



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: Monday 6 November 2023

Time: 10.00 am **Public meeting** Yes

Venue: Room 116, 16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD

Membership

Councillor Cathy Bayton (Chair)	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Naeem Akhtar (Vice-Chair)	Coventry City Council
Councillor Philip Bateman MBE	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Andrew Burrow	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Ian Kettle	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Nigel Lumby	Shropshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Ewan Mackey	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Emma Marshall	Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Paul Moore	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Lauren Rainbow	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Jamie Tennant	Birmingham City Council
Amanda Tomlinson	Business Representative
Councillor Adrian Warwick	Warwickshire County Council
Councillor Vera Waters	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Quorum for this meeting shall be 7 members

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

Contact Lyndsey Roberts, Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Telephone 07917 473824
Email lyndsey.roberts@wmca.org.uk

AGENDA

No.	Item	Presenting	Pages
Items of Public Business			
1.	Apologies for Absence	Chair	None
2.	Declarations of Interests 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
3.	Chair's Remarks	Chair	None
4.	Minutes - 4 September and 19 October 2023	Chair	1 - 10
5.	Matters Arising	Chair	None
6.	WMCA Homelessness Taskforce: Update and Key Priorities	Neelam Sunder/Jean Templeton	11 - 22
7.	Homes for the Future: Draft Strategy	John Godfrey/Leo Pollak	To Follow
8.	WMCA Air Quality Framework and Implementation Plan	Jackie Homan	23 - 68
9.	Levelling Up Zones, Investment Zone, and Place-based Strategies	Steve Bowyer/Jonathan Gibson	69 - 74
10.	Grant Register	Kate Taylor	75 - 80
11.	Work Programme (a) Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Work Programme (b) WMCA Board Forward Plan	Lyndsey Roberts	81 - 88
Date of Next Meeting			
12.	Thursday 14 December at 2:00pm (Mayoral Q&A - Proposed Draft Budget 2024/25)	Chair	None



West Midlands Combined Authority

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 4 September 2023 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Cathy Bayton (Chair)	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Naeem Akhtar (Vice-Chair)	Coventry City Council
Councillor Philip Bateman MBE	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Andrew Burrow	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Ian Kettle	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Nigel Lumby	Shropshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Ewan Mackey	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Emma Marshall	Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Lauren Rainbow	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Jamie Tennant	Birmingham City Council
Amanda Tomlinson	Business Representative

In Attendance

Deborah Casey	Homes England
Dan Essex	Governance & Scrutiny Manager
Linda Horne	Executive Director of Finance and Business Hub
Rob Lamond	Head of Strategy & Analysis (Housing)
Lyndsey Roberts	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Jaspal Seehra	Performance Manager
Laura Shoaf	Chief Executive
Councillor Vera Waters (joined via MS Teams)	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Item Title No.

144. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Paul Moore (Sandwell).

145. Chair's Remarks

(a) Oversight & Monitoring of Arm's Length Companies

The Chair reported that the WMCA had now established a formal process to monitor the activities of its arm's length companies and the outputs delivered for the region. The Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee and the Executive Board would receive activity reports on a regular basis.

(b) Challenging Year for Scrutiny

The Chair reminded the committee that although it was going to be a challenging year for scrutiny with the forthcoming Mayoral election in May 2024, the committee needed to remain impartial whilst continuing to hold the Mayor and the WMCA to account on its aims and objectives.

146. Minutes - 10 July 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

147. Matters Arising

(a) Social Housing Fund (minute no. 136(b))

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Task & Finish Group that comprised of officers from the seven local authorities had proposed that the Social Housing Fund of £14.9m was to be devolved to local authorities in an equal share. In response to a question raised by Councillor Jamie Tennant, she agreed to confirm the officer representing Birmingham City Council on the Task & Finish Group.

(b) Grant Register (Wolverhampton Metro Extension) (minute no. 141)

The Chief Executive confirmed that passenger tram services to Wolverhampton railway station would commence shortly, subject to driver training. Councillor Phil Bateman emphasised the need to be kept apprised on potential opening dates and any issues so that he could address these matters directly with the City of Wolverhampton Council.

148. English Devolution Accountability Framework - Scrutiny Protocol Progress Update

The Governance & Scrutiny Manager reported that the Department for Housing, Levelling Up & Communities had convened a small working group to help develop the contents of the scrutiny protocol, which was expected to be published in October. Members sought assurances that an opportunity to review and comment on the protocol as soon as it was published would be provided and that a full report would be presented to the committee.

The committee also noted the progress being made with the development of the terms of reference for the region's MPs and Mayoral Q&A sessions and the practical arrangements with regards to hosting the session within the region.

Resolved:

That the latest position regarding the development of the scrutiny protocol and the terms of reference for the forthcoming MPs and Mayoral Q&A sessions be noted.

149. Affordable Homes Programme

The committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration on the trailblazer approach to delivering the affordable homes programme in the West Midlands, as set out in the Deeper Devolution Deal agreed by WMCA and the Government in March.

Within the Deeper Devolution Deal, the Government committed to piloting a new, two-phase trailblazer approach to the Affordable Homes Programme in the West Midlands. The Affordable Homes Programme was the Government's flagship programme for delivering affordable housing in England, providing grant funding towards the supply of new social and affordable housing.

The committee discussed and shared comments on estate regeneration, the proportion of housing tenures to be delivered through the affordable programme, including affordable and social rents, the opportunities available to utilise the investment to deliver more social and affordable homes by 2026 and the proportion of affordable homes to be delivered as part of the Ladywood estate regeneration scheme.

[Amanda Tomlinson declared an interest in this item, as a member of the West Midlands Housing Association Partnership]

Resolved:

- (1) The progress following the announcement of the Deeper Devolution Deal in March 2023, specifically on the joint working of the Homes England and WMCA teams relating to the Affordable Homes Programme, be noted;
- (2) The ongoing engagement with local authorities and other partners be noted, and members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee be encouraged to contribute to the ongoing engagement within local authorities and provide links where necessary; and
- (3) The observations and comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding the need to be kept apprised on the use of the grant to regenerate estates, together with examples as to where local authorities were seeking to work with the WMCA to regenerate estates, resource and funding post 2026, be noted.

150. Affordable Housing Supply Strategy

The committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director for Housing, Property & Regeneration that provided a progress update on the emerging Affordable Homes Supply Strategy.

Since the last report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in January 2023, the agreement of the Deeper Devolution Deal and the significant implications for the delivery of affordable housing in the region had resulted in a pause for the development of the strategy in order to focus on the short-term mobilisation and implementation of joint working with Homes England.

Members welcomed the development of zero carbon homes but also highlighted the importance of the creation of green spaces. In addition, the provision of information to enable benchmarking to be undertaken in future years was also considered to be important. The Head of Strategy & Analysis provided an overview of the development of the strategy, together with the ongoing work with local authorities and assured the committee that Transport for West Midlands was involved in the development of the strategy, as the provision of transport infrastructure was key when building homes.

[Amanda Tomlinson declared an interest in this item, as a member of the West Midlands Housing Association Partnership]

Resolved:

- (1) The work on developing an 'Affordable Homes Supply Strategy', as commissioned by the Housing & Land Delivery Board, which was progressing in light of the additional remit for Affordable Homes Programme in the region as confirmed in the Deeper Devolution Deal, be noted;
- (2) The work to co-develop an integrated strategy with partners, directly supporting key policy agendas of the WMCA and local authorities through enabling affordable housing delivery and addressing issues of affordability in a co-ordinated and holistic way, be noted;
- (3) The observations and comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the creation of green spaces in addition to zero carbon homes and the importance of key performance indicators and the provision of information to undertake benchmarking in future years, be considered further; and
- (4) The Overview & Scrutiny Committee have sight of the draft Affordable Housing Supply Strategy when available for consideration.

151. Affordable Housing Pilot

The committee considered a report of the Head of Strategy & Analysis on the ongoing work of the WMCA and housing association partners to establish a more comprehensive collective approach to the delivery of additional affordable housing across the region.

The Chair welcomed the report but expressed concern at the pace of delivery and sought assurances that the delivery of modular builds had been considered by the housing association partners. The Head of Strategy & Analysis confirmed that within the current negotiations there was a recognition of his type of build, with a view to use a local supplier.

The Head of Strategy & Analysis agreed to keep the committee appraised on next steps and timescales.

[Amanda Tomlinson declared an interest in this item, as a member of the West Midlands Housing Association Partnership]

Resolved:

- (1) The continuing progress of collaboration between WMCA and registered providers of affordable housing, including the ongoing work to establish a pilot project, between the WMCA and a consortium of West Midlands housing associations as part of testing the strategic intent of a joint approach to deliver additional affordable housing, be noted; and
- (2) This work in the context of the emerging 'Affordable Homes Supply Strategy' and the Deeper Devolution Deal implications for the Affordable Housing Programme with Homes England to improve the collaboration and co-investment in the region and to enable more social and affordable housing delivery to meet local needs, be noted.

152. Performance Reporting against Annual Business Plan Deliverables

The committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Finance & Business Hub on the monitoring and reporting of the Annual Business Plan, which set out all activity to be delivered in-year.

In terms of July's performance, there were seven red and amber high-level deliverables, of which one red was currently at risk that was in relation to the establishment of the 'Life Chances Commission'. The commission was a Mayoral commitment to better understand the barriers for young people within the region and the targeted initiatives that could be developed by the WMCA to address these barriers.

Resolved:

- (1) That the performance of the WMCA against the Annual Business Plan deliverables be noted; and
- (2) The observations and comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the need for future reports to include additional information on the amber risks and consideration be given to the possibility of a holistic dashboard that identified the outcomes considered by the WMCA's respective committees and boards, be considered.

153. Grant Register

The committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Finance & Business Hub that provided an update on the grant register which contained all current 'live' grants where the WMCA was the accountable body and captured a comprehensive total of grants, awarding body, time period for delivery and a description of what the grant delivered.

In relation to the capital funding for the Pothole Fund announced as part of the 2023 budget, the detail on the allocation of the fund was set out within the current WMCA's Financial Monitoring Report, in which the funds would be 'passport' through to the individual local authorities.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

154. West Midlands Combined Authority Loan to Woking Borough Council

The Chair reported that a focus for the committee for this year was how to involve the WMCA's Statutory Officers in scrutiny and had invited the Executive Director of Finance & Business Hub to provide an update on the WMCA's loan to Woking Borough Council and the action taken as a result of the council issuing a Section 114 Notice.

Resolved:

That the update on the WMCA's loan to Woking Borough Council and the action undertaken by the WMCA, as a result of Section 114 Notice, be commended.

155. Work Programme

The committee considered its work programme of items that were to be considered at future meetings of the committee.

With regards to the regeneration of brownfield land, the committee agreed to undertake a scrutiny review to assess how the WMCA exercised its powers and funding in respect of brownfield land redevelopment and assess how the region's communities have benefited from this.

Resolved:

That the work programme be noted.

156. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 19 October 2023 at 10:30am.

The meeting ended at 12.00 pm.



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 19 October 2023 at 10.30 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Cathy Bayton (Chair)	Association of Black Country Authorities
Councillor Naeem Akhtar (Vice-Chair)	Coventry City Council
Councillor David Barker	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Philip Bateman MBE	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Andrew Burrow	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Ian Kettle	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Nigel Lumby	Shropshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Ewan Mackey	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Emma Marshall	Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Paul Moore	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Jamie Tennant	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Adrian Warwick	Warwickshire County Council
Councillor Vera Waters	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

In Attendance

Ed Cox	Executive Director for Strategy, Economy & Net Zero
Dan Essex	Governance & Scrutiny Manager
Councillor John McNicholas	Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Lyndsey Roberts	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Andy Street	Mayor of the West Midlands

**Item Title
No.**

157. Welcome & Introductions

The Chair welcomed the Mayor and members of the committee to the first mayoral question time for 2023/24 that would be focussing on WMCA policy-related matters.

158. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Amanda Tomlinson (Business Representative) and Councillor Lauren Rainbow (Birmingham).

159. Questions to the Mayor from Members of the Committee

The committee pursued a number of general lines of enquiry with the Mayor, including governance and accountability, the economy, skills, green policies and housing.

The Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill that was expected to receive Royal Assent shortly would simplify the process for amalgamating the Police & Crime Commissioner role into that of the Mayor. If agreed, the WMCA together with the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner would consider the practical arrangements of such a merger, including its governance structures. In terms of managing workloads, the Mayor considered that the appointment of a deputy, the use of delegated decision making and efficient structures were key elements to support the Chief Constable to improve the delivery of operational policing.

In respect of the events within the Middle East, the Mayor had met with the Jewish and Muslim communities, and both were understanding of the importance of each other's reactions to the Israel-Gaza conflict, which was critical for harmony between the different communities within the region. Discussions were also held with the Chief Constable regarding the guidance provided by the Home Secretary and how police officers were responding to events within the community.

Through the Deeper Devolution Deal, it had been agreed that the region's MPs would be able to scrutinise the Mayor in four Q&A sessions throughout the year. The Mayor shared his thoughts on the value of these Q&A sessions and believed that he was accountable to citizens of the West Midlands through members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as their democratically elected representatives.

The Government and the WMCA recognised that the current system of funding for mayoral combined authorities was fragmented and reliant on centrally administered funds. With a single settlement arrangement, the Government would give the WMCA single capital and revenue funding that would provide long term certainty and would enable the WMCA to work more effectively. It was also recognised that there was a need to review the current process in which funds were allocated to improve the pace at which programmes and projects were delivered.

With regards to the economy, the Mayor provided an overview of the lessons learnt following the transfer of the key functions of the Local Enterprise Partnerships to the WMCA and explained how the authority ensured that the business voice continued to influence decision making within the WMCA. In relation to the cancellation of the Birmingham to Manchester leg of the HS2 scheme, it was reported that the WMCA would commission an economic impact review and would continue to look at how links to Manchester could be improved. A further discussion was held on the delivery of the Midland Rail Hub.

The committee explored questions regarding the current performance of the labour market, including high unemployment and vacancy rates, the nature of vacancies, reskilling and skills bootcamps. The Mayor also shared his views on the impact of the Government's announcements related to its net zero policies, climate emergencies and partnership working with local authorities to progress to net zero.

Whilst it was recognised that the 2023 scorecards published by Climate Emergency UK had shown that the WMCA had performed well in relation to its work around the climate emergency, the Chair highlighted that the four Black Country authorities were below average and therefore work needed to be undertaken to ensure that these authorities were on target and were able to deliver net zero.

In respect of the 'green' agenda, the importance of energy creation and security to enable the UK to be self sufficient was highlighted. It was noted that the WMCA had currently focussed on reducing energy consumption.

The committee explored the opportunities for the WMCA to encourage housing associations to use modern methods of construction to help deliver the number of affordable and social homes required. Although 20% of new homes in developments supported by the WMCA must be classed as 'affordable' under its funding programmes, members enquired about the energy standards that were being encouraged.

The committee highlighted the importance of the non-financial support options that might be available via the WMCA to help support local authorities that currently experienced financial difficulties.

[Councillor Philip Bateman declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item, in relation to Birmingham International Airport, as a director representing Wolverhampton]

Resolved:

The following observations be shared with the WMCA Board for consideration and response as appropriate:

(1) HS2 (Cancellation of Birmingham - Manchester leg)

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee would like to understand when an analysis of the economic impact of the cancellation of the Birmingham - Manchester leg would be undertaken and would wish to review the report when completed.

It was considered that Overview & Scrutiny Committee members should be kept abreast of the transportation transformations to be delivered within the Network North document, the implementation of the Midland Rail Hub and on the timeline for delivery.

(2) Energy Creation

Although it was recognised that the current focus on the WMCA was to reduce energy consumption, Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered that the WMCA should also explore options for energy creation to help keep energy affordable for residents.

(3) Community Engagement

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee recognised the considerable work undertaken by the WMCA, but stressed the importance of ensuring that this was communicated to local authorities and the public to ensure that maximum benefit from its activities was being achieved.

(4) Labour Market Overview Information

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee would welcome sight on the local labour market information referred to by the Mayor within the Q&A session on a regular basis.

(5) Housing – New Builds and levels of energy standards to be supported by WMCA funding

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee requested to receive details of the levels of energy standards being encouraged by the WMCA.

160. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 6 November 2023 at 10:00am

The meeting ended at 12:30pm.



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date	6 November 2023
Report title	WMCA Homelessness Taskforce: Update and Key Priorities
Portfolio Lead	Councillor Kerrie Carmichael - Inclusive Communities The Portfolio Lead has worked in consultation with Councillor David Welsh – Chair of the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce Members Advisory Group
Accountable Chief Executive	Laura Shoaf, West Midlands Combined Authority email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk The Accountable Chief Executive and Portfolio Lead have worked in consultation with Jean Templeton - Independent Chair of the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce
Accountable Employee	Ed Cox, Executive Director - Strategy, Economy & Net Zero email: ed.cox@wmca.org.uk Neelam Sunder, Senior Programme Manager – Homelessness email: neelam.sunder@wmca.org.uk
Report has been considered by	WMCA Executive Board - 25 October 2023 Mayor & Portfolio Leads Liaison Meeting - 3 November 2023

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note that the homelessness being experienced by vulnerable citizens across the WMCA region is actively inhibiting our ability to create a more prosperous, fairer and

INclusive region for all, and that the Homelessness Taskforce has been one of the means by which the WMCA and its partners have collaborated to address this.

- (2) Consider how the WMCA and its partners can align efforts to accelerate progress towards our joint aim of designing out homelessness in all its manifestations, including by continuing to embed homelessness prevention into the mainstream strategies, processes, and programmes of the WMCA through cross-directorate activity and endorsing the Taskforce's adoption of a broader focus on all forms of homelessness.
- (3) Endorse the Homelessness Taskforce's identified priorities for 2023/24 and beyond, including specific actions to commission a suitably experienced and qualified organisation to help investigate and articulate an evidenced based economic case; and to consider how we can jointly lobby government to improve the current Local Housing Allowance (LHA) model.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update and engage Overview & Scrutiny Committee members on the current work programme and priorities of the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce.

2. Background

Forming the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce

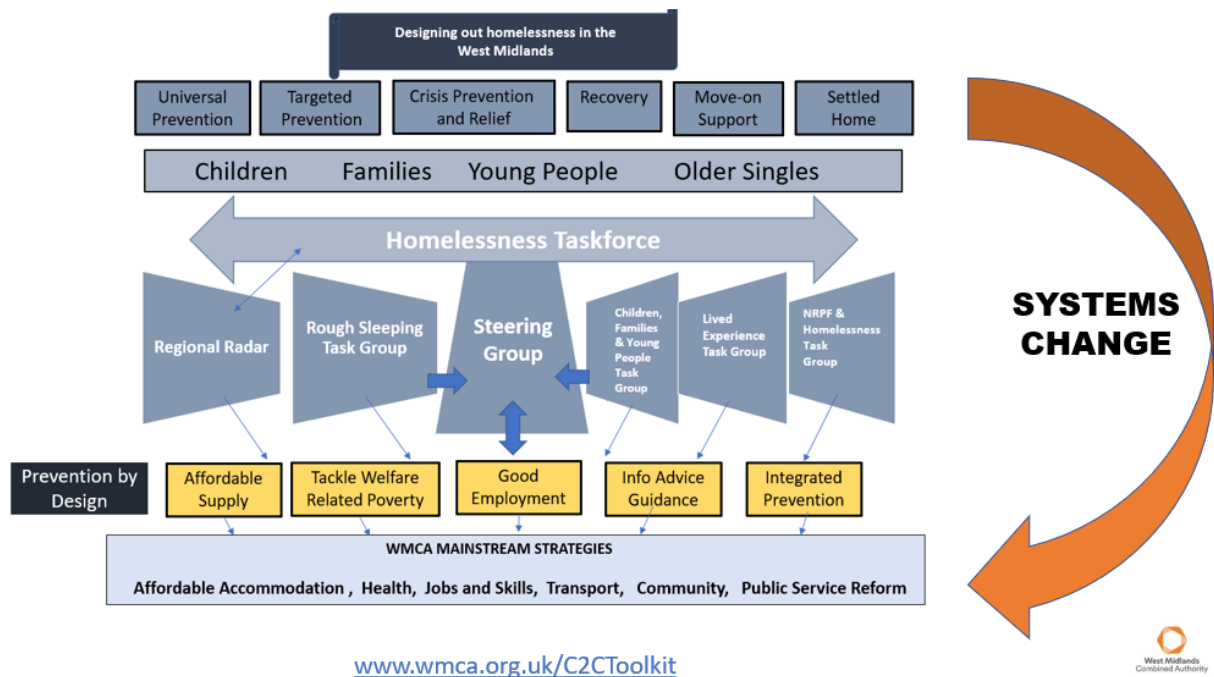
- 2.1 Homelessness is the ultimate exclusion for citizens and has far-reaching consequences for those affected and for local communities.
- 2.2 Homelessness is not a devolved responsibility to the Mayor of the West Midlands or West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), nor specifically funded. The primary responsibility and statutory duty for homelessness sits at local authority level. However, it was a key electoral issue during the first Mayoral elections due to the increase in rough sleeping at that time. This led to the Mayor setting up the Homelessness Taskforce during his first week with a commitment to bring together organisations, people and resources to support and **add value** to the work of our local authorities and other partner organisations that are involved in the prevention and relief of homelessness.
- 2.3 Two years after its formation, **the WMCA Board agreed in 2019 to 'mainstream' the work of the Homelessness Taskforce, taking it from being a Mayoral manifesto pledge into the core business of the WMCA.** At this stage, the Taskforce and its objectives were adopted within the mainstream structures of the WMCA.
- 2.4 Today, the Homelessness Taskforce membership includes all seven constituent local authorities of the WMCA, representation from non-constituent local authorities, key public sector agencies including Police, Fire, Health, DWP, Homes England; not for profit sector including West Midlands Housing Association Partnership, National Housing Federation, Crisis, Women's Aid, YMCA and representation from the Business Community. In addition, there is a Members Advisory Group made up of Cabinet Members with responsibility for homelessness from each of the seven constituent authorities, bolstering political leadership and accountability.

3. The Taskforce's ambition, aims and approach

- 3.1 The Homelessness Taskforce's strategic objective is to **design out homelessness** in all its forms, and to promote sustainable and meaningful **IN**clusion for all citizens of the WMCA region.
- 3.2 The reality however for some of our citizens is that they experience the exact opposite of **IN**clusion. Life circumstances for people with fewer social networks and resources, on lower incomes, in unstable accommodation, with physical and/or mental ill-health can put their lives into crisis, where circumstances and systems responses to those circumstances create a cycle of exclusion that results in citizens being further and further away from creating and sustaining a meaningful and safe life - in many instances leading to citizens losing their home and facing the ultimate exclusion that is homelessness.
- 3.3 The Taskforce's ambition to design out homelessness is based on the principle that we need a shared regional approach to tackling structural inequalities, which cuts across sectors and disciplines, focussing on how service systems respond to people's needs and how service systems inter-relate with each other so that they are inclusive of everyone, irregardless of life circumstances.
- 3.4 To help make sense of this critical challenge, the Taskforce has taken a life-course approach using an adapted version of the Positive Pathway Model, examining what we have in place and where the gaps exist, for children and families, young people, and older people, paying particular attention to those who are serially excluded.



- 3.5 Most homelessness or homelessness-related service systems are focused on the 'help' space of the model, when people are either already homeless or at immediate risk of being so. Therefore, in designing out homelessness, the purpose of the Taskforce has been to identify conditions for systems change which prevent homelessness at the earliest possible opportunity, deliberately considering what more can be done in the 'prevention' and 'create pathways' spaces to keep people **IN**cluded. If we can keep people in our systems, the less likely they are to become homeless.
- 3.6 This approach is encapsulated by the 'plan on a page' below, which sets out the work programme and **five objectives** which underpin all of the Taskforce's activity and resolve to embed the designing out of homelessness into the mainstream strategies of the WMCA.



- 3.7 The Homelessness Taskforce has sought to undertake activities with its local authority partners that are relevant and complementary to local strategies and commissioned services. When there has been added value to be gained, the Taskforce has played a pivotal role in convening, commissioning and coordinating activity right across the region.
- 3.8 This activity has included organising joint bids for example, to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to secure additional investment through programmes such as the National Housing First Pilots, Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme and Rough Sleeping Initiative that have allowed us to work with our local authorities and their partners to:



The 'litmus' test for all that we do includes:

- First and foremost, that we should add value to the work of our partners and not add work to already stretched services and organisations
- That our activity should not duplicate what others are already doing
- That our activity is always focused on ultimately designing out homelessness

3.9 An important part of the Taskforce's collaborative approach is the Members Advisory Group (MAG). The MAG meets each quarter where Members receive briefings, provide advice to workstreams and contribute relevant local knowledge and insight into policy issues impacting on homelessness across the region. The MAG critically acts as a conduit for embedding the work of the Homelessness Taskforce within local authority areas, taking responsibility for unblocking barriers to change. The MAG takes a bipartisan approach and as such has demonstrated its effectiveness as a lobbying group with central government, and other national bodies, providing a cross party and cross authority perspective on often complex issues spanning homelessness and housing; employment and skills; and health and communities.

4. Achievements

4.1 In the 6 years since its inception in 2017, the Homelessness Taskforce and its partners have continued delivering the Taskforce's 'plan on a page', making significant contributions to our ambition of designing out homelessness across the region. A few examples of what our joint work has achieved includes:

- Attracting additional funding in excess of £20 million for the region to tackle homelessness through the Rough Sleeping Initiative, Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme and Housing First
- Agreeing and implementing a West Midlands definition of what affordable housing is - one that reflects local incomes both from work and benefits to maximise the level of affordable housing within developments
- Using Adult Education Budget flexibilities to run sector-based work academies specifically for roles in homelessness, focusing on transferable skills for available jobs
- Publishing IAG resources for veterans, faith and community organisations, and businesses to maximise their impact in designing out homelessness
- Rolling out [Change into Action](#) in 6 local authority areas, supporting circa 700 individuals to move away from rough sleeping
- Investing in [Street Support Network](#) across the region to provide a directory of homelessness and housing related services for people looking to find and give help
- Support to cross sector organisations to use the [Commitment to Collaborate \(C2C\) Toolkit](#)

5. Homelessness in the WMCA

5.1 The top three headline reasons for homelessness presentations at local authorities have remained consistent since the inception of the Homelessness Taskforce:



Family or friends can no longer accommodate

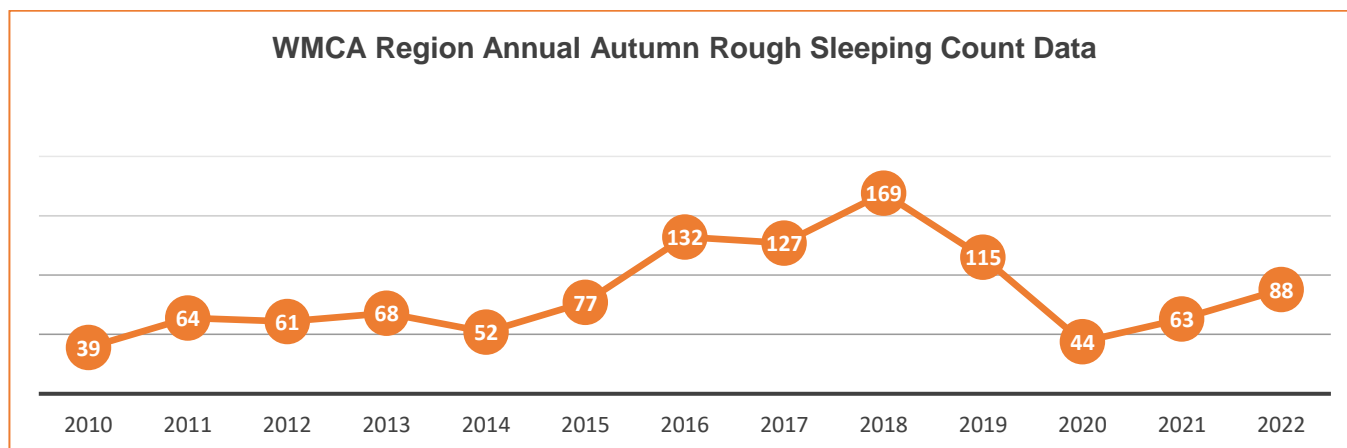


Ending of assured short hold tenancies



Relationship breakdown

5.2 A minority of people who become homeless end up sleeping rough. For most of the last decade, the headline trends for the WMCA area have showed an increase in rough sleeping from 39 in 2010, rising to 132 in 2016, and peaking at 169 in 2018. However, numbers of affected people declined significantly in 2019 and 2020. The figures for the WMCA region in the 2020 rough sleeping count showed a decrease in the number of people found to be rough sleeping from 115 to 44; the lowest number in 10 years.



5.3 Conversely data from the autumn 2021 and 2022 rough sleeping snapshot showed an increase. This reflects the exceptional circumstances of lockdowns in 2020 which had been lifted in 2021 making the environment more challenging. It is our analysis that it is too early to ascertain whether we have reached a peak in the numbers of people rough sleeping in the region, the autumn 2023 snapshot counts will provide a clearer picture.

5.4 It is important to acknowledge that homelessness and the risk of homelessness is not confined to rough sleeping. This **visible** form of homelessness is just the tip of the iceberg, which is why the Homelessness Taskforce is concerned with all forms of homelessness. The reality of homelessness is much broader than rough sleeping and there are many **hidden** forms of homelessness that are harder to see and affect many more citizens including:

- ‘Homeless at home’ e.g. overcrowding, unfit habitation
- Squatting
- Families with children in temporary accommodation, refuge, hotels and B&B
- Individuals staying in night shelters, hostels and supported accommodation
- Sofa surfing (sleeping on friend’s sofas) and other unstable solutions including intermittent hospital and prison stays

5.5 Whilst many people in the above situations may have a roof over their head, that is not the same as having a secure and stable home.

5.6 Recent statutory homelessness data published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) showed that between September 2022 and March 2023 there was a 24% increase in the number of households assessed as being owed a homelessness duty across the WMCA region, compared to a 7% increase across England. This suggests that the pressures being experienced in the region are disproportionate and significantly higher than the national average. In March 2023 the same dataset showed that there were 5,576 homeless households, including 11,076 children, across the WMCA region living in Temporary Accommodation (TA); equating to

a 7% increase compared to data for September 2022. This continuing rise of households having nowhere permanent to live is of great concern.

- 5.7 While TA for all household types is an integral part of homelessness provision, it presents real challenges to households using it. Research commissioned by the Homelessness Taskforce in 2021 to better understand the experience of families in TA showed that living in unsettled housing, the uncertainty, not being able to put down roots, with no permanent address can lead to a sense of 'living in limbo'. Unsurprisingly, the toll on the mental health of family members living in TA was reported by many of those interviewed as part of this research. For example, restrictions on the use of gardens in family units, and no privacy for parents or children, affected the wellbeing of the whole family.
- 5.8 Furthermore, families often have to move out of their local area to access TA which can take them away from friends and support networks. The research pointed to specific impacts on children around schooling. We heard examples from families and stakeholders of families being moved to TA far away from their children's schools, which had had a detrimental effect on attendance and performance.
- 5.9 There are many factors contributing to the rise in homelessness presentations and use of TA, but one critical factor identified by all of our Local Authorities is the level of Local Housing Allowance (LHA). The contextual evidence from our Local Authorities and wider partners indicates that low LHA rates are connected with increased levels of homelessness and is making the prevention and relief of homelessness even more difficult. Whether that be in initial prevention of homelessness or helping families in TA to move on to secure housing quickly.
- 5.10 LHA was originally designed to help make the private rented sector accessible and sustainable for households on benefits and low incomes. The LHA rate was set with the aim that the rent element of benefits would cover the full rental cost of 30% of private sector properties in any given area.
- 5.11 Data provided by Crisis and Zoopla clearly demonstrates that for all regions of England this aim is not being achieved. The most recent data for the WMCA region, as at the end of March 2023, shows that only 3% of private rented properties are currently affordable at LHA rates, falling significantly short of the intended 30%.
- 5.12 The assumptions that underpin the work of the Homelessness Taskforce, for example the logic chain on which the Positive Pathway Model is built, would suggest that households having affordable access to a higher percentage of the private rented sector is important for promoting household stability and preventing homelessness. Having accessible affordable secure housing is one of the most important protective factors for families and other households.

6. Homelessness Taskforce Priorities for 2023/24 and beyond

- 6.1 The analysis above suggests the continuing need for both strategic and practical action across the region. The following areas of focus have been identified by the Taskforce as being our contribution to the current strategic and practical challenges as well as continuing to help progress our longer term aim to design out homelessness across the region:

- **Systemic Change** - homelessness comes about through a combination of structural and personal 'risk' factors, and the (in)ability of services and systems to come together to prevent and relieve homelessness well before a crisis occurs. To design out homelessness, is to affect change in service systems so that homelessness is prevented at the earliest opportunity – this is the hardest challenge. The Homelessness Taskforce is actively working with the WMCA Executive Board and Leadership Centre on further embedding the principles of designing out homelessness in all the work of the WMCA, so that the WMCA exemplify the Taskforce's ambition, and help enhance our ability to influence and support structural and systemic change across the region.
- **Equalities & Diversity** – linked to the Children, Families and Young People priority below, we are undertaking some joint work with the West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce to generate a better understanding of the issues related to race equality, potential discrimination in service systems and the underlying reasons behind the disproportionate representation of some groups in homelessness services e.g. TA. We have secured commitment from Herriot Watt and the Oak Foundation to undertake a deep dive into our region. Linked to the systems change priority above, and the work being led by the WMCA Executive Board we are working with the WMCA Equalities & Diversity team to include an increased focus on homelessness impacts and opportunities for homelessness prevention as part of the WMCA Health and Equity Impact Assessment process.
- **WMCA Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal 2023** – the Taskforce is working in partnership with DLUHC & DWP on expanding the Live and Work model and piloting a Rent Simplification scheme for the region. DWP have secured £4.57m for the latter initiative. We have jointly developed a Proof of Concept project with DWP that will test financial support and simplification of the benefits system for 18-24 year olds living in supported housing who move into work or increase their working hours. This will help them to build their employment prospects further and work towards becoming financially independent and progress into move on accommodation in a planned way. In addition, we are also actively working across WMCA directorates to make the 'weave' across other Deal commitments related to Affordable Housing, Skills and Health.
- **Rough Sleeping** - until recently data to track rough sleeping has come primarily from the annual rough sleeping 'snapshot', which uses annual street counts to estimate the number of people sleeping out on a single night each autumn. While the snapshot is helpful in pointing out trends over time, we know that rough sleeping is complex - some people spend a single night out, others are rough sleeping for long periods of time and some have returned to rough sleeping after a period away. The single night count cannot adequately capture this complexity, and means we lack the insight needed to systematically ensure that rough sleeping is prevented wherever possible or, if it does occur, ensure that it is rare, brief and non-recurring. As early adopters of the government's new national data-led definition and rough sleeping framework, we have started to take a targeted data collection approach to tackling rough sleeping. The new set of indicators central to this approach will enable us to better capture and understand the extent and nature of rough sleeping in each local authority area, and to use this information to target interventions more effectively.

- **Children, Families and Young People** – as a region we critically need to increase housing supply, making a robust case on how we can tackle barriers linked to accessibility and affordability. The Members Advisory Group asked the WMCA to commit resources to help the region demonstrate the economics of improving the LHA model, to help make the case to government. The Taskforce intends to shortly go out to tender to commission a suitable organisation to help us investigate and articulate the economic case for improving the current LHA model. Our assessment is that to maximise the chances of at least marginal reform of LHA rates we need to be able to articulate an evidence based economic case for change. To be impactful any such articulation would need to be both methodologically robust and include serious attention to the economics and cost benefits of the case for improving LHA rates. In short, we need to demonstrate that investing in raising LHA expenditure will contribute to the prevention of homelessness which in turn will help to reduce expenditure and upward pressure on related budgets. This work will deliver an up to date evidence based case that is methodologically sound and includes robust evidence of the cost benefits or return on investment of increasing LHA rates.
- **No Recourse or Restricted Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)** - lobbying and influencing decisions regarding national responses and sharing good practice across service systems. This work includes working at a strategic level with partners across the region, such as the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, as well as ensuring that organisations providing support to affected groups are well informed and are being heard, for example working with the plethora of Faith and Community Groups working in this space.
- **Lived Experience Task Group** – we have resolved to explore how we can better embed learning from lived experience across systems and within the work programmes of the Taskforce. We have formed a new Task Group that will actively seek to include the voice of lived experience to inform and add value to our work.

7. Strategic Aims and Objectives

7.1 The key driver of the region's homelessness prevention work is framed by the Homelessness Taskforce and the Inclusive Growth Framework. Designing out homelessness is an agreed strategic objective for the WMCA, identified within and aligned to Aims 2.2, 2.3, 5.1 and 5.2:

- To work with partners to identify and address the different barriers faced by our diverse communities
- To support social innovation to tackle complex and longstanding challenges facing our communities, where mutually agreed with partners
- To work with partners to understand their priorities, convene around shared opportunities, and deliver together
- To work with central government to gain new powers and resources for the region, including double devolution

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no immediate financial implications within this paper. A Senior Programme Manager and Associate to the Homelessness Taskforce is currently funded by the WMCA from the Inclusive Communities portfolio budget to support this work programme. The WMCA has also secured an additional £1.5m funding from DLUHC for the 3-year Rough Sleeping Initiative Programme through to March 2025, with another 3 roles directly supporting this programme.
- 8.2 Future work on progressing the 5 objectives and the specific priorities identified within this report may require further investment; this will be sourced through a variety of routes, including central government, grant providers, pro bono support, local authorities and WMCA. This will be considered and agreed on a case by case basis.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 The WMCA does not have specific statutory duties in relation to homelessness. These powers and duties remain with and are discharged by the constituent and non-constituent Local Authorities. No immediate legal implications have been identified. It is recognised however that this is a challenge which transcends individual authority boundaries and the issues identified touch upon a number of the powers of the Mayoral Combined Authority. The functions of employment, skills, health and communities, transport, strategy and economy, and facilitating the delivery of housing (including both market and affordable homes) across the region are all affected by, and in turn can have an influence over the causes and incidence of homelessness in the region.

10. Single Assurance Framework Implications

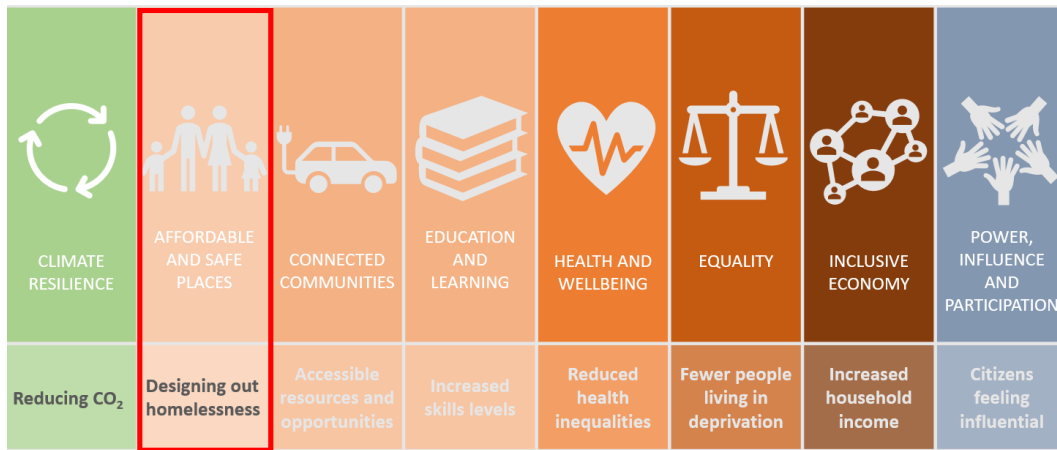
- 10.1 None.

11. Equalities Implications

- 11.1 The work of the Homelessness Taskforce targets some of the most vulnerable individuals in our communities and seeks to prevent homelessness in all of its forms. It has taken a person-centred life course approach to homelessness taking account of the demographics and equalities impacts for children and families, young people and older singles as well as those sleeping rough. We know that homelessness disproportionately affects some groups such as women and children, as well as those from some racialised communities. The Taskforce has specific workstreams aimed at better understanding the underlying reasons behind this disproportionate representation and how we can prevent and relieve homelessness for these groups.

12. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 12.1 The WMCA Board agreed in 2019 to 'mainstream' the work of the Homelessness Taskforce, taking it from a Mayoral manifesto pledge into business as usual. At this stage, the Taskforce and its objectives were adopted within the mainstream structures of the WMCA, including as one of the eight fundamentals of inclusive growth: affordable and safe places.



12.2 The work of the Homelessness Taskforce as a whole also addresses several of the indicators on the Inclusive Growth Framework, notably Education and Learning; Health and Wellbeing; Equality; and Inclusive Economy. Its overall purpose is to strengthen the region's ability to support some of the most vulnerable people within the region and ensure that inclusive growth means inclusive for all, including those experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage.

13. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

13.1 The work of the Homelessness Taskforce spans across all seven constituent authorities of the WMCA. In addition, the non-constituent authorities are represented on the Homelessness Taskforce.

14. Other Implications

14.1 There are no other implications.

15. Schedule of Background Papers

15.1 None.

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Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date	6 November 2023
Report title	WMCA Air Quality Framework and Implementation Plan
Portfolio Lead	Environment, Energy and HS2 - Councillor John Cotton
Accountable Chief Executive	Laura Shoaf, West Midlands Combined Authority email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk
Accountable Employee	Jackie Homan, Head of Environment email: jackie.homan@wmca.org.uk
Report has been considered by	Environment and Energy Board (July 2023 and Sept 2023) Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Air Quality, Congestion and Environmental Impact Members Engagement Group

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Endorse the draft Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan for approval at the November 2023 WMCA Board.
- (2) Endorse this paper for presentation to the WMCA Board in November 2023.
- (3) Note and support the recommendation, made by the Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Air Quality, Congestion and Environmental Impact Members Engagement Group to identify a stretch target for more ambitious air quality limits in the WMCA area than currently set out through the Environment Act 2021. ***(Awaiting decision from TDOSC meeting on 30th Oct)***

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the Air Quality Framework, and its associated Implementation Plan for the next 2 years. The paper also highlights delivery priorities, including funding secured/ required to expedite projects/ programmes.

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 (NO₂) and particulate matter (especially PM_{2.5}). Both of these have environmental, social and economic impacts for the region that have previously been set out in the 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:
- NO₂ 40 µg m⁻³ [this is a retained target]
 - PM_{2.5} 20 µg m⁻³ [new Env Act: 10 µg m⁻³ (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:

- NO₂ 10 µg m⁻³
- PM_{2.5} 5 µg m⁻³

- 2.4 To put this in a West Midlands context:
- The highest annual average PM_{2.5} 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_{2.5} levels in 72 of the 192 wards within the West Midlands exceed 10 µg m⁻³
 - 1.2m people or ca. 40% of the West Midlands' population live in wards exceeding PM targets of 10 µg m⁻³.
 - 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 NO₂, which is produced (and can be reduced) locally. PM_{2.5} 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.
- 2.6 In order to accelerate the improvement of air quality in the WMCA area, one of the actions proposed is to identify stretch targets which are more ambitious in terms of timescales and pollutant concentration targets than the UK Government air quality targets, and which are closer to World Health Organisation (WHO) targets for NO₂ and PM_{2.5}. This work would be done as part of the delivery of the Air Quality Implementation Plan (see Section 2.23 below)

Scope of the Air Quality Framework

- 2.7 Whilst all options for improving air quality have been considered by the Framework, the implementation opportunities have been narrowed down by the cost, time and likelihood of deployment. This is covered by the Methodology section below. 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?
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 There are some 'grey areas' including communications and behaviour change initiatives, for example, which 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

- 2.10 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 Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), constituent local authorities and partners such as WM-Air situated within University of Birmingham. 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.

2.11 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 2.12 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

2.12 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?

2.13 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 summary tables 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
- Initial 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 2.16 – 2.22 below).

2.14 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; University of Birmingham/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 17th August to review the Framework, which has been updated in response to feedback received – 48 people from the organisations referenced above attended.

2.15 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

2.16 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 a focused list of Framework priorities for collaboration has been developed into a two year Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan, which will be overseen by an Air Quality Framework Delivery Group (see 2.18 – 2.20 for more on proposed governance).

2.17 At the Framework consultation event on 17th 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 to produce the Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan. It consists of 9 packages of work and 10 standalone measures. The delivery will start with a discrete number of these measures (Section 2.23 below).

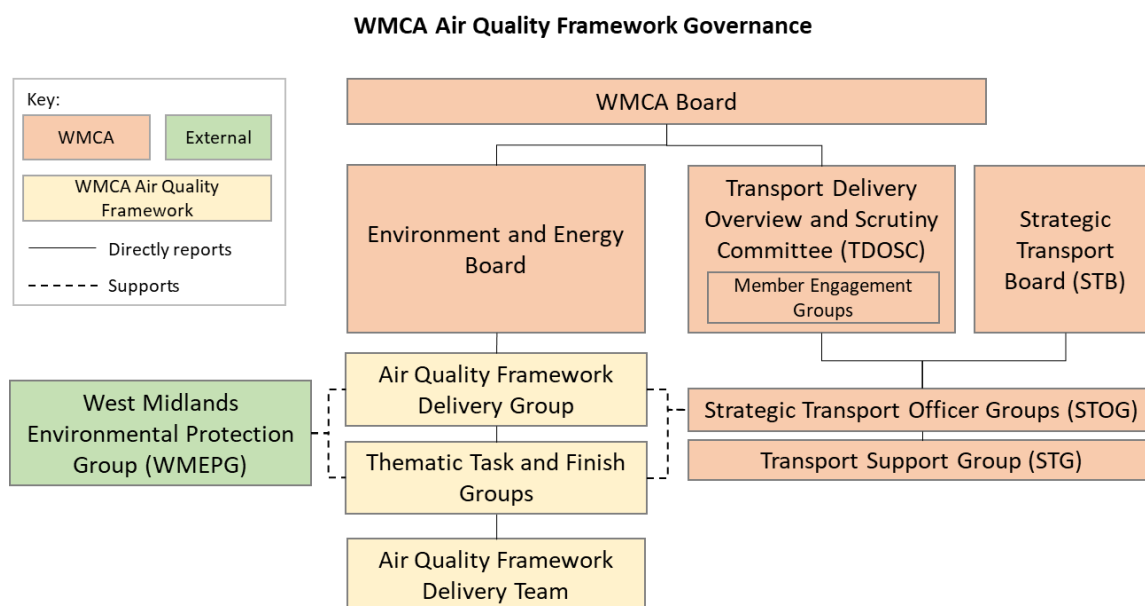
2.18 In addition to the measures themselves, the consultation also gave participants the opportunity to discuss potential governance for delivery. To ensure that the Framework is delivering for the whole WMCA area, we will establish an Air Quality Framework Delivery Group. This is something that has 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.

2.19 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 2.20 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.

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



2.21 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. It has become clear that the WMCA could add immediate value through behaviour change/ awareness raising and scaling up of monitoring capability and data collection.

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

Priority work programme for 2024 – 2026

2.23 A number of priority areas are included in the Implementation Plan, and the initial work would start on the following priorities:

1. Installation of a regional low-cost sensor network with capability of measuring PM2.5.
2. A website to collate and publicise data from new and existing sensors.
3. Behaviour change and air quality literacy delivery, specifically looking to reduce PM2.5 and its impact.

Priorities 1-3 are funded through a DEFRA air quality grant (see Section 2.24 below)

4. Identify stretch targets for air quality (could the West Midlands have more ambitious targets than those set nationally and what would they be?).
5. Full air quality communications package, including a region-wide alert system for high levels of air pollution.
6. Regional school engagement and accreditation programme.
7. Regionwide planning and design guidance for air quality to ensure consistency across the WMCA area.
8. Business case for speed limit reduction on high-speed roads and for lowering speed limits in urban centres.

Priorities 4-8 remain unfunded currently.

- 2.24 In parallel to producing the Air Quality Framework, WMCA secured **funding from DEFRA** in March 2023 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_{2.5}. 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. A communications toolkit will be developed for 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.
- 2.25 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 and we are planning to support a future session of the Panel to test the delivery of measures in 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

- 2.26 The DEFRA Air Quality grant detailed above, will support the implementation of some 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, or appropriate delegated approval in line with WMCA Single Assurance Framework procedures.
- 2.27 The initial funding from DEFRA will put in place an Air Quality Lead within WMCA. 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 and associated measures.

3. Strategic Aims and Objectives

3.1 The work on air quality links to a number of the strategic aims of the WMCA. These include:

- WMCA Business Plan Aim 4 (To reduce carbon emissions to net zero, enhance the environment and boost climate resilience), specifically objectives Objective 4.4 (we will pioneer and embed transport innovations and drive behaviour change to reduce emissions, improve air quality, and enable the creation of green jobs) and Objective 4.5 (we will work with partners to increase investment in nature and our surroundings). The Air Quality Framework is specifically referenced in Objective 4.5.
- The WMCA Natural Environment Plan and maximising the potential of biodiversity in enhancing air quality.
- The Local Transport Plan – improvements in air quality could be delivered across the six big moves, but are particularly drawn out in the ‘green transport revolution’ section.
- The State of the Region’s Health (air quality, and exposure to air pollutants) is seen as one of the wider determinants of health).
- The Inclusive Growth Framework, particularly in relation to improving health and well-being across the region.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 A number of priority areas are included within the Implementation Plan, and the initial work will be funded through a combination of secured DEFRA grant funding as well as the re-prioritisation of existing budgets.

4.2 The tables below identify the work that is planned over the next 2 years and their associated funding requirements.

DEFRA Grant Funded:

24/25	25/26
Installation of sensor network: £140k	
Website to collate and publicise data: £70k	
Behaviour change & AQ Literacy: £360k	
TOTAL: £570k	

Funded through re-prioritised existing budgets:

24/25	25/26
Identify stretch targets: £25k	Communication package: £50k
Planning and design guidance: £60k	Schools engagement programme: £100k
Speed limit reduction business cases: £60k	
Communication package: £30k	
TOTAL: £175k	TOTAL: £150k

5. Legal Implications

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

6. Single Assurance Framework Implications

- 6.1 The role of the Assurance and Appraisal Team is to apply the SAF process to the WM AIR Quality business case which has already been approved. The Assurance and Appraisal team have confidence that SAF has been applied to the business case and that it demonstrated that effective plans for delivery are in place and that the risks to the WMCA have been considered.

7. Equalities Implications

- 7.1 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.

8. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 8.1 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).

9. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 9.1 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.

10. Other Implications

- 10.1 None

11. Schedule of Background Papers

- 11.1 Appendix 1: West Midlands Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan

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

September 2023 (Version 1)



**West Midlands
Combined Authority**



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Executive Summary

This first Framework Implementation Plan has been developed to summarise priority measures from WMCA's Air Quality Framework that will be progressed/delivered between 2024 and 2026. 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 wide consultation event which sought the views of attendees regarding the options/measures that should be the focus of activities over the next two years. At the end of this, there will be a further Framework Implementation Plan developed.

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 the above work packages at this stage. The prioritised measures/work packages target improvements in both nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter and look beyond road transport emissions. This reflects the shifting focus for protection of future health in relation to particulate matter and associated effects from both road transport and other sources. Notably, WM-Air researchers estimate that annually in the West Midlands, up to 2300 early deaths are attributable to long term PM_{2.5} 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, the Framework 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, some of the 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 path to delivery through a DEFRA-funded air quality grant and 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 a Framework 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 enacted 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 West Midlands constituent¹ and non-constituent local authorities² on local air quality management (LAQM) and seeks to support and amplify their efforts 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 Framework 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, health and air quality. Their feedback and input were gained through an interactive consultation process that allowed the identification of priority measures for implementation.

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

1. Reduced exposure to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} - particles that are less than 10 and 2.5 micrometres (µm) in diameter respectively) striving to achieve better health outcomes for people living and working in the West Midlands.
2. Increased awareness amongst people, communities, developers, businesses, politicians, and policymakers of the need to tackle poor air quality in the West Midlands.
3. Improved monitoring, data collection and communication of the data to local groups, especially those at risk. The resulting insights should be used to understand the impact of various policy measures. Findings can then be used to inform discussions concerning future prioritisation to address poor air quality (including soft measures such as behaviour change campaigns and/or infrastructure solutions).
4. Increased regional and national co-working and cooperation to improve air quality and health outcomes in the most efficient way possible. This will build upon the work undertaken by local authorities and use the lessons learned 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 cannot be delivered by any one organisation (i.e. WMCA) acting 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, the engagement and involvement of the West Midlands people and communities is fundamental to helping assess, prioritise, and implement measures. The Greener Together Citizens' Panel has already provided input into 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.

¹ 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.

² 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 Framework 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 national government to promote or are not implementable within the current powers. If we identify any powers that would benefit air quality and public health, then they could form part of a future devolution deal.

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 form a multi-disciplinary approach when considering measures to be implemented to improve air quality and health 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 (e.g. undertaking preliminary assessment work, providing physical items (e.g. 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 address them (such as mitigation or adaptation).

The workplan in **Section 5** is a combination of Framework options in complementary packages and standalone measures. It captures proposed ownership and delivery partners, as well as the targeted progress/delivery stage by the end of the initial two-year period. One of the strengths of a framework approach is that options within the Framework can be initially assessed, and experience 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:

- NO₂ 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_{2.5}) - 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, road traffic, resuspended dust and dust from construction; secondary sources include particle formation from the atmospheric processing of NO₂, sulphur dioxide (SO₂), volatile organic compound (VOC) gases, and ammonia (NH₃).

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 2021³, its subsequent regulations (The Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023⁴) and other strategies such as the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023⁵.

The current legally binding targets set are higher than the WHO Air Quality Guideline Values in **Table 2.1**, and therefore seen by many as not being sufficiently ambitious to maximise protection of health. It was noted in legislation that all areas within England should be able to reach the revised PM_{2.5} target within the timescales set. However, transboundary pollution, especially in London and the south-east arising from continental Europe, 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 all of England (a requirement of the Environment Act) and what the World Health Organization recommends governments should set as their PM_{2.5} target, based on current evidence.

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

Pollutant	Averaging Period	Government Objectives and Targets in England (µg/m ³)	WHO Air Quality Guideline Values (µg/m ³)
NO ₂	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 ₁₀	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 _{2.5}	Annual mean (in 2023)	20	5
	Annual mean (2028 interim target)	12	5
	Annual mean (2040 target)	10	5

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

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

⁵ 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 a DEFRA policy paper⁶ which states 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 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) and Zero Emission Zones (ZEMZ) that can be used as a mechanism to meet the legally binding NO₂ air quality objective in the shortest possible time. However, measures such as CAZs can have varying impacts on concentrations depending on the restrictions imposed, but typically the impact on NO₂ is greatest. For example, the Birmingham CAZ area includes approximately 5% of the city population, which is one of the major limitations in achieving any significant health benefit (for major cost). CAZs can also exacerbate social and economic inequality, however if funds are used efficiently, changes in behaviour and modal shift can provide wider benefits which may not be immediately apparent.

With the clarified responsibility to improve local air quality, it is imperative that regional solutions are implemented. This is a departure from most previous 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, focusing on NO₂; 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 NO₂ and the larger particle sizes (such as PM₁₀). However, there is a substantial evidence base that concludes⁷ PM_{2.5} is more dangerous to human health, as the particles can penetrate more deeply into the body, lungs and even bloodstream; and is causally associated with a broader range of health outcomes than NO₂. This is reinforced within the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF), where the ‘Fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution’ only includes PM_{2.5}. As such, the Framework options have a particular focus on reducing emissions and exposure to PM_{2.5}. However, pollutants such as NH₃ should not be ignored as they have both a direct impact on the natural environment and play a part in secondary PM_{2.5} 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 year⁸.

⁶ 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>

⁷ An extensive evidence base on the impact of PM_{2.5} 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

⁸ 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:

Most of these deaths attributable to outdoor air pollution are related to long-term exposure to PM_{2.5}. WM-Air estimate that annually in the West Midlands, up to 2300 early deaths are attributable to long term PM_{2.5} exposure. In addition to the mortality burden, there is the causation and exacerbation of both avoidable and unavoidable

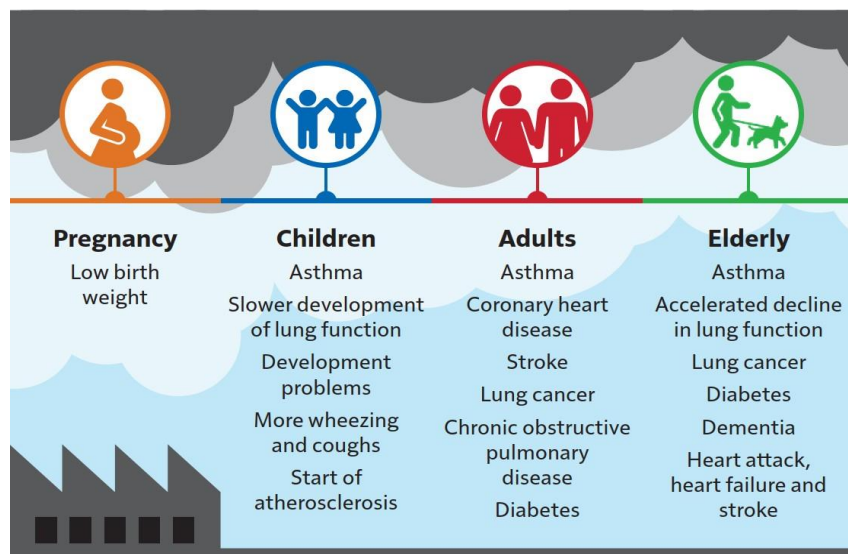


Figure 1: Health effects of air pollution throughout life. From Chief Medical Officer’s 2022 Annual Report: Air Pollution

chronic illnesses, such as asthma, along with associated impacts on mental health and cognitive function. As such, 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 including socio-economics, ethnicity, age and other medical factors (such as pregnancy and pre-existing conditions).

having an impact on sensitive plants through the formation of nitric acid in sunlight, which is a major constituent of acid rain, tropospheric ozone and smog. 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 less mature field of study than outdoor air quality. With improvements to outdoor air quality, it is expected that there will be an increased focus on indoor air quality, given the time that people spend indoors, and the range of behavioural and other interventions which can mitigate exposure. This can include advice on better ventilation, change to electric cooking methods, having a smoke free home (no smoking and log burners), reducing the use of harsh cleaning chemicals and keeping your home heated to prevent condensation leading to some damp and mould.

Pollutant Sources Within the West Midlands

Primary NO₂ and NO_x 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. NO₂); at the opposite extreme levels of very long-lived species depend upon emissions globally (e.g. carbon dioxide (CO₂)).

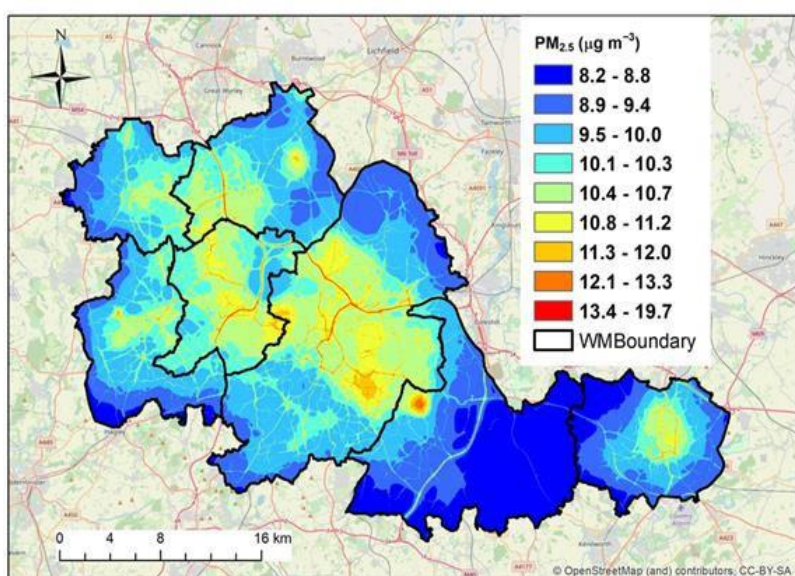
Whilst we are expecting urban NO₂ to decrease with the move to electric vehicles, projections from the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory indicate that we cannot currently anticipate an equivalent reduction in PM_{2.5} without additional interventions (related to non-exhaust PM sources: brake, tyre, and road wear, exacerbated by increased vehicle weight).

West Midlands Ambient Air Quality Overview

Ambient air quality has significantly improved over the past 50 years, particularly with notable reductions in pollutants like NO₂. 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.

NH₃ is typically more relevant to the natural environment but is gaining importance in terms of human health. It can contribute to increased secondary PM_{2.5} concentrations through chemical reactions in the atmosphere. Ammonia emissions and concentrations have not decreased to the same extent as other pollutants.

The highest 2021 annual average PM_{2.5} 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). N.B this dataset is a modified 2016 model and therefore it has limited influence from COVID-19. This is because it utilises a 2021 vehicle fleet that would not be affected by COVID-19.



Across the region, monitored concentrations of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are below their respective objectives, with monitored annual mean PM_{2.5} concentrations being below the 2040 target (10µg/m³) 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, PM_{2.5} in all areas exceeds the WHO Air Quality Guideline Value (5µg/m³); 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 ward-mean annual average PM_{2.5} levels in 72 of the 192 wards within the West Midlands exceed 10µg/m³. Modelling by WM-Air⁹ suggests that that 1.2m people or ca. 40% of the West Midlands' population live in wards where ward average annual mean PM_{2.5} concentrations exceed 10µg/m³. 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.

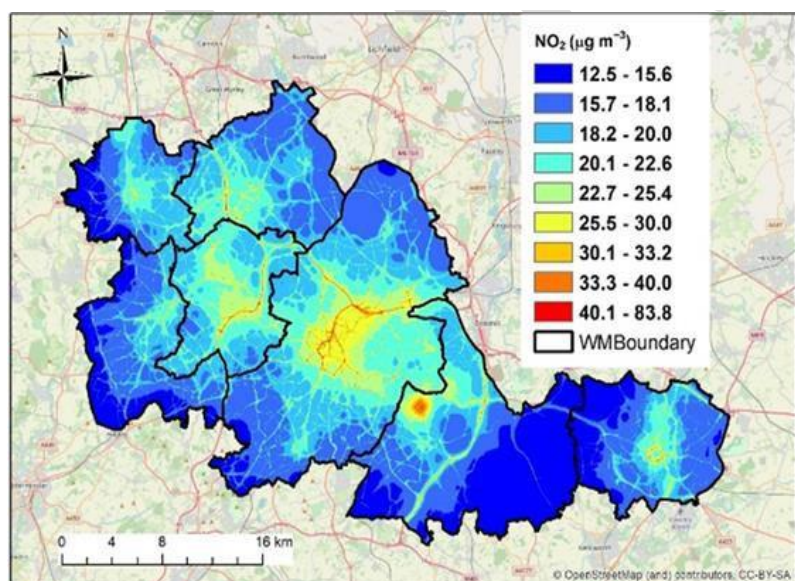


Figure 2: Predicted 2021 annual average concentrations of PM_{2.5} (top) and NO₂ (bottom) in the West Midlands. Drawn from NAEI emission data & WM-Air modelling.

Based on the WM-Air modelling (though the Air Quality Life Assessment Tool (AQ-LAT), across the WMCA area in 2021, the estimated *fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution* was 7.5%, which is higher than the West Midlands average (includes non-

⁹ 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>

WMCA local authorities) and English average. Sandwell is predicted to have the highest fraction at 7.9%, whilst Solihull, has the lower fraction of attributable mortality in the WMCA area. It should be noted that national PHOF fractions are based on national modelling and have a lower fraction in companion. Although the regional PM_{2.5} 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 NO₂, there have been historical exceedances of the annual mean objective prior to COVID-19, and locations in the West Midlands where NO₂ exceeded the objective during covid affected years (2020 and 2021). In line with the national trends, the number of locations exceeding the annual mean NO₂ objective has been decreasing over the past 15 years, however in some urban locations, the concentrations are not decreasing at the same rate as 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 NO₂ emissions and exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ objective.

DRAFT

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 paper¹⁰, 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 DEFRA¹¹). The main Framework document details each of the stages in the Framework process. **Figure 3** below provides a summary of the stages of work undertaken.

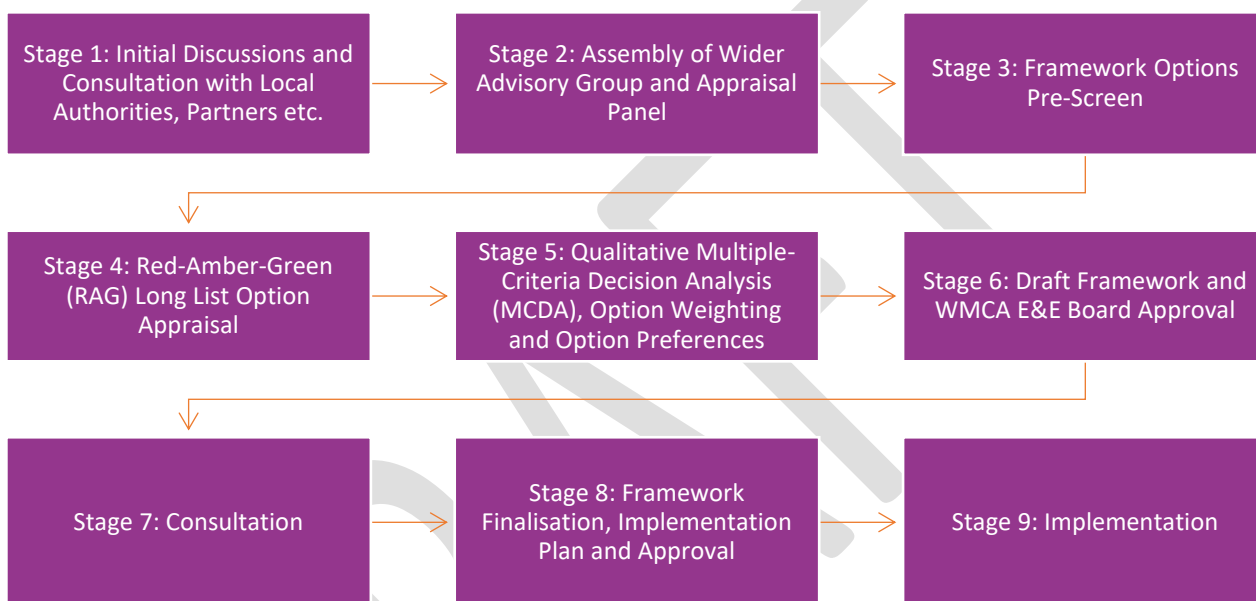


Figure 3: Framework Stages and Workflow

At the inception of the Framework, and throughout the process, regular discussion and consultation was 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 guiding principles that should be used as part of 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 also 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 relevant 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 achievable set of packages and measures to improve air quality within the region.

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

¹¹ 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/202205627_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

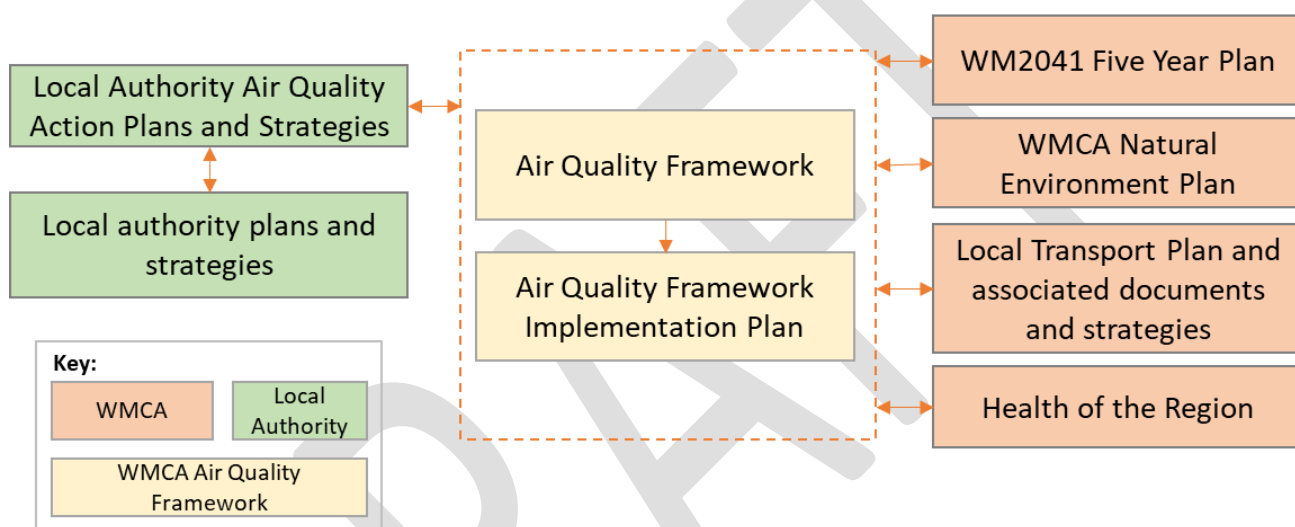


Figure 4: Alignment of the WMCA Air Quality Framework to Regional Strategies

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 and natural environment (noting these may not necessarily be interlinked at a local authority level). 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, grouped as:

- Outline feasibility stage;
- 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, options 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 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 the above structure have been retained as standalone measures. 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. **Table 5.10** (Transport for West Midlands and local authority standalone transport measures) and **Tables 5.11** and **5.12** (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). We do, however, recognise that there are significant capacity issues in terms of delivery in the constituent local authorities, which is a potential risk to delivery of some of these programmes. Providing additional resource through external support will be critical for success.

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 identified against these.

Much of the engagement and behaviour change work can be delivered through existing officer time, potential additional resources and by leveraging the benefits of having more of a regional approach. Others, such as 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 once a scope is defined. The Framework Delivery Group will play an integral role in identifying sources of finance 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 on the back of revised planning guidance (i.e. 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			
Package Summary	Establish a West Midlands wide low-cost sensor network, along with an associated standalone website, network standard and behaviour change elements. This will bring together existing indicative low-cost sensors from local authorities, plus existing monitoring that is used for compliance. This will enable increased understanding of particulate concentrations within the region and provide tools to reduce exposure and emissions to benefit public health. The network will be designed in conjunction with partners and with guidance/standards to be shaped by upcoming DEFRA low-cost sensor guidance.		
Expected Delivery	Full implementation		
Consisting of Framework Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish, manage, and maintain a West Midlands wide low-cost sensor network, with an associated standalone website that includes existing regional data and other air quality information that is effective for behaviour change. (MON1) ▪ 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) ▪ Use a centralised West Midlands air quality network website as a data store to enable various analyses. (MON4) ▪ 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) ▪ Provide a centralised online public resource and/or platform for engagement and behaviour change co-ordination across the West Midlands. (EBC30) ▪ 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) ▪ Interactive online resources to demonstrate air quality issues. (EBC32) 		
Proposed WMCA Role and Ownership	WMCA to lead , with local authority and partner input.	Stakeholders/ Consultees	Local authorities, TfWM, communities, medical professionals/GPs and businesses.
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	£640k (already secured through DEFRA grant and DLUHC funding), likely to cover up to five years.	Risks	Long term viability without long term funding. Dating of equipment due to adoption of new technologies/fragmentation of technologies. Lack of promotion and engaging materials on the centralised website leading to lack of usage.
Indicative Long-Term	TBC following finalisation of scope and procurement, however existing funds	Dependencies	External funding (including promotion), local authority highways/TfWM support for

Costs and Sources	expected to provide support to five years (££-£££).		installation on lampposts where required and property owner consent.
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Table 5.2: WP2 - Air Quality Communications

Air Quality Communications			
Package Summary	Produce a communications strategy and materials to harmonise and maximise the effective delivery of air quality communications throughout the West Midlands. This would include 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. Utilising local authority public health teams will be critical in the creation and dissemination of materials through existing partnerships and communication channels		
Expected Delivery	Early stage to full implementation		
Consisting of Framework Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leverage campaigns for public transport, walking and cycling to promote the various co-benefits. (EBC10) ▪ Use health professionals to educate and disseminate targeted air quality information to vulnerable and at-risk patients. (EBC27) ▪ Work with existing public health channels to deliver consistent messaging across the West Midlands. (EBC29) ▪ Use trusted advisors to disseminate air quality messaging, including faith leaders, GPs, nurses, fire service etc. (EBC34) ▪ 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) ▪ Roll out tools to warn and update residents of poor air quality and supported by regional/local healthcare system. (PH1) 		
Proposed WMCA Role and Ownership	WMCA to lead , with local authorities supporting on local implementation.	Stakeholders/ Consultees	Local authorities (air quality, public health, and communication teams), TfWM, healthcare, communities, and external organisations.
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	Set up and initial delivery of the work package expected to be in the region of £80,000. This would include a feasibility study/business case for an alert system and healthcare system integration.	Risks	Poor public reach due to lack of coordination in communications, no agreement on messaging and key messages, conflicting messaging, lack of support within communities. No scope to update healthcare systems to integrate air quality alerts/warnings leading to lack of use.
Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources	TBC following feasibility – Expected to be officer time, any identified promotional costs and long-term support of air quality alert system if implemented (£-££).	Dependencies	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	
Package Summary	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). There should be engagement and linkages to existing programmes and working with existing groups who campaign in the area (such as Mums for Lungs).
Expected Delivery	Early-stage implementation
Consisting of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce a West Midlands schools accreditation and education scheme for air quality. (EBC28) ▪ 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)

Schools			
Framework Options			
Proposed WMCA Role and Ownership	WMCA to enable , with local authorities leading on local implementation	Stakeholders/ Consultees	Schools, local authorities (air quality, public health, and communication teams), TfWM, communities and external organisations.
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	Establishment of the region wide programme and initial delivery of the work package expected to be in the region of £100,000.	Risks	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.
Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources	TBC following feasibility – Expected to be officer time + any identified promotional costs (£). Potential sources to be investigated, could include section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding streams (where in place and applicable). Potential funding request from DEFRA etc.	Dependencies	Sufficient officer time and promotion to provide an effective programme.

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

General Air Quality Engagement and Behaviour Change			
Package Summary	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. This should also include information on general behaviour change on better transport choices and small changes to reduce personal emissions when possible. The toolkit and toolbox approach will aim to reduce the 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.		
Expected Delivery	Early stage to full implementation		
Consisting of Framework Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raise awareness of wider general indoor air quality issues, how to manage and potential solutions. (EBC4) ▪ Provide information on how to reduce personal exposure to poor air quality outside of the home and what can be benefits can be. (EBC25) ▪ 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) ▪ 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) 		
Proposed WMCA Role and Ownership	WMCA to lead , with local authorities supporting on local implementation.	Stakeholders/ Consultees	Local authorities (air quality, public health, and communication teams), TfWM, healthcare, communities, external organisations, and businesses.
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	£350,000 funding secured through DEFRA for a seven behaviour change programmes across the WMCA area (covering themes in WP4 and WP5)	Risks	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.
Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources	TBC following feasibility – Expected to be officer time + any identified promotional costs (£). Potential sources to be investigated, could include section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding streams (where in place and applicable).	Dependencies	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			
Package Summary	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 _{2.5} 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. It should be noted that there is the potential to deal with some aspects of domestic combustion through the planning process, via planning conditions on new development alongside Building Regulations requirements.		
Expected Delivery	Early-stage implementation		
Consisting of Framework Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To raise awareness of specific air quality issues and potential solutions associated with the use of log burners, fireplaces, and bonfires. (EBC1) ▪ Raise awareness of air quality issues and potential solutions associated with general domestic combustion. (EBC2) ▪ Raise awareness for when solid fuel combustion is required, to ensure the correct fuels are used (i.e. dry seasoned wood). (EBC3) 		
Proposed WMCA Role and Ownership	WMCA to lead , with local authorities supporting on local implementation.	Stakeholders/ Consultees	Local authorities (air quality, public health, and communication teams), healthcare, communities, external organisations, and businesses.
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	£350,000 funding secured through DEFRA for a seven behaviour change programmes across the WMCA area (covering themes in WP4 and WP5)	Risks	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 publicity when targeting non-essential combustion. Potential cost of living implications for small minority who have combustion appliances as their main source of heating and hot water.
Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources	TBC following feasibility – Expected to be officer time + any identified promotional costs (£). Potential sources to be investigated, could include section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding streams (where in place and applicable).	Dependencies	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	
Package Summary	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. Links to the changes in indoor air quality because of retrofit could be made, with promotional campaigns undertaken. There are also opportunities for the new WM-Net Zero research project to support and provide outputs, alongside linkages to other research, such as Framework option PH5 (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).

Net Zero and Retrofit			
Expected Delivery	Full implementation		
Consisting of Framework Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metrics for improving air quality, to capture co-benefits from net zero actions and for policy to reduce regional health inequalities. (CNZ1) Reduce Fuel Combustion by Improving home Energy Efficiency. (DOM1) Supporting the transition from gas central heating. (DOM4) Support landlords and homeowners in accessing grants to retrofit. (DOM6) 		
Proposed WMCA Role and Ownership	WMCA to lead , with local authorities supporting on local implementation.	Stakeholders/Consultees	Local authorities (air quality, public health, net zero and planning teams), TfWM, WM-Net Zero, businesses, housing organisations, healthcare, and communities.
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	Officer time (£) from an air quality perspective but tying into existing packages with significant funding. Potential additional costs if indoor air quality monitoring is undertaken to assess retrofit programmes	Risks	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. Cost of living crisis impacting affordability of measures.
Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources	TBC following feasibility – Officer time (£) from an air quality perspective but tying into existing packages (£££). Potential sources to be investigated, could include section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding streams (where in place and applicable).	Dependencies	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			
Package Summary	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 identified as best practice consistently 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 should be a clear process on what should be done when there is a potential negative impact on air quality/public health. This will ensure it is clear for developers and consultants on what is expected and how this should be dealt with, ideally prior to a planning decision being made. There is the potential to expand existing requirements for damage cost assessments to fund air quality initiatives and promote higher standards of development.		
Expected Delivery	Business case to early-stage implementation		
Consisting of Framework Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) Introduce air quality neutral and/or air quality positive assessments into the planning process across the West Midlands. (PPG2) Including Health Impact Assessments (HIA) in planning applications and containing air quality. (PPG8) 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) 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) 		
Proposed WMCA Role and Ownership	WMCA to enable/convene , to be led by local authorities.	Stakeholders/Consultees	Local authorities (air quality, public health and planning teams), TfWM and communities

Planning and Air Quality Assessment Considerations			
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	£60,000 to bring in external delivery support.	Risks	Patchy implementation, evolving planning processes, legislation, guidance etc. Political support for additional planning processes and policy. Lack of officer time. Existing national and local planning policy typically leads to air quality issues in practice being low in the decision-making process.
Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources	Officer time (£)	Dependencies	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			
Package Summary	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.		
Expected Delivery	Early-stage implementation		
Consisting of Framework Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leverage modified biodiversity net gain (BNG) metrics to improve urban design and reduce exposure to poor air quality. (NBE1) ▪ Working through the Natural Environment Plan to identify best uses of green infrastructure for air quality. (NBE5) 		
Proposed WMCA Role and Ownership	WMCA to lead, with local authorities supporting on local implementation and policy	Stakeholders/ Consultees	Local authorities (air quality, public health, planning and natural environment teams), partners, communities, and developers.
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	Officer time (+ DEFRA funding through Local Nature Recovery Strategy Responsible Authority function)	Risks	Uptake from constituent local authorities, developers (due to costs). Willingness for developers to engage. Lack of officer time.
Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources	Officer time (£)	Dependencies	Local Nature Recovery Strategy, adjustment to BNG metrics

Table 5.9: WP9 - Research

Research			
Package Summary	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 performed by WM-Air within the West Midlands, and has directly informed this framework and implementation plan, 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.		
Expected Delivery	Funding secured to early-stage implementation		
Consisting of Framework Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand the relative importance of within-region emissions and transported air pollution for WMCA air quality. (MON5) ▪ 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) ▪ Research on the effectiveness of new technologies for reducing pollutant concentrations in the built environment. (NBE12) 		

Research			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research the sources and methods for effective secondary aerosol formation reduction and how these can be implemented across commercial, industrial and agriculture. (CIA21) 		
Proposed WMCA Role and Ownership	WMCA to convene , with WM-Air at the University of Birmingham to lead.	Stakeholders/Consultees	Research institutions, WMCA, Local authorities (air quality, public health, and communication teams), TfWM, healthcare, communities, businesses, and industry.
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	Utilising existing research streams (£)	Risks	Potential difficulty in providing the resolution required across the region. Additional data may be required for particular emission sources, which may be expensive.
Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources	TBC depending on funding coming forward and existing funding streams (££-£££)	Dependencies	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 to 5.12 overleaf provide a summary of the measures that have not been put into a work package but are still a priority over the next two years. The measures mostly relate to transport, however there are built environment and other considerations. As with the work packages above, the expected ‘delivery stage’ of the measures is subject to assessment, feasibility studies, business cases and funding.

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

Framework Option	TRN4	TRN8	TRN11	TRN15
Measure	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.
Expected Delivery Stage	Outline feasibility stage	Early-stage implementation	Outline feasibility stage	Business case prepared
Proposed WMCA Role and Ownership	WMCA to convene - TfWM and local authorities to lead	WMCA to convene - TfWM and local authorities to lead	WMCA to convene - TfWM and local authorities to lead	WMCA to convene - TfWM and local authorities to lead
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	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.
Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources	Dependant on specific scheme. Will have associated assessment and feasibility costs. Local Transport Plan and other potential sources to be investigated. Could include section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding streams (where in place and applicable). (£££)	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 (££-£££).
Stakeholders/ Consultees	Communities and local businesses	Communities, local businesses, and transport companies	Communities and local businesses	National Highways, communities, local businesses
Risks	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.
Dependencies	Promotion by local authorities and appropriate assessment.	LTP implementation	Promotion by local authorities and appropriate assessment.	National Highways support

Table 5.11: Additional Standalone Measures for WMCA, Transport for West Midlands and Local Authorities (1)

Framework Option	TRN16	NBE11	NBE2	NBE9
Measure	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.	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.
Expected Delivery Stage	Outline feasibility stage	Business case prepared	Early-stage implementation	Business case prepared
Proposed WMCA Role and Ownership	WMCA to convene - TfWM and local authorities to lead	WMCA to convene - TfWM and local authorities to lead	WMCA to convene - TfWM and local authorities to lead	WMCA to convene - TfWM and local authorities to lead
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	Delivery of a business case, estimated to be in the region of £30,000.	Dependant on specific scheme. Will have associated assessment and feasibility costs. Local Transport Plan and other potential sources to be investigated. Could include section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding streams (where in place and applicable). (£££)	Officer time (£)	Officer time (£)
Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources	Dependant on scope. Will have associated assessment and feasibility costs. Local Transport Plan and other potential sources to be investigated. Could include section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding streams (where in place and applicable). (£££)	TBC	Officer time (£)	Dependant on specific scheme. Local Transport Plan and other potential sources to be investigated. Could include section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding (£££)
Delivery Stakeholders	Communities and local businesses	Communities, local businesses, road safety teams, local and national cycling groups.	Communities, local businesses, research institutions.	Communities and local businesses
Risks	Potentially lower speeds in urban areas may worsen air quality. May need street feature changes instead and risks road safety	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.	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.
Dependencies	Promotion by local authorities and appropriate assessment.	LTP implementation.	LTP and Natural Environment Plan implementation.	Promotion by local authorities through transport and planning, and appropriate assessment.

Table 5.12: Additional Standalone Measures for WMCA, Transport for West Midlands and Local Authorities (2)

Framework Option	PPG14	PPG19	Stretch Air Quality Targets
Measure	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.	The adoption of stretch targets which are more ambitious in terms of timescales and pollutant concentration targets than the UK Government air quality targets. These should be closer to World Health Organisation (WHO) targets for NO2 and PM2.5 to benefit public health.
Expected Delivery Stage	Full implementation	Full implementation	Business case prepared and targets agreed
Proposed WMCA Role and Ownership	WMCA to convene - TfWM and local authorities to lead	WMCA to lead .	WMCA to lead in partnership with a delivery partner (such as WM-Air)
Indicative Two-Year Costs and Sources	Dependant on specific scheme. Will have associated assessment and feasibility costs. Local Transport Plan and other potential sources to be investigated. Could include section 106 agreement or damage cost assessment funding streams (where in place and applicable). (£££)	Funded through the DEFRA Air Quality grant.	Delivery of a business case and research, estimated to be in the region of £25,000, assuming WM-Air can be mobilised to support on the work with their regional air quality model.
Indicative Long-Term Costs and Sources	TBC	Officer time and programme running costs (£)	N/A
Delivery Stakeholders	Communities, local businesses, police, road safety teams and transport companies	Members and local authorities.	Members, local authorities, research partners.
Risks	Impacts on parents where there aren't viable alternatives to travel to school safely. Ensuring issues are not displaced.	Promotion will be required to ensure uptake.	Adoption across the region within air quality policies is key to ensure that the region has a common goal. Reliant on funding and adoption of Framework measures. Transboundary emissions are outside of the control of the region.
Dependencies	Continued support and implantation by TfWM and local authorities.	DEFRA Air Quality grant.	Utilisation of the WM-Air regional model for efficiency. Support from local authorities.

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. Constituent local authorities will be able to add data and shape the website where possible. 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; each project/programme will have its own methodology. 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 guiding principles 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 of 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, 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)
- Local authority representation (air quality, behaviour change and net zero officers)
- Community group representation
- Political stakeholder (such as a member of the WMCA Environment and Energy Board)
- 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. The incorporation of wider governance arrangements and their role within the Framework Governance will be agreed by the Framework Delivery Group.

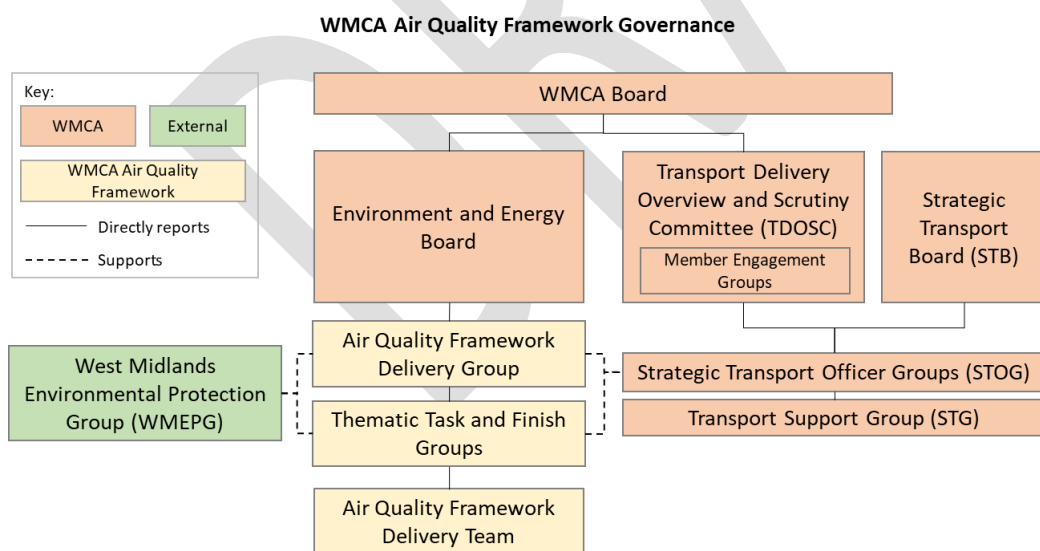


Figure 6: Proposed WMCA Air Quality Framework Governance Structure

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

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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: Greener Together Citizens Panel (wmca.org.uk)
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 ₃	Ammonia
NO ₂	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 _x	Nitrogen oxides - NO _x is a collective term used to refer to a group of reactive nitrogen oxide, primarily nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂).
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 ₁₀	Particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of less than 10 micrometres.
PM _{2.5}	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 ₂ 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
Members 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)	Birmingham: Mark Wolstencroft (Operations Manager Environmental Protection), Paul Burns (Environmental Protection Officer) and Peter Mackintosh (Air Quality Projects Officer) Coventry: Neil Chaplin (Principal Environmental Protection Officer) and Steve Dewar (Environmental Health Officer) Dudley: Ruth Burgin (Pollution Control Officer) and Ian Grove (Principal Environmental Health Officer) Sandwell: Elizabeth Stephens (Senior Environmental Health Officer) and Sophie Morris (Public Health Specialist- Air Quality and Climate Change) Solihull: Nick Laws (Senior Public Health Specialist) and Amanda Clover (Senior Development Officer) Walsall: John Grant (Environmental Protection Manager) and Curtis Dean (Environmental Protection) Wolverhampton: Shaun Walker (Service Lead – Environmental Crime)	Air Quality: 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) Behaviour Change: James Knoll-Pollard (Behavioural Design Lead) Planning: Michael Wood (Technical Director) Ecology: Joe Franklin (Associate Director), Vaughn Lewis (Consultant)	
Framework working group	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Option Pre-Screen	✓				
Optioneering and Advisory	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RAG	✓	✓			
MCDA	✓	✓	✓	✓ (Represented by Sophie Morris)	✓ (Represented by Andy Talbot)
Option Preferences	✓				

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

Organisation	Members
WMCA	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>)
WMCA Panels/Groups	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)
TfWM	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>)
WM-Air at the University of Birmingham	Suzanne Bartington (<i>WM-Air Health Effects Strand Lead</i>) and Jian Zhong (<i>WM-Air Model Development</i>).
Constituent Local Authorities – Non air quality Officers	Birmingham: 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>) Coventry: 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>) Dudley: Joanne Todd (<i>Development Manager</i>) Solihull: Mark Andrews (<i>Head of Planning, Design and Engagement Services</i>) Wolverhampton: 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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Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date	6 November 2023
Report title	Levelling Up Zones, Investment Zone, and Place-based Strategies
Portfolio Lead	Levelling Up / Devolution - Councillor Sharon Thompson
Accountable Chief Executive	Laura Shoaf, West Midlands Combined Authority email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk
Accountable Employee	Ed Cox, Executive Director for Strategy, Economy and Net Zero email: ed.cox@wmca.org.uk
Report has been considered by	LUZ, IZ and Place Strategies considered by: Policy Development, Integration and Place Group; dedicated IZ & LUZ Working Groups.

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the development of Levelling Up Zones and Investment Zone propositions and the opportunity available through the single settlement to develop 'place-based strategies', and make recommendations for their future development as the Committee considers appropriate.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 A considerable amount of work has been undertaken by local authority officers in conjunction with WMCA around Levelling Up Zones and the West Midlands Investment Zone. With the offers presented through the Devolution Deal, including the Single Settlement, there is an opportunity to build on this work to-date to develop integrated place-based strategies across the region. The OSC's insights into this work will be vital.

2. Background

Deeper devolution deal: Levelling Up Zones & Growth Zones

- 2.1 As part of the region's negotiations with Government over its Trailblazer Devolution Deal, WMCA developed the proposition of 'Levelling Up Zones': areas that would be identified

by the relevant local authority as being a priority for levelling up, based on both need and opportunity. The proposal aims to focus the efforts of local, regional and central Government to align diverse policy, funding and fiscal measures to support outcomes bespoke for each area.

- 2.2 Within the Devolution Deal, Government recognised 6 ‘Levelling Up Zones’; acknowledging that these would be locally designated, with the opportunity to align extant funding and policy options as designed by the relevant LA and WMCA. In response to the region’s original aspirations to attract extensive new fiscal powers within these areas, Government agreed to Growth Zones – areas that could be identified locally and which would attract 100% business rate growth retention for 25 years. These were explicitly articulated separately to Levelling Up Zones in the Devolution Deal and there was an implicit intention that there should be 3 such Growth Zones.
- 2.3 The Devolution Deal also contained a number of other new policy and funding opportunities for the region:
- Greater influence, and ultimately control, of Affordable Housing Programme funds;
 - Confirmed Business Rate Retention growth across the region for 10 years; and
 - New partnerships with government focusing on innovation, business productivity and digital infrastructure.

Investment Zone

- 2.4 At the same time as announcing the Trailblazer Devolution Deal, Government also launched its Investment Zone Policy Prospectus: a national programme to drive economic growth in 8 combined authority areas in England (2 were subsequently announced for Scotland). Each CA would be considered ‘the Investment Zone’ and would be able to access a fund of £80m to support either direct spend (capital and revenue), or a combination of tax incentives and spend. The Policy allows for designation of 3 tax sites up to a total of 600ha, and 2 business rate retention sites (retention of 100% business rate growth for 25 years) up to 600ha. Within this, retained business rate growth would be expected to firstly fund the development and implementation of the Investment Zone sites, and any surplus be allocated, by the CA, to support an identified primary economic sector.
- 2.5 The West Midlands has identified Advanced Manufacturing as its primary economic sector, in particular around electric vehicles and battery development, and its intersection with green industries and health-tech. Sites have been identified at the Coventry-Warwick Gigapark, Birmingham Knowledge Quarter and Wolverhampton Green Innovation Corridor.
- 2.6 Alongside these Investment Zone sites, WMCA is continuing to negotiate with Government over the designation of ‘Growth Zone’ business rate retention sites (see para 2.2 above) that could present one of the fiscal levers to support Levelling Up Zones.

Single settlement

- 2.7 The single settlement presents an opportunity to enhance our work to-date on Levelling Up Zones (Growth Zones and the Investment Zone). Through the settlement, the West Midlands will receive a consolidated grant across each Spending Review period for

transport, skills, housing and regeneration, net zero and local growth projects. We will be set a range of outcomes to achieve with this funding. We expect to develop 'functional strategies' for each of these themes, which will represent our plan to achieve the outcomes agreed with government.

- 2.8 In addition, we will be able to articulate how the five policy functions of the single settlement (as above) will be joined up in places across the region, to drive multi-year, inclusive economic impact. This is not a stipulation from government, but our proposed approach to getting the most out of the single settlement for the benefit of places across the region. This approach will build on, complement and help to align our work to-date on: Levelling Up Zones, existing local authority and Combined Authority plans and strategies, the broader commitments within the deeper devolution deal and the investment plans of broader regional and national stakeholders. Though place-based strategies will not direct all of the funding available through the single settlement – we will, for example, continue to fund adult education across the region as a whole – we think this is an exciting opportunity to create critical masses of investment across the region.

Our emerging, integrated approach to place-based investment

- 2.9 As set out above, the region is in the fortunate position of having a range of investment tools at its disposal. Work is starting between the Combined Authority and local authorities to develop our approach to bringing these tools together, as part of a new approach to place-based investment. Over the coming months, we will work together to agree:
- a. The principles that will guide our work on place-based strategy;
 - b. The data and considerations we will employ to inform WMCA Board decision-making about place prioritisation;
 - c. The form, delivery and sequencing of place-based strategies, including their governance and implementation approach;
 - d. Initial work to understand best practice approaches to integrated place-based strategy development and delivery, and to develop design guides setting out what the strategies should look like and include.
- 2.10 The work undertaken by LAs and WMCA to Levelling Up Zones will be a key consideration guiding this work. These were always identified as opportunities to align and coalesce a wide range of funding and policy levers.

3. Strategic Aims and Objectives

Regional Objectives

3.1 WMCA's aims:

These proposals would align with all six of WMCA's Strategic Aims:

- i. *Promote inclusive economic growth in every corner of the region* – WMCA will work with LA colleagues to ensure that the Inclusive Growth Fundamentals are integral to the development of the interventions for the Place-based Strategies.
- ii. *Ensure everyone has the opportunity to benefit* – LA and WMCA colleagues will work closely with their respective community engagement teams to ensure

proposals are appropriately influenced, as well as applying intelligence through shared data sources.

- iii. *Connect our communities by delivering transport and unlocking housing and regeneration schemes* – These are two key functional pillars of the Single Settlement with Government and therefore will be instrumental to the development of the Strategies and their successful implementation to meet requirement of the Outcomes Framework.
- iv. *Reduce carbon emissions to net zero and enhance the environment* – Ensuring appropriate net zero energy provision to support development and implementation, as well as delivering retrofit at scale and other complementary environment enhancements are likely to be central to LA-designed Place-based Strategies.
- v. *Secure new powers and resources from central Government* – The overall approach is founded on the powers secured through the recent Devolution Deal and their successful deployment will underpin further negotiations with Government.
- vi. *Develop WMCA as a good regional partner* – Engagement between the WMCA and LA partners has been exceptional throughout the LUZ-IZ discussions and Devolution Deal negotiations, and this is continuing through a range of formal groups and bilateral discussions.

3.2 Local Authority Aims:

It is expected that the Place Plans will be informed and driven by existing policies – as such these proposals should demonstrably align with their overall objectives and aims, and act as routes for delivery.

3.3 National Objectives:

The proposed approaches aligns with a wide range of national funding streams and policies and will be underpinned by the Outcomes Framework agreed with central Government. Given the comprehensive nature of the proposals and focus on 'levelling up' it is anticipated that proposals will support Government's delivery man of its Levelling Up Missions, particularly around productivity, increased investment into R&D, transport connectivity, skills and health outcomes, and enhanced 'pride in place'.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The intention is that Place-based Strategies will be instrumental in the development, establishment and consideration of future investment plans. They will complement and comply with all relevant assurance framework considerations and accountabilities for funding to central Government.

They may also inform relevant financing mechanisms, such as borrowing and tax incentive finance (TIF) routes, where they are considered.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Unless otherwise stated in the deal, functions will be conferred through regulations created under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and are subject to:
- a) The ratification of the deal by WMCA and the agreement of its constituent councils.
 - b) WMCA undertaking a governance review, the development of and consultation on a scheme, and the submission of the results of the consultation to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, following agreement of WMCA and constituent councils.
 - c) The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities being satisfied that the required statutory requirements have been met as set out in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction 2009.
 - d) Consents from the necessary parties locally to and parliamentary approval of the required secondary legislation.

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

As these proposals develop, further and detailed involvement from the legal teams within the Combined Authority, local authorities and Government departments will be required.

Proposals will comply with legislation developed with Government through the implementation of the 2023 Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal and other legislative frameworks, including all accountability and governance issues.

6. Single Assurance Framework Implications

- 6.1 These proposals are at an early stage but it has been consistently clear that all proposals will need to comply with the WMCA's Single Assurance Framework where the WMCA and its respective funding routes are supporting delivery of outcomes. It should be noted that some interventions identified within the Place-based Strategies may lie outside the funding routes of the WMCA – for example, local authority borrowing or funding from other agencies. In those instances, the commissioning or responsible body, eg the local authority, will be responsible for ensuring compliance with their assurance frameworks.

7. Equalities Implications

- 7.1 All proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they support the WMCA's Equalities and Diversity objectives set out in the Equality Scheme - the proposal of this strategy directly support two of four of objectives in the ES. The Levelling Up, Growth and Investment zones in the strategic proposals are likely to have a direct positive impact on socio-economic outcomes e.g. reduction in unemployment, increase in training opportunities and an indirect positive impact on some protected characteristic groups such as disabled people and racialised (minority ethnic) communities who face disproportionate levels of unemployment and access to training opportunities when compared to non-disabled and White ethnic groups. To explore this fully, it is recommended that a 'Health and Equity Impact Assessment' is carried out, and the findings of that assessment added to this strategy where appropriate.

8. Inclusive Growth Implications

8.1 The principles of the Inclusive Growth Framework will be integral to the development of the Place-based Strategies, with local authority colleagues being made aware of the opportunities for demonstrating truly inclusive growth through the application of the IG Fundamentals.

In particular, it is anticipated that proposed Place-based Strategies will:

- build-in climate resilience through the appropriately planned development of interventions;
- ensure inclusive economic benefits are enshrined during proposal scoping and development;
- bring forward affordable and safe places through the targeted application of Affordable Homes and Retrofit funding;
- align transport and digital connectivity opportunities presented through comprehensive place plans;
- generate new skills growth through aligned Skills funding and potentially new capital infrastructure;
- secure better health outcomes through aligning several funding streams, for example more effective deployment of retrofit investment.

9. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

9.1 This report relates to the whole of the WMCA area.

10. Other Implications

10.1 There are no other implications to consider.

11. Schedule of Background Papers

11.1 *Links to the following for information:*

- *Government's Investment Zone Policy Prospectus -*
www.gov.uk/government/publications/investment-zones
- *The Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal –*
www.gov.uk/government/publications/west-midlands-combined-authority-trailblazer-deeper-devolution-deal/west-midlands-combined-authority-trailblazer-deeper-devolution-deal



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date	6 November 2023
Report title	Grant Register
Accountable Chief Executive	Laura Shoaf, West Midlands Combined Authority email: laura.shoaf@wmca.org.uk
Accountable Employee	Linda Horne, Executive Director of Finance and Business Hub email: linda.horne@wmca.org.uk
Report has been considered by	Executive Board - 18 October 2023

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

(1) Note and comment on the grant register.

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper provides an update on the grant register. This contains all current 'live' grants where the WMCA is the accountable body and captures a comprehensive total of grants, awarding body, time period for delivery and a description of what the grant delivers.

2. Background

2.1 The grant registers are attached as an appendix to this report.

2.2 Since the last report the following new grants have been awarded to WMCA:

- £14.1m from DESNZ for energy efficiency intervention in small and mid-sized businesses, split as £9.1m revenue and £5.0m capital grants
- £2.5m from Sports England to support sport development across the region
- £27k from DEFRA for Biodiversity Net Gains.

3. Strategic Aims and Objectives

3.1 Grant funding is instrumental in the WMCA being able to deliver on its Aims and Objectives.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from accepting the recommendations in this report. The update on the grant register is provided for transparency purposes.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications as a direct consequence of this report.

6. Single Assurance Framework Implications

6.1 The relevant SAF process will be followed as necessary.

7. Equalities Implications

7.1 There are no specific equality implications from this update report. However, individual grant funded schemes and initiatives will be subject to equality impact assessments to ensure key equality and inclusion considerations have been embedded.

8. Inclusive Growth Implications

8.1 Not applicable for this report.

9. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

9.1 None arising from this report.

10. Other Implications

10.1 No other implications have been identified.

11. Schedule of Background Papers

11.1 Grant Register.

Capital Grants Register

Grant Name	Provider	Date of grant Award Letter	Total Grant Awarded in full £	Notes
DIT - Major Scheme (Eastside / Edgbaston)	DIT	Apr-19	£ 187,559,779	Midland Metro Extensions
ITB WMCA	DIT	Apr-21	£ 17,755,000	Annual rolling settlement from DIT, rolled into CRSTS from 22/23. Funding is distributed to WMCA and all & LAs on a formula basis which is agreed locally. The 21/22 annual value only is shown here.
Road National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIFF)	DIT	Sep-17	£ 17,055,000	National Productivity Investment Fund including projects in Birmingham (Growth Point Public Transport Package), Walsall (Economic Growth and Infrastructure Project) and Solihull (Strategic Cycle Network)
Clean Bus Technology	DIT	Feb-18	£ 5,987,750	Projects that work with bus operators or technology providers to retrofit buses to reduce emissions
Transforming Cities Fund	DIT	Annually	£ 250,000,000	The purpose of the Transforming Cities Fund is to boost productivity, transform intra-city connectivity and reduce congestion through investment in public and sustainable transport in the West Midlands. No detailed constraints as to what it can be spent on, but the WMCA should have regard to the national objectives of the Fund. Programme agreed Nov 2018. Additional £71.5m TCF2 now funded through CRSTS)
Joint Air Quality	DIT	Jan-19	£ 3,456,520	Fund retrofit buses with kits that tackle exhaust emission in Birmingham
Association of Directors Environment Economy, Place & Travel (ADEPT) Live Labs	DIT	Jul-19	£ 2,650,000	Network Resilience Live Lab funding covering the transport network to build up a detailed picture of traffic and transport movements around the region through collection of data
Opening LA Transport Data Competition	DIT	Pre 18/19	£ 100,000	Data / Technology
Future mobility Zones	DIT	Jun-19	£ 20,000,000	The purpose of the future mobility zones is to: trial new transport services modes and models; creating a functioning marketplace for mobility that combines new and traditional modes of transport; improve integration of services; increase the availability of real-time data; and provide access to digital planning and payment options. The fund also
TWIM Bus Priority	DIT	Jul-20	£ 24,225,000	Funding bus priority measures in Birmingham City Centre and between Dudley and Druids Heath.
Emergency Active Travel Fund	DIT	Nov-20	£ 13,182,667	Phase 2 of Active Travel Fund to support longer term walking and cycling schemes (Phase 1 classed as revenue grant)
Active Travel Fund (Tranche 3)	DIT	Mar-22	£ 17,250,000	Phase 3 of Active Travel Fund to support longer term walking and cycling schemes
All Electric Bus Town Competition (Coventry) (AEBT)	DIT	Mar-21	£ 50,000,000	Coventry All Electric Bus City project
Zero Emissions Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA)	DIT	Mar-22	£ 30,383,250	Grant to deliver 124 hydrogen buses plus associated infrastructure in the region
City Region Sustainable Transport Summary (CRSTS)	DIT	Apr-22	£ 1,050,000,000	Supporting inclusive economic growth, provide better connections between places and encourage more people to use sustainable and zero-carbon transport
West Midlands Land Fund	MHCLG	Apr-18	£ 100,000,000	Quarterly reporting to MHCLG as part of the grant. This is against the outputs specific to Housing of 8,000 homes and the wider West Midlands target of 215,000 homes by 2031, which includes outputs from the Local Authorities
Brownfield Housing Fund	MHCLG	Apr-20	£ 125,381,582	Quarterly reporting to MHCLG on the outputs of this grant. Deliver between 7,714 and 9,773 homes.
Brownfield Housing Fund Extension	MHCLG	Mar-22	£ 17,350,000	Extension agreed to the Brownfield Housing Fund March 2022.
Sustainable Warmth Competition	BEIS	Mar-22	£ 2,600,000	Upgrade homes to a target energy efficiency rating
BEIS Social Decarbonisation Fund	BEIS	Feb-22	£ 6,174,205	Improve the energy performance of social rented homes
Metro Birmingham Eastside Extension	EZ	n/a	£ 18,000	Enterprise Zone funding
University Hospital Birmingham - University Station	3rd Party	Aug-20	£ 5,000,000	Delivery of University Station build.
Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP) Funding	DIT	Oct-21	£ 39,650,000	Rail Station Development-Package 1 Walsall - Wolverhampton
Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP) Funding	DIT	Oct-21	£ 19,350,000	Rail Station Development-Package 2 Camp Hill
PB - Highways England	Highways England	n/a	£ 86,400	Relates to HS2 Modelling Framework
Public Realm Schemes	BCC	Jun-22	£ 606,543	Enhance public realms for Commonwealth Games
A435 Alcester Rd Bus Priority Revitalisation	BCC	21/22	£ 154,000	A435 Alcester Rd Bus Priority Revitalisation
Clear Air Zone	BCC	Mar-22	£ 5,218,000	Rail Station Development-Package 2 Camp Hill
Rail Development	Walsall MBC	21/22	£ 68,000	Rail Station Development-Package 1 Walsall - Wolverhampton
Air Quality	Defra	Mar-22	£ 990,000	Develop and/or implement measures that deliver air quality benefits in the near future (one to two years), projects which develop solutions over the longer term by increasing awareness to encourage behavioural changes, and new, innovative ideas if they will successfully and as closely as possible meet the needs and objectives of the Applicant's local area.
LA - Birmingham	LA	n/a	£ 14,279,629	Rail funding = £8.983m BCC funding for Perry Barr = £5.083m BCC funding for University = £3.9m BCC funding for Package 2 = £5.2m
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - capital element	DLUHC	Dec-22	£ 8,900,000	Capital allocation for 22/23 of UKSPF Fund. Permission has been sought from grant providers to carry forward £5.7m of UKSPF into 2023/24
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - capital element	DLUHC	Aug-23	£ 7,922,222	Capital allocation for 23/24 of UKSPF Fund.
Social Housing Fund	DLUHC	Feb-23	£ c14,900,000	Working with local authorities and registered housing provider for repairs and improvements to properties to raise homes to 'Decent Homes Standard'. Works may include insulation, replacement of doors and windows, roofing repairs, reduction of mould and damp and repairs/replacements to ineffective heating systems.
Air Quality Grant 22/23	DEFRA	Feb-23	£ 140,000	Provision of sensors that monitor air particles PM2.5 and PM10.
ADEPT LIVE LAB 2 - Highways CO2laboration centre	DIT	Feb-23	£ 4,035,000	The UK CO2laboration Centre of Excellence for Materials Decarbonisation will be a single centre based across two campuses: a physical centre based in Birmingham and a virtual centre hosted by North Lanarkshire Council. It will provide a centralised hub for research and innovation for the decarbonisation of local roads materials, developing a knowledge bank, real-life conditions testing and sharing and learning insights.
CCAV - MACAM	Innovate UK	Nov-23	£ 1,485,000	Part of wider automated public transport demonstrator project to prove viability of services.
CCAV - EBNS Feasibility Study	Innovate UK	Nov-23	£ 55,000	Feasibility project looking at how Connected and Autonomous Mobility technologies could be used in East Birmingham and North Solihull. Part of larger project.

Social Decarbonisation Fund (Wave 2.1)	DESNZ	Mar-23	£	17,776,915	Funding to make homes more energy efficient through retrofitting with better insulation, new doors and windows and greener heating systems. This will be matched by further £35 million from registered social housing providers across the region to benefit approximately 3000 homes.
Homes Upgrade Grant	DESNZ	Mar-23	£	16,000,000	Retrofit off gas grid homes in Birmingham, Dudley and Sandwell, Dudley. The bid was part of the Midlands Net Zero Hub consortium that successfully bid for £140 million for the wider Midlands area.
DLUHC Capital funding	DLUHC	Feb-23	£	25,900,000	Grant to support delivery of the following schemes: i. The extension to the West Midlands Metro network that will link Dudley and Brierley Hill via Line One to Wolverhampton and Birmingham ii. The extension of the Wolverhampton Metro iii. A package of works to renew life-expired sections of key systems on Metro Line One iv. Funding for the renewal of University station v. The provision of digital devices through the Connected Services Project
Highways Maintenance Funding	DIT	Mar-23	£	3,617,000	For Additional Highways Maintenance and Pothole repair announced within the Central Government 2023 Budget Statement
Local Investment in Natural Capital Programme	DEFRA	Mar-23	£	1,000,000	DEFRA funding to support the establishment of a natural environment investment fund.
Active Travel Fund (Tranche 4)	DIT	Mar-23	£	12,608,201	Phase 4 of Active Travel Fund to support longer term walking and cycling schemes
Live Labs Capital funding	DIT	Jun-23	£	3,617,200	To fund the Transport for West Midlands Live Labs project which is exploring ways to decarbonise local highways infrastructure in the region
Local Transport Capital Block Funding (Pothole Fund)	DIT	Jul-23	£	1,614,000	Capital grant for repairs of potholes across the region. Announced as part of the 2023 budget
West Midlands Business Energy Assessment Service (BEAS)	DESNZ	Sep-23	£	5,000,000	Overall objective is national energy productivity, supply chain resilience and global competitiveness. High volume (2-4000) of well-targeted and tailored energy efficiency interventions in small and mid-sized energy-exposed businesses. The emphasis is on data and evaluation, diversity of sectors and variety of interventions. To include resource efficiency advice, identifying the most cost-effective ways for government to address market barriers, permanently mitigate impacts of the energy cost crisis and increase UK economic and supply chain resilience.

Revenue Grant Register

Grant Name	Provider	Start Date	End Date	Total Grant Awarded in Full	Notes
B SOG	DfT	Annual		1,792,259	A discretionary grant paid to operators of eligible local bus services to help them recover some of their fuel costs.
Emergency Active Travel Fund	DfT	Aug-20	Mar-23	3,765,980	Phase 1 of Active Travel Fund to support temporary walking and cycling schemes in response to Covid 19 pandemic
Intra-City Transport Settlements	DfT			8,900,000	Intracity Prep Fund (now CRSTS)
Cycling for Everyone	DfT	Nov-21	Nov-22	2,000,000	Cycling for Everyone
Supported Bus Services	DfT	Apr-20		879,836	Provided to as revenue support to help provide more bus services in areas by improving current services, restoring lost services or supporting new services
Bus Capacity Grant	DfT	Apr-20		100,000	Funding to support LTAs in developing local bus proposals as outlined in the National Bus Strategy (NBS), in particular, it is being offered to help LTAs towards the development of their Enhanced Partnership Schemes(EPS) or franchising scheme, and Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP) work, and to meet the timescales that go alongside that work.
AEB Devolution	DfE	Annual		131,875,523	Devolved budget from DfE for delivery of adult education (19+) in West Midlands region
Adult Education Budget Level 3	DfE	Annual		10,954,673	Devolved budget from DfE for delivery of level 3 education offer open to adults without an existing L3 qualification in West Midlands
Technical Bootcamps	DfE	Apr-22	Mar-23	11,250,000	Technical bootcamps 22-23 allocation of £11.25m in priority sectors of digital, technical, construction, green and HGV – with 10% to be used flexibly in other areas: Health and Social Care (inc Life Sciences); Creative Industries; Hospitality; Leadership and Management; Professional Services (inc Finance).
Tackling Loneliness through Transport Fund	DfT	May-22	May-23	460,469	The TLwT Fund offers grant funding to the public and charity sectors to run pilot transport schemes that aim to reduce loneliness. The pilots will be measured and evaluated rigorously, enabling DfT to understand more about how transport can be used to help reduce loneliness and to share these findings with organisations within and outside government.
Black Country Cultural Capital Development	Arts Council England	Apr-22	Mar-25	725,000	This grant is specifically marked to be spent in the Black Country, with the aim to support development of future cultural sector capital projects within Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Dudley. The grant activity will specifically focus on developing capital project feasibility studies and business cases, together with some support resources for cultural organisation.
DLUHC - Rough Sleeping Initiative	DLUHC	Apr-22	Mar-25	1,491,707	3 year settlement to allow Authorities to build on the progress of previous funding interventions, moving increasingly from a focus on intervention to supporting long term recovery and preventing rough sleeping.
Multiply	DfE	Apr-23	Mar-24	5,849,000	Multi year grant allocation of 16.7m total funding over 3 years. Amount shown here is for year 1 only. Grant supports literacy and numeracy skills development activities in line with investment plan submitted to HMG
Bus Service Improvement Plan	DfT	Apr-23	Mar-24	36,686,987	Multi year grant allocation of £87.8m total funding over 3 years. Amount shown here is for year 2 only. Grant supports transformation activities to support bus service improvement in line with investment plan submitted to DfT.
UK Shared Prosperity Fund (2022/23)	DLUHC	Apr-22	Mar-23	7,175,415	UKSPF is a central pillar of this government's levelling up agenda, and replacement funding for the European Union Structural Funding. Funds will be spent in line with the investment plan submitted to government.
UK Shared Prosperity Fund (2023/24)	DLUHC	Apr-23	Mar-24	13,536,117	
Technical Bootcamps Wave 4	DfE	Apr-23	Mar-24	10,605,000	Continued support for Bootcamp activity. Amount reflects current amount confirmed via grant letter but total allocation is confirmed as £15.15m.
Thrive into Work	DWP	Feb-23	Mar-25	7,936,260	Continued support for existing Thrive into Work employment scheme.
Active Travel Capability Fund	Active Travel England	Jan-23	Jan-24	3,456,000	To support the better design, planning and development of cycling, wheeling and walking schemes in the region.
Local Government Cyber Security Resilience Fund	DLUHC	Jan-23		175,000	To support digital and data requirements in this area
Air Quality Grant 22/23	DEFRA	Apr-23	Mar-25	778,531	Provision of sensors that monitor air particles PM2.5 and PM10.
Create Central	BFI	Apr-23	Mar-26	1,000,000	National Lottery Funding to support screen production workforce development and training
Place Pilot	DLUHC	Nov-22	May-24	500,000	Grant to support the realisation of efficiencies across the public estate, and also unlock opportunities to release land held by central and local government. It builds on the strength of the One Public Programme and pilots a place-based approach to strategic asset management. Funding can be allocated for purposes such as data analysis and mapping, undertaking feasibility studies, masterplanning, seed funding to initiate opportunities, programme coordination, etc.
Levelling Up Capacity Grant	DLUHC	Apr-22	Mar-23	625,000	Following successful bid to DLUHC on 24/02/2023, the grant has provided funding to build the necessary capacity and capability support infrastructure to support local authorities within the MCAs geographical area to deliver their capital projects. A further 2 years of funding will be made available, subject to delivery of outcomes outlined in the proposal to DLUHC.
Local Transport Fund- Bus Recovery Fund extension	DfT	Apr-23	Jun-23	6,087,372	March Board report indicated that Government had extended the funding for support of the bus network to June 2023 in light of the challenges that the sector continues to face. This report confirms the value
Cycling facilities (velodrome)	DfT	May-23	Maximum term of 7 years specified	40,000	Grant to fund expert consultants to determine whether there is a business case for specialist cycling facilities in the West Midlands. The consultancy will make recommendations to a Cycling Facility Advisory Group chaired by the WM Walking and Cycling Commissioner as to whether there is a strategic, site allocation; business, commercial, management and financial business case(s) for such facilities.
One Public Estate Opportunity Development Fund	DLUHC	Apr-23	Not specified	140,000	The Opportunity Development Fund (ODF) will fund a comprehensive forward-looking assessment of the region's public estate. The assessment will identify pipeline opportunities for land release to deliver new homes, employment, health and community space alongside wider inclusive growth benefits.
Events Screening	DCMS	May-23	May-23	45,000	Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport grant of £30k for coronation screening events across the region plus £10k for the Eurovision screening,
Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) Preparation	DEFRA	Apr-23	Mar-24	126,956	To fund the costs of developing and preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy which will outline proposals for how and where to recover nature and improve the wider environment. This grant forms the first year of two years of funding for LNRS preparation. The second year of funding will be distributed in 2024/25, pending review of LNRS progress by Defra. There is no restriction on funding being carried over to the next financial year, and the grant is not ring-fenced.
Careers & Enterprise Company	Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC)	Sep-23	Aug-24	1,244,863	Funding for Careers Hub to improve careers provision in schools and colleges. Matched funding to be provided by WMCA

West Midlands Business Energy Assessment Service (BEAS)	DESNZ	Apr-23	Mar-25	9,109,772	Pilot funding for energy assessment audits and roadmaps for SMEs in both the industrial and commercial sectors across the ITL 1 area of the West Midlands
Sport England Solicited Grant	Sport England	Apr-23	Mar-25	2,500,000	An agreed Wellbeing Board Sport England Lottery workstream which includes: a Commonwealth Games collaborative leadership programme for the Physical Activity system, Black Country Moving (placed based funding with grant agreement to Black Country Consortium Limited), Include Me West Midlands (an ongoing work programme consisting secondment to manage work to address identified barriers preventing disabled people getting active e.g. transport), a regional action commitment, citizen voice and a Public Space Design trial and learn programme. Negotiations started in developing a 5-7 year partnership to deliver twin strategic priorities.
Biodiversity Net Gain	DEFRA	Apr-23	Mar-24	26,807	To deliver measures that prepare for applying at least a 10% biodiversity net gain to developments. Biodiversity net gain delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development. Grant must be fully spent by the end of financial year.

Specific Revenue/Devo Grants

Devo Deal Grant	MHCLG	Annual		36,500,000	Devolution Grant Deal (Investment Programme)
MHCLG - Office for Data Analytics	MHCLG	Apr-18	No end date	800,000	Devolution funding to support operational activities of ODA
Devo Housing Package	MHCLG	Apr-17		6,000,000	Revenue grants to support capital housing grant activity delivery
Brownfield Housing Fund	MHCLG	Apr-20		2,826,498	Revenue grants to support capital housing grant activity delivery
One Public Estate	LGA		Apr-22	1,246,141	Support OPE activity - drawn down by partners delivering OPE activity as required.

Other Revenue Contributions

MHCLG -Brexit	MHCLG	Apr-18	No end date	1,375,059	
IPS Programme	DWP	Mar-17	Jun-22	2,059,911	





WMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Work Programme 2023/2024

Title of Report	Description of Purpose	Date of Meeting	Lead Officer/Member
Members Workshop: Proposed Draft Budget 2024/2025		1 December 2023	Dan Essex Lyndsey Roberts
Mayor's Question Time: Proposed Draft Budget 2024/2025		14 December 2023	Dan Essex Lyndsey Roberts
English Devolution Accountability Framework – Scrutiny Protocol	To consider the Governments Scrutiny Protocol, implications and proposed changes	29 January 2024	Dan Essex Sophie Waddington
Performance Against the WMCA's Annual Business Plan	To consider the performance of the WMCA against the Annual Business Plan	29 January 2024	Fiona Bebbington
Trailblazer Devolution Deal Skills and Employment	To review and consider the implementation of the Deeper Devolution Deal – Skills and Employment	29 January 2024	Clare Hatton

Skills/Worklessness Statistics – Outcomes Framework	To consider and review the outcomes framework.	29 January 2024	Clare Hatton
Commonwealth Games Legacy Enhancement Fund – Monitoring & Evaluation	To consider the monitoring and evaluation process and scrutiny’s role.	29 January 2024	Ed Cox Cat Orchard
Grant Register	To receive and review the Grant Register	29 January 2024	Kate Taylor
Grant Register	To receive and review the Grant Register	4 March 2024	Kate Taylor
Future Reports			
Performance Against the WMCA’s Annual Business Plan	To consider the performance of the WMCA against the Annual Business Plan	Every July and January	Fiona Bebbington
Net Zero WM2041 – Progress Update	To consider the progress being made to becoming a net zero region by 2041.	Tbc	Tbc
Grant Register	To receive and review the Grant Register	All meetings	Kate Taylor



West Midlands Combined Authority

Forward Plan

Forthcoming key decisions

Title of key decision:	Decision to be taken by and date:	Open or Exempt:	Portfolio Lead	Employee to contact:
Regional Activity & Delivery Update To provide an update on recent activity of the WMCA.	WMCA Board 13 October 2023	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Laura Shoaf Chief Executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority
Deeper Devolution Deal To formally ratify the 'trailblazer' deeper devolution deal between the WMCA and HM Government.	WMCA Board 13 October 2023	Open	Councillor Sharon Thompson Levelling Up Portfolio Lead	Ed Cox Executive Director of Strategy, Integration & Net Zero
New Stations Package 1 Project Update To provide an update on the impact on the West Midlands Rail Programme (New Stations Package 1 Project), following Buckingham Group Contracting Ltd being placed into administration.	WMCA Board 13 October 2023	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	Liz Baker Strategic Sponsor
Regional Activity & Delivery Update To provide an update on recent activity of the WMCA.	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Laura Shoaf Chief Executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority
WMCA Financial Monitoring Report - November 2023 to provide an update on the latest financial position	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Bob Sleight Finance Portfolio Lead	Beverly Sullivan, Sally Truman Financial Planning and Coordination Manager, Lead Financial Planning Accountant

<p>Single Settlement To provide an update on the latest developments regarding the single settlement arrangements.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Finance Portfolio Lead	Jonathan Gibson Head of Policy & Public Affairs
<p>Investment Zone and Levelling Up Zone Governance To consider governance arrangements supporting the region's Investment Zone and Levelling Up Zone proposals.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Stephen Simkins Economy & Innovation Portfolio Lead	Jonathan Gibson Head of Policy & Public Affairs
<p>Air Quality Framework To approve the draft framework that reviews all of the measures possible to accelerate improvements to regional air quality, following public consultation and consideration by the Environment & Energy Board.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor John Cotton Environment, Energy & HS2 Portfolio Lead	Jacqueline Homan Head of Environment
<p>WMCA Homelessness Taskforce: Update and Key Priorities The purpose of this paper is to update and engage WMCA Board members on the current work programme and priorities of the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Kerrie Carmichael Inclusive Communities Portfolio Lead	Neelam Sunder Senior Programme Manager - Homelessness
<p>HS2 / 'Network North' Update and Implications To consider further details on the economic implications of HS2 not going to Manchester, the package of proposed alternative transport projects and funding governance arrangements.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	Anne Shaw Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands
<p>Birmingham Eastside Extension position paper on scheme and next steps</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	Marilyn Grazette Programme Sponsor
<p>New Stations Package 1 Update Paper to update the Board on the impacts of the novation to a new contractor for the Package 1 New Stations contract.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Fully exempt	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	Liz Baker Strategic Sponsor

<p>State of the Region State of the Region for the West Midlands in 2024</p>	<p>WMCA Board 12 January 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Andy Street Mayor</p>	<p>Si Chun Lam Head of Research, Intelligence and Inclusive Growth</p>
<p>Health of the Region To consider an update report reviewing the health of the region.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 12 January 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor George Duggins Skills & Productivity Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Julia Cleary, Mubasshir Ajaz Head of Corporate Support & Governance, Head of Health and Communities • Strategy, Integration and Net Zero</p>
<p>Bus Franchising Update To provide a further update on work to support the consideration of any future bus franchising decision.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 12 January 2024</p>	<p>Part exempt</p>	<p>Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Pete Bond Director of Integrated Transport Services</p>
<p>Skills Funding To consider the latest position regarding skills funding.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 15 March 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor George Duggins Skills & Productivity Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Dr. Fiona Aldridge Head of Insight & Intelligence</p>
<p>WMCA's Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Progress Update To provide a quarterly summary of the activity of work of the WMCA's overview and scrutiny function, as required by the Deeper Devolution Deal.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 15 March 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Andy Street Mayor</p>	<p>Lyndsey Roberts Scrutiny Officer</p>

The Forward Plan

This document sets out known 'key decisions' that will be taken by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) over the coming months.

Forthcoming key decisions are published online to meet the statutory 28 day notification rule for each meeting where a key decision will be taken. Where it has not been possible to meet the 28 day rule for publication of notice of a key decision or an intention to meet in private, the relevant notices will be published as required by legislation as soon as possible.

What is a key decision?

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A 'key decision' means a decision of the Mayor, WMCA or officer which is likely:

- (a) to result in the WMCA incurring expenditure, making savings or generating income amounting to £1m or more; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the WMCA

The report relating to a decision, together with any other documents being considered, will be available five clear working days before the decision is to be taken (unless the documentation contains exempt information).

The forward plan also provides notice of when the WMCA may decide to exclude the press and public during consideration of a particular matter due to the potential for disclosure of confidential or exempt

information. The grounds upon which local authorities can exclude the press and public are specified by law and details of the exempt categories are available on request from the Governance Services team (governance.services@wmca.org.uk).

Councillors or members of the public wishing to:

- make a representation about why a matter should be heard in public, or
- submit information to the decision-making body about an item in the forward plan, or
- request details of relevant documents, or
- seek advice about the WMCA's decision-making arrangements,

should contact the Governance Services team: governance.services@wmca.org.uk