

Environment Board

Date	10 September 2018
Report title	WMCA Environment Board Action Plan September 2018/19
Portfolio Lead	Councillor Patrick Harley - Environment
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Accountable Employee	Simon Slater, Interim Head of Environment, WMCA email: simon.slater@wmca.org.uk
Report has been considered by	Summary of progress and future priorities considered by WMCA Board - 20 July 2018

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Environment Board is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the Environment Board Action Plan for September 2018/19.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To set out the progress to date and the future action plan for the new WMCA Environment Board

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Since January 2016 we have used Sustainability West Midlands (SWM) – the government recognised regional sustainability champion body – as our sustainability commission. They have provided independent advice, monitoring, and coordination and engagement with a diverse range of local networks and partners.
- 2.2 As a result we have set or are developing a range of carbon reduction, air quality, waste, fuel poverty, natural environment, green business growth, health inequality improvement targets to guide ‘clean, inclusive and resilient growth’ in our Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and now the Local Industrial Strategy.
- 2.3 A set of environmental priorities were developed taken from the SEP, Mayors Renewal Plan, stakeholder consultation, and good practice activity identified from the annual national sustainability benchmarking of CAs. They are:
 - Environment Board and Action Plan, Strategy and Monitoring, Benchmarking and Reporting
 - WMCA Internal Estates, Operations, Communications and Environmental Management
 - Green Energy and Carbon Emissions
 - Green Business and Finance
 - Green Buildings and Retrofit
 - Natural Environment
 - Air Quality and Low Carbon Vehicle Opportunities
 - Commercial Waste
- 2.4 In September 2017 the WMCA Board and newly created Environment Portfolio holder agreed the WMCA environment priorities, the ambition to become a ‘best in class’ Combined Authority in our approach to sustainability over the next 2 years, and the creation of an Environment Delivery Board of SWM, officers and partners to drive the work needed.
- 2.5 In practice this means a mixture of activities including overall sustainability reporting on economic, social and environmental progress built into the WMCA SEP and Performance Management Framework led by our strategy team, maximising the overall impacts of all programmes led by the programme team, and the operations led by the assets team. The WMCA also commission specific programmes to address clean growth gaps and opportunities, such as supporting the Energy Capital initiative to develop Energy Innovation Zones.
- 2.6 Over the last year this partnership of SWM, officers and partners has helped the WMCA to deliver a range of improvements as part of an annual support plan. In June 2018 the WMCA published a summary of environmental progress and priorities as part of the WMCA 2018/19 Annual Plan. A summary of progress is set in Appendix 1.

2.7 In July 2018 the WMCA Board noted the good progress to date, and agreed to expand the Environment Board so that it operated on a similar model to other WMCA Boards. A key role of this Board would be to build on previous progress and agree and implement a new annual action plan.

2.8 The new action plan has been created around the future environment priorities set out in the WMCA Annual Plan. Appendix 2 sets out the proposed WMCA Environment Board action plan for September 2018-19.

3.0 Financial implications

3.1 The cost of supporting the WMCA Environment Board action plan will come from the CA in terms of staff time and a budget for a range of strategy development and events. Much of the activity is reliant on the continued support of partners and alignment of existing activities, and bidding for future resources.

4.0 Legal implications

4.1 None

5.0 Equalities implications

5.1 Part of the sustainability review and benchmarking focused on the health inequalities agenda between the gap between the worst and best performing areas with the WMCA SEP area, and by gender. It is the intention of the work programme to indirectly contribute and support the work carried out by other parts of the WMCA within this area, for example by improving air quality.

Appendix 1: Highlights of WMCA progress on the Environment 17/18 (extract from WMCA Annual Plan 2018/19)

- Overall good progress on clean growth showing a 24% increase in economic productivity whilst achieving a 18.3% decrease in carbon emissions in the WMCA area (2010-2015 which is the latest comparable data in April 2018).
- The UK's first annual benchmark of Combined Authorities on overall sustainability performance around areas such as leadership, strategy and delivery by SWM ranked the WMCA second. The WMCA has committed to become 'best in class' within two years.
- The creation of a new Environment Portfolio lead and agreed set of priorities, developed at a summit with the Mayor and the Climate Change Committee, supported by an Environment Delivery Board of local partners coordinated and monitored by SWM.
- Working with SWM business club networks and other partners, the WMCA has improved the coordination of existing business support and funding, promoting over £510m of accessible low carbon funding for local businesses and communities.
- The West Midlands Science and Innovation Audit launched by the Mayor identified international strengths in low carbon transport, buildings, and energy. This was reflected later in the year within the UK Government Clean Growth and Industrial Strategies and a successful bid to host the £80m UK battery research centre in Warwick.
- The second devolution deal contained a commitment to recognise the existing regional Energy Capital partnership, support a WMCA- wide energy strategy, and support a regional energy commission to explore potential innovation zones to pilot new regulation and investment in order to stimulate new energy companies, products and services.
- The WMCA held a roundtable with industry and local partners on air quality to begin to develop a longer-term roadmap to go beyond short- term compliance on a single pollutant, and tackle a wider range of pollutants to meet the SEP 2030 targets and stimulate local economic opportunities.
- Research was commissioned by the Sustainable Housing Action Partnership and the West Midlands Housing Officers Group to identify good sustainability practice for new build standards for housing, planning policies, and methods of construction.

Appendix 2: WMCA Environment Board: Action Plan September 2018-19 (version 10.9.18)

	Objectives from WMCA 18/19 Annual Plan	Milestones and WMCA Environment Board Meetings Sept 2018-19		
		10 th Sept 2018 Board	1 st Feb 2019 Board	7 th June 2018 Board
1	<p>Improve WMCA overall organisational performance on sustainability external and internal impact</p> <p>The Environment Board will publish an action plan and report progress on moving the WMCA to become 'best in class' within two years (September 2020). The WMCA will address capacity gaps identified within the organisation and partners to deliver the plan.</p>	<p>Set up of new Environment Board supported by Advisory and Delivery Group</p> <p>Agreement of annual plan.</p>	<p>Results from annual national sustainability activities benchmark of CAs good practice and independent annual progress review by Sustainability West Midlands to inform future priorities and programmes to meet September 2020 target.</p>	
2	<p>WMCA area sustainability and environment performance</p> <p>Reporting of WMCA area performance by SEP sustainability indicators against 2030 targets – carbon, air quality, health inequality.</p>		<p>Agree additional targets for new indicators for clean growth (productivity vs emissions), fuel poverty, renewable energy, waste, and natural environment.</p>	<p>Results from annual sustainability metrics and benchmarking with other CAs to inform next year priorities and programmes.</p>
3	<p>External communications, awards, and campaigns to promote scaling up of good local practice as part of partnership with Sustainability West Midlands</p> <p>The WMCA will improve internal and external communication on WMCA activities around sustainability to help identify and promote good practice, enable constructive challenge and help local partners to engage and work together more effectively.</p>	<p>Ideas for key campaigns for Mayor and Portfolio holder to support over next 12 months.</p> <p>Comments on new Environment section for the WMCA website.</p>	<p>Agree communications and good practice networks, events and awards plan for next 2 years.</p>	<p>Report on benchmarking of good local practice by business, NHS, universities, and councils that could be scaled up and inform next year priorities and programmes.</p>
4	<p>Development of Low Emissions Strategy with partners</p> <p>The WMCA will work towards a longer-term roadmap supported by business and local partners to tackle overall air quality issues within the next 10 years, while working with local authority partners on shorter-term priorities.</p>	<p>Input into development of strategy.</p>	<p>Review of draft strategy and recommendation for adoption by WMCA Board.</p>	
5	<p>Development of Natural Environment approach as part of partnership with West Midlands Natural Capital Roundtable</p> <p>The WMCA will work with natural environment partners, businesses, and Government to develop a long-term natural capital investment strategy to help coordinate and attract investment to improve the state and use of natural assets</p>		<p>Review approach and progress on supporting investment in natural assets and local priorities.</p>	

6	<p>Development of Local Industrial Strategy with partners</p> <p>“The WMCA will work to ensure local strengths in clean growth sectors of transport, buildings and energy, as well as the importance of the natural environment, form a key part of the new Local Industrial Strategy, with the ambition to become the UK’s first Combined Authority Clean Growth Industrial Strategy. “</p>	Input into draft strategy	Review potential risks and opportunities from sustainability and resilience review of strategy – e.g. climate risk, and potential new programmes and activities flowing from the new strategy including waste, housing retrofit and green business support.	
7	<p>Development of Green Energy investments as part of partnership with Energy Capital</p> <p>The WMCA will consider recommendations from Energy Capital and the Regional Energy Commission on innovation zones.</p>			Progress update from Energy Capital on progress and any future support required.
8	<p>WMCA external funding and buildings.</p> <p>The WMCA will promote key sustainability opportunities within WMCA key investment sites to lever local partners’ expertise and innovation opportunities to maximise benefits.</p> <p>The WMCA will review, and if required, update current sustainability criteria within WMCA funding and monitoring system and building standards.</p>		Review of WMCA and partners key investment sites sustainability standards e.g. Commonwealth Games. Agree any future standards required.	Review of WMCA funding system and criteria for non-building projects e.g. skills, transport, business support. Agree any future standards required.
9	<p>WMCA internal estates, operations, and communications</p> <p>The WMCA will improve internal communication on WMCA activities around sustainability to help identify and promote good practice, enable constructive challenge and help local partners to engage and work together more effectively.</p>			Report on internal environment strategy, communications, performance of own estates and impact of accredited Environmental Management System. Identify any other good practice to be aware of.