



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date	16 January 2019
Report title	West Midlands Low Emissions Strategy and Action Plan – Progress Update
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Report has been considered by	Not Applicable

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the content of this report and appendices.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This paper is to update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the West Midlands Low Emission Strategy and Action Plan.

2. Progress to date

- 2.1 The WMCA Board approved the production of the West Midlands Low Emission Strategy and Action Plan in July 2018 and delegated the draft scope to the WMCA Environment Board to approve in September 2018. Comments on this draft scope at the Environment Board meeting and from the steering group members of TfWM, the Local Authority air quality officers network and the WMCA Environment Board advisory group, were then incorporated into the final scope. This has included a re-emphasis on local 'added value', sharing of good practice, and local ownership raised previously by the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.2 To raise awareness and further ownership in November and December the WMCA Environment Team have presented to officers and councillors as part of regional public health and transport events on air quality and the West Midlands Environment Pollution officers network.
- 2.3 A steering group has been appointed which meets on 21st January to finalise the development and implementation plan. This group is made up of representatives from the WMCA constituent councils covering air quality and low emission issues, who will also liaise with non-constituent councils. The group also includes representatives from industry, public health, and Transport for West Midlands, and is led by the new WMCA Environment team.
- 2.4 Appendix 1 covers the latest scope of the West Midlands Low Emission Strategy and Action Plan prepared for the steering group.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 The original timescales have changed to allow time required for the approval process by the Environment Committee and Board and feedback from partners. The latest indicative timescales are:
- January 21st - Inception Meeting with Steering Group to finalise implementation plan
 - February 1st – Progress report to WMCA Environment Board
 - April / May – Meeting of Steering Group to finalise draft actions / recommendations
 - June 7th – WMCA Environment Board agree final actions and recommendations within strategy for adoption by WMCA Board.
 - July – WMCA Board approval of strategy
 - August/September – formal launch of strategy and action plan.

4. Wider WMCA Implications

- 4.1 This proposal helps strengthen the WMCA delivery of the environment and the delivery of key Manifesto, SEP, and annual plan commitments.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The CA will provide support to the production of the Strategy and Action Plan.

6. Legal Implications

None at this stage.

7. Equalities Implications

7.1 Part of the WMCA 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. This work will support partners improving air quality and the creation of jobs which help begin to address these inequalities.

8. Inclusive Growth Implications

See above.

9. Geographic Implications

9.1 This covers the CA geography covered by the SEP.

10. Schedule of Background Papers

Appendix 1: Progress Update for Steering Group 8th January 2019.

Scope of WM Low Emission Strategy (updated version 4 8.1.19)

The WMCA Board previously approved the production of the Low Emission Strategy in July 2018 and delegated the draft scope to the WMCA Environment Board to approve in September 2018. There were some minor comments on this draft scope at the Board meeting and from the steering group members of TfWM, the Local Authority air quality officers network and the WMCA Environment Board advisory group. These comments are incorporated in the latest version below, and were approved with the Environment Board minutes by the WMCA Board on 9th November. The next steps is to use this scope to guide the development of the strategy with the steering group and partners.

Objectives and outcomes of a West Midlands Low Emissions Strategy and Action Plan:

- **Support for local action** - Joint action between local authorities, the WMCA and other stakeholders where this will accelerate existing agreed local plans to tackle air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Social, economic, and environment outcomes** – accelerated activity will result in improved health, such as reduction in premature deaths and health inequalities, economic productivity, such as reduced congestion and attraction of new business, and an improved natural environment.
- **Attract investors** - help to scale up opportunities to attract investors to fund innovation, manufacturing and deployment of solutions both locally and for export. Underpin the WMCA ambition to produce the UK's first 'clean, inclusive, and resilient growth' local industrial strategy and inform relevant bids such as future Industrial Strategy 'grand challenges'.

The format of the Strategy and Action Plan

This is flexible to meet the objectives, however it is likely to include:

- The strategy setting out:
 - the nature of the problem,
 - links with other local and regional strategies,
 - rationale for the focus on particular actions,
 - and delivery mechanisms either through existing plans and activities or new activity.
- The action plan with:
 - a clear set of actions and owners
 - success measures, milestones, and monitoring.
- The evidence base and methodology used to allow future updates of the strategy and action plan. This is to include:
 - some form of scoring matrix on how the actions were prioritised against criteria such as rationale/value for regional action, ease/cost of implementation, and scale of impact.
 - Maps and graphs covering the sources and concentrations of different emissions.
- To review and recommend appropriate delivery structures e.g. Joint Low Emissions Unit

The Geographic area

The strategy is to cover the same area covered by the WMCA Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and draft Local Industrial Strategy. This is the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) of the Black Country, Greater Birmingham and Solihull, and Coventry and Warwickshire.

There will need to be a recognition of the diverse economic geography and good practice of urban and rural areas. However the prioritisation of actions will need to be focused on where there is a concentration of emissions and health impacts, which is likely to be in the WMCA constituent members urban areas.

Emissions and targets covered

Greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change covered by the UK Climate Change Act and the 2050 target of an 80% reduction on 1990 levels. At the SEP level this is a 2030 target of 40% reduction on 1990 levels. This is currently monitored by the WMCA Performance Management Framework indicator PMF E.1. of Carbon Dioxide equivalent (CO₂e).

Emissions that contribute to air quality and have the highest impact on health covered by the draft UK air quality strategy with 2020 and 2030 targets for reduction. These are:

- fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) reduction against the 2005 baseline by 30% by 2020, and 46% by 2030.
- particular matter (PM₁₀) reduction against the 2005 baseline to 50% or less of UK population living in areas with concentrations of (10 µg/m³) by 2025
- ammonia (NH₃) reduce emissions against the 2005 baseline by 8% by 2020 and 16% by 2030.
- nitrogen oxides (NO_x) reduce emissions against the 2005 baseline by 55% by 2020, and by increasing 73% by 2030.
- sulphur dioxide (SO₂) reduce emissions against the 2005 baseline by 59% by 2020, increasing to 88% by 2030.
- non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs) reduce emissions against the 2005 baseline by 32% by 2020, increasing to 39% by 2030.
- ozone (O₃) as secondary pollutant to ensure it does not increase as NO_x reduces and keeps within EU limits.

At the SEP level the target is to reduce the number of poor air days (a 4 or higher in the Defra Daily Air Quality Index to reflect likely legal breaches of the pollutants and the beginning of health warnings) from 40 in 2016 to 1 by 2030. This is currently monitored by the WMCA Performance Management Framework indicator PMF E.2. of number of days scoring '4' or higher on the Daily Air Quality Index. The index covers a basket of most of the current pollutants in the draft air quality strategy e.g. PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, NO_x, SO₂, Ozone. However it omits NH₃ and NMVOCs which need to be reviewed as part of the new strategy.

Timescales for Strategy and Action Plan (2019-2030)

The strategy should align with the Single Economic Plan (SEP) and Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and the alignment with many of the national air quality targets and 'grand challenge' of clean growth and mobility set out in the national industrial strategy. Therefore the new strategy should cover the period when the Low emissions strategy is launched in early 2019 to 2030.

Consultation and stakeholder involvement

The strategy is not statutory and will be drawing on existing local plans and knowledge which have already been subject to detailed consultation. Therefore the focus will be to consult with the local authorities and regional stakeholders on a strategy and plan for joint working to accelerate existing agreed local action, rather than engage directly with the public locally. This will include working closely with the University of Birmingham that has recently won a significant research contract to develop the air quality monitoring and intelligence for the WMCA area.

This strategy will support the decision made by Birmingham City Council, after public consultation, on a local Clean Air Zone.

Where possible the strategy is required to build on existing good practice and development experience from other Combined Authorities who have developed similar strategies, especially Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, and the London Integrated Environment strategy.

Potential solutions will include the alignment of a variety of existing or planned activity that could help support existing local action from the role of green infrastructure to public transport, working practices, and technology and services.

Governance of the development of the strategy

The WMCA Environment Board and supporting officers and partners will be the group overseeing the development of the strategy to ensure it 'adds value' and through joint working at scale will help accelerate existing local good practice driven by individual local councils. This Board will ultimately recommend the final strategy for approval by the Mayor and WMCA Board.

There will be a strategy steering group dealing with the day to day development of the strategy. This is:

- Dr Simon Slater – WMCA Head of Environment - to Chair the group and manage the consultant
- Jake Thrush – TfWM – to act as link to TfWM colleagues
- Keith Budden – CENEX – to act as link to WMCA Environment Board and also private sector
- Nick Powell – Chair of WM Environment Protection Group - Black Country Local Authorities– to ensure ownership and identification of regional joint actions that will benefit local action
- Mark Wolstencroft – Birmingham City Council - (and liaison with other councils within LEP area e.g. Redditch) - – to ensure ownership and identification of regional joint actions that will benefit local action
- Dominic Towey - Solihull Council– to ensure ownership and identification of regional joint actions that will benefit local action.
- Steve Dewar – Coventry Council (and liaison with Warks CC) – to ensure ownership and identification of regional joint actions that will benefit local action
- Duncan Vernon - Public Health Birmingham City Council – to ensure link to latest health data and support from Public Health network

Timescales for development of Strategy and Action Plan

The original timescales have changed to allow time required for the approval process by the Environment Committee and Board and feedback from partners. The latest indicative timescales are:

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Note if actions and early wins identified during the development process with partners to improve coordination and local implementation, then joint working will occur earlier. However, any key region wide actions requiring additional investment and support by the WMCA and partners will require approval as part of the final strategy and action plan.

END

Additional information in the detailed brief used to identify consultants to help develop WMCA and partners Low Emission Strategy and Action Plan.

Background

In July 2018 Birmingham began the consultation process on developing a Clean Air Zone (CAZ). To support this local action the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board and Mayor agreed to strengthen the WMCA Environment Board and progress the development of a supportive strategic approach to air quality covering the whole WMCA area.

Informal consultation with internal and external stakeholders including local authorities showed that there was clear appetite for the West Midlands to develop a strategic approach on Air Quality and a low emissions strategy and delivery plan which would be similar to the approach used by Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, and partly by London in their new Environment Strategy. This is emerging good practice for our major urban areas.

This strategic plan will be steered by the new Environment Board and agreed by WMCA Board.

Emerging principles for a West Midlands approach to Air quality will be considered by the board but could include:

- Build on existing powers and duties of individual local authorities, who remain responsible for delivery and direction in their areas.
- Keep a strategic approach to improving air quality by continuing to measure an overall basket of air quality indicators, and greenhouse gases, not just Nitrogen Dioxide.
- Develop a grand challenge to address clean growth and mobility as part of WMCA Local Industrial Strategy and bid for Government funding.
- Develop a Low Emissions Strategy to help coordinate monitoring, grand challenge actions, and scale up local good practice.
- WMCA to use Environment Board Delivery Plan to lead by example, through building standards, transport contracts etc.

Useful Background Documents

WMCA Annual Plan 18/19 (useful background to WMCA, TfWM and partner bodies)

<https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/2273/wmca-annual-plan.pdf>

Strategic Economic Plan – 2016 (Overall Economic Plan for 3 LEP geography and the basis for the new local industrial strategy)

<https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/strategy>

West Midlands Movement for Growth and Delivery Plan to 2026 – September 2017 (Strategic Transport Plans to support the Strategic Economic Plan)

<https://www.tfwm.org.uk/strategy/movement-for-growth/>

[PUBLIC]

West Midlands Draft Energy Strategy – May 2018 (3 LEP Geography useful context although more focused on energy than carbon emissions)

<https://www.energycapital.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/A-Regional-Energy-Strategy-for-the-West-Midlands-Final-Consultation-1.pdf>

WMCA Sustainability Metrics Report – May 2018 (including air quality and carbon emissions)

<http://www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk/resources/combined-authority-sustainability-benchmarking-technical-report-analysis-of-metrics-2018/>

West Midlands Low Emissions Towns and Cities Programme (2011-16) previous extensive programme

https://go.walsall.gov.uk/low_emissions_towns_and_cities_programme

Sustainability West Midlands advice to WMCA on developing strategic approach to air quality – May 2018 (includes stakeholders involved in developing approach, existing good local practice and that of other Combined Authorities)

<http://www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WMCA-Strategic-Air-Quality-Briefing-v18may18.pdf>

Creation of WMCA Environment Board – July 2018 (includes in annex summary of agreed approach to producing low emissions strategy)

<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s1878/Report.pdf>

END

Any initial queries to WMCA Head of Environment simon.slater@wmca.org.uk