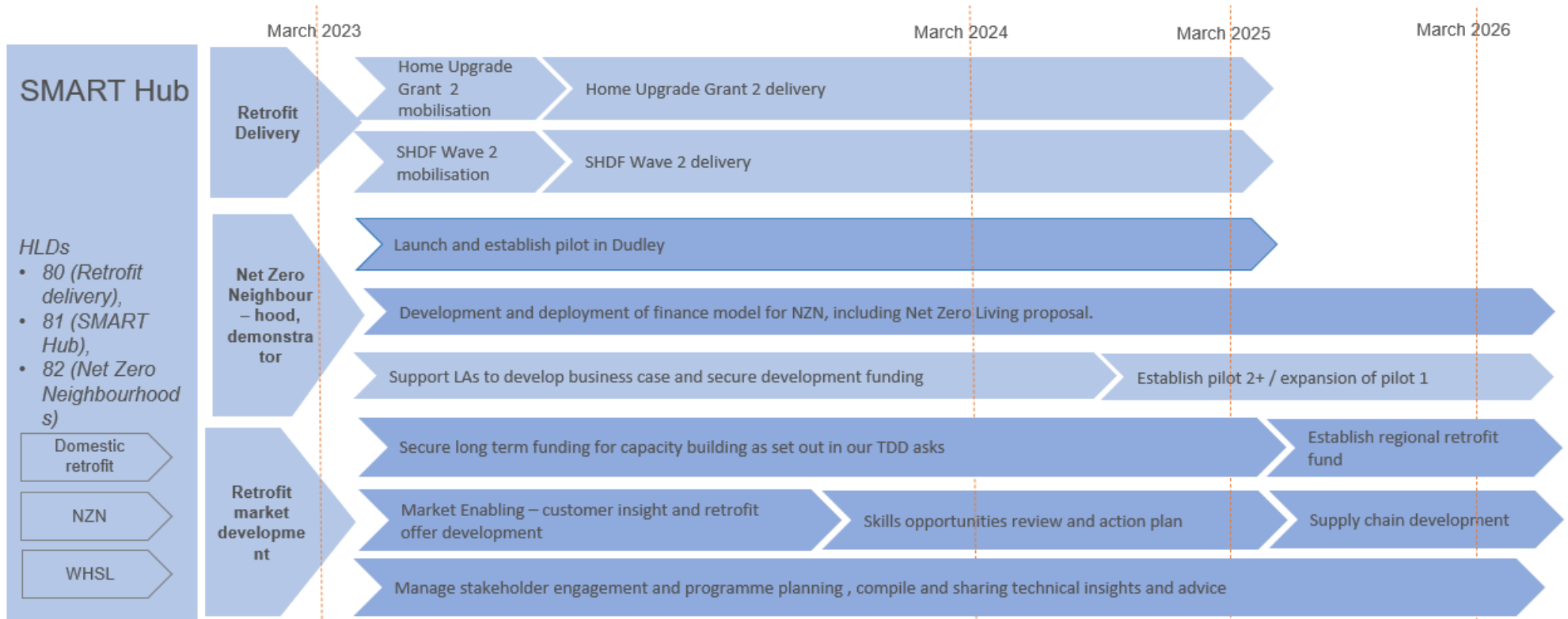
Programme slide deck will be presented at the Energy and Environment Board meeting.

# Appendix 1: Energy Programme

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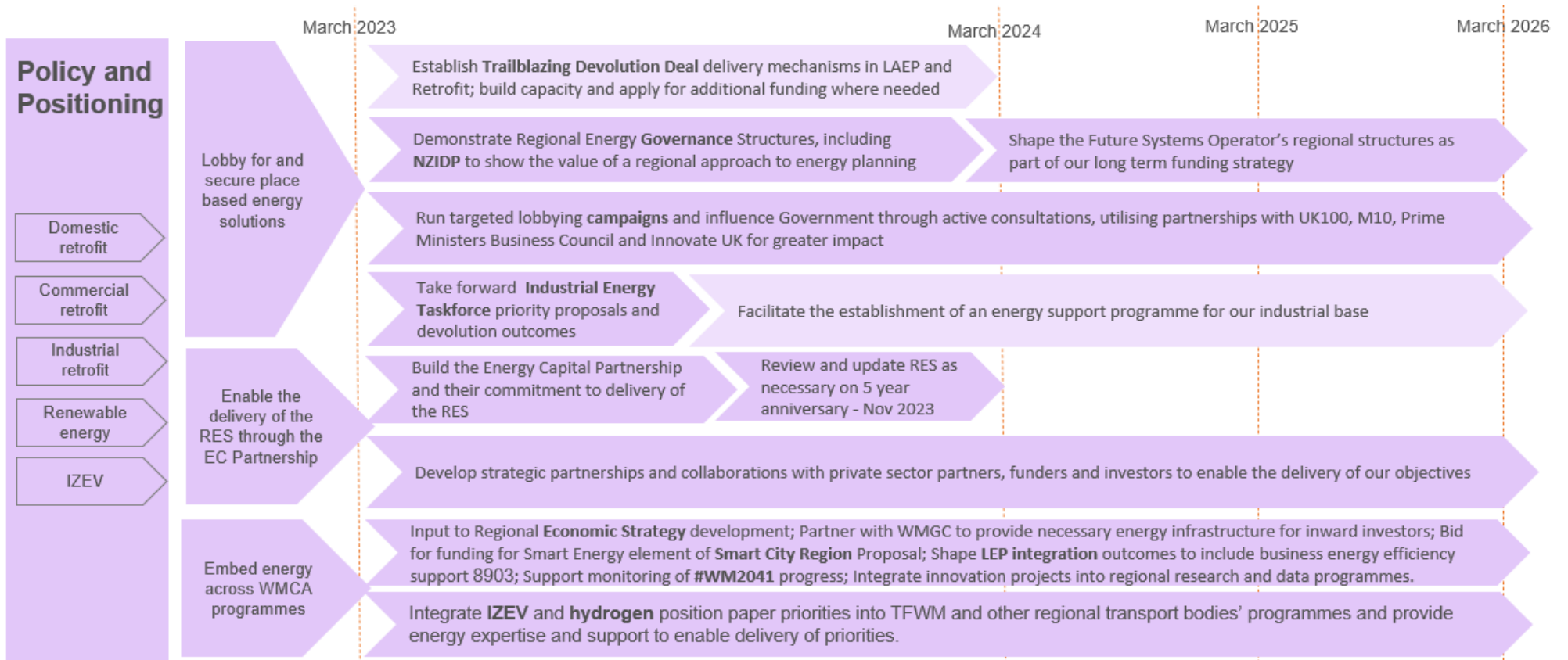


HLD: Remove barriers and enable investment in clean energy assets, by taking a smarter, place based approach to energy investment (energy efficiency, renewable energy and storage)



**HLDs:**

To support LAs to access funding, intelligence and expertise to retrofit homes and reduce carbon emissions and work with partners to develop and deliver projects that tackle fuel poverty in the region



HLD: Develop policies and projects to ensure the energy infrastructure of the region supports competitive, clean and inclusive growth