



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Environment Board

Date	8 February 2018
Report title	Environment Board Action Plan - Update on Progress
Portfolio Lead	Councillor Qadar Zada – Environment
Accountable Chief Executive	Jan Britton, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council email: jan_britton@sandwell.gov.uk
Accountable Employee	Simon Slater, Head of Environment, WMCA email: simon.slater@wmca.org.uk
Report has been considered by	WMCA Environment Delivery and Advisory Group – 21/11/2018

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Environment Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note progress on the Environment Board Action Plan and forward plan.
- (2) Provide ideas from their own experience of how they have influenced other portfolios and activities to deliver environmental outcomes that could be explored with the role of this Board and the wider WMCA.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Board on high level progress of the agreed Environment Board Action Plan linked to the immediate priorities of air quality, clean growth, green infrastructure, and green buildings. To allow members to ask questions about progress and the forward work plan to help guide the new WMCA Environment Team with implementation.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At the 10 September 2018 the Environment Board agreed the Annual Action Plan.
- 2.2 In October 2018 the Annual Sustainability Benchmark of Combined Authorities was published. We were 2nd on how we had integrated environment within our leadership, strategies and delivery within the publicly available information published on our website. We therefore ensured the recommended improvements provided by Sustainability West Midlands were prioritised within our existing plan, so we can reach our target of being a leading CA in this area.
- 2.3 In November 2018 through meetings with the new portfolio holder and the Mayor we ensured their emerging priorities were clear in the existing Action Plan. The Environment Board Annual Action Plan was then formally approved by the WMCA Board.
- 2.4 The current portfolio holder has requested that the following issues are prioritised in the Annual Action Plan.
 - Reporting progress against the top priorities of Clean Growth, Air Quality, Green Infrastructure, and Green Buildings.
 - Working towards quantifying the health and jobs benefits of proposed interventions over time.
 - Ensuring relevant local authority officer groups are involved with the Environment Delivery and Advisory Group that supports the work programme.
 - For the WMCA Environment Team to go and brief individual Environment Board members to build the collective understanding of local priorities and where the CA can add value.
 - Explore ways on how to clearly influence other WMCA workstreams.
- 2.5 There is a more detailed work plan available to members on request.

3.0 Action Plan Progress Highlights – September 2018 – February 2019

Clean Growth

Worked with Green Alliance, Sustainability West Midlands, and other partners to raise profile of Clean Growth opportunities in the region and how to make the new Local Industrial Strategy – the UK's first Clean and Inclusive Growth one.

Air Quality

Worked with a range of local partners to develop and agree a regional approach to developing a Low Emission Strategy to tackle air quality and carbon emissions (see later Agenda item)

Green Infrastructure

Worked with a range of local and national partners to develop and agree a regional approach to developing a Natural Capital Investment Strategy and Programme (see later Agenda item)

Green Buildings

Early stages of supporting the Sustainable Housing Action Programme and their networks and partners to support the WMCA Housing and Regeneration Team.

Internal WMCA activity and Communications

Reviewed WMCA funding and investment system and have agreed an internal improvement plan to integrate revised environmental criteria across all our funding.

Secured budget and created new WMCA Environment team in October 2018 to help support Environment Board Action Plan and scale up good practice with partners, and attract more investment within region.

4.0 Action Plan Forward Highlights – February 2019 - June 2019

Clean Growth

Launch of Local Industrial Strategy and securing funding for Clean Growth Challenge to stimulate business in this area.

Identify in more detail the local clean growth opportunities within each LEP and local authority area to help the WM Growth Company and local business support.

Air Quality

Development of Low Emission Strategy and Action Plan – with recommendations back to Environment Board in June.

Green Infrastructure

Securing funding from partners and getting partnership team together to launch strategy consultation in July and other external investment opportunities.

Green Buildings

Developing standards for new homes and buildings funded by WMCA and delivered by local partners.

Internal WMCA activity and Communications

Continue to implement improvements to funding system and communications.

Complete visits to WMCA member authorities and commission review of good local practice to scale up.

Ensure appropriate links are built and supported with officers groups to strength capacity and good practice sharing across WMCA area on key environmental priorities.

Launch internal environment strategy for WMCA. Explore producing external document to highlight work of WMCA on Environment and the role of the Board.

5.0 Wider WMCA Implications

This activity helps strengthen the reporting of the WMCA delivery of the environment and the delivery of key Manifesto, SEP, and annual plan commitments.

6.0 Financial Implications

The WMCA will provide support through the new WMCA Environment Team and seek to influence other WMCA programmes, and secure external funding from partners and investors for other activities.

7.0 Legal Implications

None at this stage.

8.0 Equalities Implications

The proposal to work to quantify the impact of these work streams, especially around health, will help begin to tackle some of the issues around access to a good quality environment.

9.0 Inclusive Growth Implications

See above.

10.0 Geographic Implications

This covers the CA geography covered by the SEP.