

## WMCA Board

<b>Date</b>	5 June 2020
<b>Report title</b>	WM2041: A Programme for Implementing an Environmental Recovery
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<b>Report has been considered by</b>	Programme Board

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

#### The WMCA Board is recommended to:

- (1) Receive the summary of the consultation feedback on WM2041 set out in the appendix of the main report.
- (2) Agree that the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic should be one that supports the ambition for a fairer, greener, healthier West Midlands and builds on those aspects of the crisis that prefigure a low carbon economy.

- (3) Approve the programme of activity identified in the Appendix of this Board paper including key priorities to be developed in the coming 12 months, alongside the development of a 5-Year #WM2041 Delivery Plan.
- (4) Agree the need for a coordinated approach around tackling climate change and an effective approach to governance as set out in 2.13.

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This paper outlines the feedback that was received from the consultation on the WM2041 plan, as well as the next steps that we recommend should be taken in order to progress regional work responding to the climate emergency. Since the consultation the COVID-19 crisis, and the lockdown in particular, has demonstrated to many people some of the environmental benefits that could be experienced in a lower carbon economy and the economic opportunities that might exist in the region if we plan now for clean, green recovery. The paper sets out a programme of short, medium and long-term priorities focusing on how this can be achieved, supported by the findings from the WM2041 consultation process.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 In June 2019, WMCA declared a climate emergency. In July 2019, the CA Board received a paper from the Tyndall Centre outlining the trajectory that would be necessary in order to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2041. This work includes two interim carbon budgets of 36% reduction by 2022 and 69% reduction by 2027. The focus is on rapid transition towards a zero-carbon future where action must be 'front-loaded'. The report also indicated that if urgent action is not taken, the WMCA will use up its entire carbon budget within 6 years.
- 2.2 Following the production of the target, a 'green paper' was produced to indicate how the region could take action in order to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2041. The paper contained 73 actions of varying scale, complexity and investment requirement and was approved by the Combined Authority Board on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2020.
- 2.3 The WM2041 green paper was formally launched at an event on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020, which began the period of consultation. This ran until 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and, during this time, a significant amount was done to publicise the document and promote the opportunity to provide comment and input into it.
- 2.4 The consultation was run using four different routes:
- 1) An online questionnaire, run by the WMCA, that included both open and closed questions to gain an indication on people's wider thoughts on climate change and what they would like to see in the region. Local authorities were provided with communications packs to support the awareness raising around the consultation.
  - 2) Facebook Messenger chatbots were used, working with a company called Novoville, to widen the exposure to the WM2041 plan and to try and reach a different audience. These were mainly closed questions.
  - 3) A more intensive engagement programme, mainly working with young people, to gain some input into the plan itself and how we might work with different groups of people on climate change going forward.
  - 4) For businesses and organisations that wanted to provide more detailed feedback, a generic email address was established to receive this input.
- 2.5 As a result of the consultation, which is detailed in the attached report, we managed to reach 415 people through the questionnaire hosted on the WMCA's website; 401 people through the Facebook Messenger chatbot; 16 people through The Democratic Society workshops; and, 31 businesses and organisations.

- 2.6 The consultation responses were largely positive. However, the public consultation could not be considered representative of the West Midlands population and therefore should be treated as providing insight, rather than a definitive understanding or regional public opinion on climate change. There are, however, some important proposals that we are recommending could be taken forward as a result of this consultation work, particularly how we deliver some of the actions in WM2041.
- 2.7 The response from organisations and business provided both additional specific actions, as well as some of the more strategic issues relating to 2041. Some of the input from these responses was in relation to sectors or technologies and their potential in addressing climate change, but others related to how we should move forward from a high-level strategy to urgent and transparent actions and delivery. These included suggestions such as clear action plans and annual monitoring. These are therefore picked up in our delivery programme for WM2041 set out for the Board's consideration in this paper.
- 2.8 Following the identification of some highlights from the consultation process, the attached document presents some of the short, medium and longer term work that is necessary to deliver the ambition in WM2041. In the short to medium term, these proposals represent a crucial element of the region's economic recovery programme from COVID-19.
- 2.9 There are multiple pathways that we could take out of the current crisis and this paper indicates some of those that not only have benefits for the climate but will also be critical in creating jobs, increasing skills and seizing economic opportunities. There is a huge risk that economic recovery could entail a high carbon rebound, especially given the global low oil prices and fears about public transport. Such a scenario not only contravenes our legally-binding commitment to carbon reduction but also lurching from one crisis to another. Networks such as C40 and the COP26 Universities Network are urging city leaders and mayors to navigate a low carbon way out of COVID-19 on the basis that this will deliver economic advantage as well as supporting carbon reduction.
- 2.9 The actions presented in the paper, replicate the timetable set out in the Economic Recovery Prospectus: 1) Moving out of lockdown (0-4 months); 2) Consolidation (4-9 months); 3) Accelerating and embedding (9 months plus); and then add: 4) Five-year delivery plans (the first one will run from 2021-2026). The plans identified vary significantly in scale, from smaller scale initiatives (the Clean Growth Challenge) through to potentially region-wide and complex schemes, like a retrofit programme. These bring together input from the WM2041 consultation and actions already identified in the plan but now with the additional context of COVID-19 recovery and the central role these actions will play in contributing to that. The details of the key priorities and the delivery plan are set out in sections 4 and 5 of the Appendix.
- 2.10 Also emerging from the consultation was a clear steer that there needs to be action planning for longer-term delivery. These five-year plans will package up activity on WM2041 into programmes of work with clear milestones and, also responding to comments in the consultation, will provide the opportunity to measure progress towards the carbon reduction target.
- 2.11 The responses to the consultation drew attention to several cross-cutting issues around finance, engagement, behaviour change, communications, monitoring and reporting. These will be picked up in different ways, as highlighted in the paper. For example:

- The WMCA will explore options for financing green infrastructure projects through products like green bonds.
- Engagement and behaviour change considerations will be built into the programmes developed in the five-year plans. There also needs to be consideration of the channels we use for generic engagement and providing support and advice on what people can do to have a positive impact on climate change. This needs to be a collaborative effort working with local authorities, communities and national government.
- Communications campaigns will be a central part of the delivery of WM2041. This will consider regional-level initiatives as well as how the West Midlands can be represented at national and international events, for example COP26.
- Monitoring and reporting are key for transparency around emissions reduction. The WMCA has committed to disclosing carbon emissions through the Carbon Disclosure Project. This information will be publicly available.

2.12 Addressing climate change will need to be a collaborative effort; ensuring that we have the right governance and engagement in place for delivery will be critical for us to succeed. This will need to take place alongside local authority partners to ensure that full account is taken of plans and work happening locally and that regional plans are not replicating or confusing local activity but rather complimenting and enabling it.

2.13 Each of the main actions in the programme will have a working group/ taskforce established that brings together the necessary stakeholders for delivery. The governance proposed for this work is for the Environment and Energy Board to receive the updates on programme activity and progress, as well as to make decisions on the work on behalf of the CA Board. A Low Carbon Officers Group has been established, with membership of all the constituent local authorities, to support collaboration across the CA, co-development of proposals and subsequent implementation. An internal working group has also been established at the WMCA to ensure that there is collaboration across directorates on WM2041. The proposals on governance are set out in sections 5.4 – 5.8 of the Appendix.

### **3. Financial Implications**

3.1 There will be no direct financial implications as a result of approving the recommendations within this report as each investment proposal associated with the WM2041 plan will be the subject of a separate and specific costed approval.

3.2 The scale of the challenge is significant. The high-level figure of investment required to take the region to net zero carbon emissions by 2041 is £40bn (this is based on the Committee on Climate Change's estimate of a 1-2% of GDP spend). This is the figure that appears in the original green paper.

3.3 The next steps will be, through the five-year plans, to develop business cases and investible programmes of work that more accurately identify the funding associated with delivery. The work to develop the plan is funded within existing WMCA plans and budgets in 2020/21.

- 3.4 Successful delivery of the wider agenda will require a blend of funding and financing from both public and private sector sources and as part of the investment proposals, the WMCA will assess the viability of available options. This may include funding options such as corporate sponsorship or specific asks of government and financing options such as the issue of a green bond where the income can be identified to underpin such arrangements.

#### **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1 As a public authority the WMCA is affected by the implications of environmental legislation in all its activities. Furthermore, there are environmental implications in all the functional activities of the Combined Authority and many of those areas will be affected by specific environmental legislation and controls. The environmental portfolio demonstrates how the authority both responds to those requirements and contributes to regional leadership in partnership with constituent and non-constituent authorities in the authority's area.
- 4.2 Where specific power is required to authorise actions which are not otherwise explicitly provided within the existing functions of the Authority, the WMCA has a functional power of competence under s113A of the Local Democracy, economic development and Construction Act 2009 to undertake actions which are related to or incidental to the performance of its functions.

#### **5. Equalities Implications**

- 5.1 The equalities implications of this paper – and the activities it proposes – should create net positive effects in terms of the impacts on citizens and communities. It demonstrates support for 'just transition' (deliberately mitigating the cost of changes for those least able to bear it) and seeks to embed environmental goals as part of an overall approach to economic growth that is more inclusive. The basis of the WM2041 plan is the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the aim of which is to create a fairer and more just future for people globally – the delivery of a net zero carbon future must be one that also delivers significant co-benefits.

#### **6. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 6.1 There are many actions proposed in this paper that aim to support some of the most vulnerable people in terms of housing, access to employment and training and quality of neighbourhoods and places, for example. The work around climate change, and meeting the goals of 2041, will seek to be as inclusive as possible and, through engagement and consultation, we will aim to ensure that multiple voices are heard as we progress with implementing actions.

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

- 7.1 The original Tyndall Centre work was based on the three LEPs that are part of the WMCA. This will not always be the geography used for implementation, which will vary according to the project or programme being taken forward at any given time. Understanding the most effective combination of stakeholders, including local authority partners, will be a critical part of developing work programmes and business plans.

**8. Other Implications**

None.

**9. Schedule of Background Papers**

Appendix: 'WM2041: a programme for implementing an environmental recovery'