

# WM2041: a programme for implementing an environmental recovery

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to set out the high-level response that was received through the consultation on the WM2041 plan and to outline some of the next steps we should take to move forward on addressing climate change. Clearly this now needs to be within the context of COVID-19 and the transition to a 'healthier, greener' West Midlands so the paper also covers actions that could be taken in this regard. This paper will cover:
  - The feedback from the consultation on WM2041, pulling out priorities from the public, business and third sector responses.
  - Outline the COVID-19 context for climate change and some of the actions that are in WM2041 and that can be taken forward immediately and over the next twelve months.
  - The longer-term plans for delivery of WM2041, moving from strategy to delivery at scale.
  - Recommendations for moving forward.

## 2. Recap on WM2041

- 2.1. In June 2019, the WMCA declared a climate emergency. In July 2019 the Combined Authority 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' – we will need to meet year-on-year carbon emissions reductions of 13% to reach that target.
- 2.2. Following the production of the target, a 'green paper' was written 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 17th January 2020. The green paper was formally launched at an event on 23rd January 2020, which began the period of consultation. This ran until 12th March 2020 and, during this time, a significant amount was done to publicise the document and the opportunity to provide comment and input into it.
- 2.3. The following section of this paper provides an overview of that consultation process before moving on to discuss the next steps for delivery.

## 3. Update on WM2041 consultation

- 3.1. The consultation on WM2041 was run through a number of different channels and invited responses from business and organisations, as well as from members of the public. The latter were consulted through three different routes:

- A WMCA-hosted survey, which we pushed out through our own communications channels and in partnership with communications teams in the local authorities.
  - A Facebook Messenger questionnaire run using chatbots and coordinated for us by a company called Novoville who have done similar work for other local authorities on their climate change plans.
  - Through in-depth workshops run by an organisation called The Democratic Society.
- 3.2. The following sections provide some high-level insight into the responses from the consultation. More detail can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

### *The business and organisation response*

- 3.3. These responses were received through email/ letter and the preparation of standalone documents to reflect on WM2041, the actions that were highlighted and the overall approach to taking action on climate change. We asked four questions as part of the consultation:
- Was anything missing?
  - What are the barriers and challenges as well as the opportunities?
  - What should accountability and governance look like?
  - How should we involve citizens?
- 3.4. The following draws upon the responses that were made by **more than one** organisation.
- Interim targets are needed on the route to taking emissions to net zero by 2041, split by priority area. Retrofit was used as the example: e.g. how many houses would we complete each year? What are the costs of doing so? What would the carbon savings be? Etc.
  - Role of procurement: this needs to be strengthened through the report as it is an important way for the public sector to drive change
  - Be more explicit about links with flagship infrastructure projects, particularly how we will work to influence projects like the Commonwealth Games, Coventry City of Culture and HS2.
  - Need to build a partnership across ALL sectors this will require us to think carefully about the governance for delivery and what it should look like.
  - Need annual reporting to understand how we are progressing against a range of measures – not just carbon.
  - We should include Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions in the plan
  - Be clear on financing – how are we going to pay for the scale of the transition that will be required?
  - Develop an action plan to set clear, time-bound targets, which will also provide clarity about powers and where they sit – for example, what sits with the WMCA and what powers sit with the local authorities.

## *Public consultation*

- 3.5. There was significant input into the consultation, across several platforms and involving different models of engagement:
- Questionnaire (hosted on WMCA's website): 415 people responded
  - Facebook Messenger chatbot: 401 people responded
  - In-depth workshops (these were run in Dudley and Solihull). These were small, focused events that brought together 16 people in total. They also ran interviews with a selection of local authorities (Wolverhampton, Birmingham and Solihull) on their public engagement on climate change.
- 3.6. The breakdown from this consultation is provided in Appendix 1, but there are some key messages that we can take from the consultation process:
- Reducing road traffic (and promoting walking and cycling in particular), and promoting energy efficiency in buildings, were seen as the best ways of tackling climate change.
  - Government is seen as the most important source of information on climate change. The respondents to the WMCA survey prioritised regional and local government, the Facebook Messenger respondents prioritised national government.
  - In terms of what people are already doing to try and reduce their carbon footprint, it falls into:
    - Mobility – using public transport, reducing the number of flights taken, walking, cycling and using a car less.
    - Food – both eating locally produced food as well as following a vegetarian or vegan diet.
    - Being conscious of energy consumption, for example turning things off at home and not over-heating the house.
    - Recycling and waste reduction, particularly single use plastics.
  - We need to work with people to develop the engagement and communication of the plans – this needs to be done through a diverse range of communication channels, including social media, video etc.
  - The delivery of WM2041 needs to be done in an inclusive way to ensure everyone is able to play a role in delivery.
  - It is worth highlighting that a significant minority: consider themselves to have no or basic knowledge of what to do; believe that they lack the money to make necessary changes; feel powerless to have any impact through individual action; believe that climate change is not as important as other issues; and rarely or never take action to reduce their carbon footprint.

## *What is the role of WMCA in public engagement?*

- 3.7. We also asked people, through the consultation, how they might like to be involved as the strategy is further developed and implemented. There are some key principles that should form the basis of our future public engagement work:

- People want to be kept informed of the work that is happening on WM2041.
  - A significant minority want to be more closely involved.
  - We will respect place and subsidiarity – we do not need to lead every conversation and will not be best placed to. However, we do need to be active in making space for good engagement, supporting it, and listening attentively.
  - We need to ensure that we are designing communication and engagement that is fit for purpose – this will depend on the programme or project, but also thinking about our wider communication on WM2041.
  - That transparency around programmes of activity, their delivery and the contribution towards the carbon emissions target is fundamental.
  - That governance for delivery is important to get right and that this needs to involve multiple stakeholders.
- 3.8. The combined returns from the consultation period – including formal and informal discussions at relevant events – will be folded into a revised version of WM2041. It will remain important as our strategic vision for 2041, but will be translated into five-year delivery plans, with carbon budgets assigned to them. However, the urgency of the climate crisis means that we also need to act immediately; we cannot wait for delivery plans to be developed before we start implementing change. As a result, we will also be putting programmes in place straight away that take on board the context of the reset afforded by COVID-19 as well as the results from the consultation on WM2041.

## 4. Immediate next steps: a green recovery from COVID-19

- 4.1. The consultation process provided important insights and additions to the WMCA work on climate change. We are now, however, dealing with a new setting in which to deliver this activity and this section will outline some of the potential options for the region's recovery from COVID-19 in the context of WM2041. The pandemic has been challenging for individuals, households, communities and business, and we need to be mindful of this in terms of using language around opportunity. However, by “bouncing back better” there is the chance to facilitate a green, inclusive transition as we emerge from lockdown and to think about the lessons COVID-19 has taught us about community response, behaviour change, resilience, the role of government regulation and the need for action based on science. Indeed, comparisons have been made between COVID-19 and climate change, particularly in relation to how we tackle something that is both urgent and global (albeit over different timescales).

### Principles

- 4.2. In recovery from COVID-19, there are some observations that will be fundamental to the recovery and that should be taken into consideration:

- *The UK Government has a statutory target of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and we are prepared to engage with them on a low carbon recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.*
- *As with COVID-19, there are many pathways to responding to climate change – we need to consider which of those are most effective and have greatest impact. But the response needs to be systemic – it is only by thinking in whole systems that it is possible to effectively tackle societal challenges like climate change or a global health pandemic.*
- *Tackling the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that data and evidence are critical in supporting response, but that government regulation has a fundamental role to play in shifting behaviour to result in change at scale.*
- *There is a risk of a high carbon rebound from the COVID-19, particularly given the very low oil prices we are currently seeing. In addition, perception of the safety of crowded public spaces (including trains and buses) could see people rejecting public transport in favour of personal transport options. This should be seen in the context that transport is already the biggest sector source of CO<sub>2</sub> (by end user and source), and sector emissions have stayed relatively level for 20 years.*
- *Conversely, the lower interest rates that are currently available might make this a good time to look at a range of financial vehicles with a view to investment in low carbon infrastructure.*
- *The impact of COVID-19 has not been even, in the same way that climate change impacts in an unequal way. As a result, we should be thinking about how the recovery will support some of the most vulnerable people and communities in the West Midlands.*
- *There is growing evidence that pre-existing exposure to negative environmental conditions has a direct impact on potential outcomes to disease – for example, research at Harvard University has concluded that a small increase in long-term exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> [fine particulates] leads to a large increase in COVID-19 death rate, with the magnitude of increase 20 times that observed for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and all-cause mortality<sup>1</sup>.*
- *Social isolation has highlighted the need to think about the spaces we can create for people to be together and thrive, for example in the way we design housing, places and the public realm.*
- *The power of the community response to the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the absolute requirement to work alongside people as agents of change and to understand how we give them the right support to do that.*

### **Timetable and approach**

- 4.3. It is currently unclear as to exactly what a recovery ‘timetable’ is going to look like but it is likely that it will involve a series of steps as we transition from

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<sup>1</sup> Wu, X, et al. (2020) *Exposure to air pollution and COVID-19 mortality in the United States*, <https://www.medrxiv.org/>

lockdown towards a 'new normal', including the possibility of further lockdowns, particularly at the regional level, should outbreaks spike in particular places.

- 4.4. Given this we propose three categories for action in the coming 12 months which are consistent with the approach set out in the Economic Recovery Prospectus:
- **Urgent action:** Moving out of lockdown (0-4 months) and consolidation (4-9 months) phases (Sections 4.7 – 4.29) – activities that will have immediate impact and/or set a clear direction of travel for the kind of recovery we expect in the West Midlands.
  - **12-month priorities:** Accelerating and embedding (9 months plus). (Sections 4.30 – 4.58) – activities that need to be pursued over the next 12 months as key priorities within the wider recovery programme.
  - **5-year delivery plan priorities:** Mid-long term programmes that need to be included in the first WM2041 5-year Delivery Plan. This will be prepared in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders during 2020 (Section 5).
- 4.5. The actions being suggested in this section are also reflected in thinking coming through other networks that have expertise in this space. For example, the COP26 Universities Network and C40 are highlighting how and where city leaders and mayors can take leadership on reducing carbon emissions as part of the long-term recovery from COVID-19. The COP26 Universities Network has said that 'The world could leap "from the COVID frying pan into the climate fire", unless governments intervene to shift economies to clean pathways as they recover'.
- 4.6. On May 6<sup>th</sup>, the UK's Committee on Climate Change wrote to the Prime Minister urging a low carbon recovery from COVID-19. They outline 5 areas that should be expanded immediately (all of these appear below in the WMCA plans):
- Investments in low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure.
  - Supporting reskilling, retraining and research for a net-zero, well-adapted economy.
  - Upgrades to our homes ensuring they are fit for the future.
  - Making it easy for people to walk, cycle, and work remotely.
  - Tree planting, peatland restoration, green spaces and other green infrastructure.

#### **Urgent Action: Moving out of lockdown/ consolidation phases**

- 4.7. Activities that will have immediate impact and/or set a clear direction of travel for the kind of recovery we expect in the West Midlands. These include:
- West Midlands Green Financing
  - West Midlands Clean Growth Challenge
  - WM Circular Economy Taskforce
  - Community Green Grants
  - Reinforcing the region's energy infrastructure to support green growth

- Active Travel
- Urban Transformation Fund (Brownfield sites)
- Communications and behaviour change

### **West Midlands Green Financing**

- 4.8. Since 2013, when Gothenburg issued the first green city bond, they have become a way of cities and regions funding low carbon infrastructure projects. In recent times there has been an increasing demand for green bonds from investors, which far outstrips supply. The WMCA Finance Team is currently exploring the potential for a green bond, as well as other financing options for low carbon investment. Understanding financing options was a key request from the consultation process.
- 4.9. There is also the option to set up a 'West Midlands Future Fund', where public funds are used to crowd in private investment, thereby building a vehicle that could deliver on retrofit, for example. This could be a route for the West Midlands Pension Fund to invest, for example (initial work could start immediately on scoping the potential).
- 4.10. Energy Capital has already started to look at this type of arrangement and commissioned Enzen to develop a Green Infrastructure Fund<sup>2</sup> proposal, which could be used to support a wide range of infrastructure projects required to underpin the green recovery.
- 4.11. Action: Establish an officer working group in May 2020 and take initial proposals to the next Energy and Environment Board by July 2020.**

### **WMCA Clean Growth (Recovery) Innovation Challenge**

- 4.12. The aim of this would be to support small innovative companies, who often find it difficult to push their solutions through a public procurement process, to work with the WMCA on some of its challenges around clean growth. A competition would be run where broad challenges are put forward by the WMCA and organisations pitch their ideas for grant funding to develop them.
- 4.13. We are currently exploring the possibility of funding this through 5G funds with DCMS matched funding. We are also looking into corporate sponsorship.
- 4.14. Action: Identify funding options/ sponsorship and to shape the challenges that we would like to work on with a view to launching the Challenge in July with first winners announced in September.**

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<sup>2</sup> A FundCo has been proposed, set up as a community interest company (CIC) providing discounted commercial loans to eligible projects and recovering its costs through the interest gained (or arrangement fees). This would need to be funded initially with funds drawn from LEPs, central government and other sources.

### **WM Circular Economy Taskforce**

- 4.15. We will work with local partners, including the Circular Economy Club and International Synergies, to establish a Circular Economy Taskforce. The Taskforce will take the first steps towards establishing a Circular Economy Routemap (described in 4.52-4.55 below).
- 4.16. Action: First working group of local stakeholders that have expertise in circular economy policy and delivery organised for 14 May. Membership for the Taskforce will be discussed, and a potential Chair identified. A timetable for the next steps will be taken to the Energy and Environment Board in June.**

### **Community Green Grants**

- 4.17. The mobilisation of people in response to COVID-19 has illustrated the importance of community action. This is no less true in the response to climate change, where we have seen places set up community action groups or community interest companies to support, for example, energy efficiency, renewable energy provision or tree planting.
- 4.18. COVID-19 has also seen a surge of interest in local parks and green spaces but at the same time there is evidence that some communities have significantly less access to such spaces than others.
- 4.19. We are exploring options for a small grants programme, devolved to local authorities and targeted towards particular places, to be able to build the community response to climate change. This would be an important way of maintaining and repurposing some of the community activity that has been seen in recent weeks and sustaining interest in green spaces.
- 4.20. Action: Identify funding stream, delivery partner and local authority working group by mid-June with a view to launching the programme in July and first grants made in September.**

### **Reinforcing the region's energy infrastructure to support green growth**

- 4.21. Decarbonising industry, business, housing and transport in the West Midlands will rely heavily on being able to draw low carbon power from the national energy grid. Affordable connections to the network will depend on whether OFGEM have allowed Western Power Distribution to invest sufficiently in the network in the West Midlands to enable planned economic growth. If not, developers, industry and businesses who need network connections, may find themselves being quoted millions of pounds for infrastructure upgrades, rendering business models unviable.



- 4.22. Energy Capital is currently working with Western Power Distribution and Cadent Gas to shape the information that they collect and provide to OFGEM. This is part of a rolling five-year funding process which determines whether OFGEM approve investment in the West Midlands's networks. Resources are required to ensure that a local area energy planning process is undertaken and consider the critical infrastructure plans of the region and local authorities, to identify where network upgrades are needed.
- 4.23. Recognition by BEIS and OFGEM that UK regions should have a more formal governance role over the future of critical infrastructure is needed. This role could be limited to defined Energy Innovation Zones, or wider city regions and would help to build public trust, engage local stakeholders, and allow the networks to leverage the investment potential of regional economic plans and industrial strategies<sup>3</sup>. Recognition by OFGEM of the importance of regional plans and programmes led by democratically accountable bodies, as 'strategic representatives of the consumer', is a necessary foundation for this.
- 4.24. Action: Energy Capital will prepare a paper for the June Energy and Environment Board concerning regional energy infrastructure with details of the devolved powers needed by the Combined Authority to ensure OFGEM consider the needs of the regions in their network planning cycles within Energy Innovation Zones.**

### **Active Travel**

- 4.25. Transport currently contributes 32% towards the WMCA's carbon emissions. However, we know that of all the sectors, emissions from transport are not decreasing at the rate of some of the others (e.g. energy). The danger, coming out of COVID-19 lockdown, is that a perceived lack of safety of public transport, combined with low oil prices, will exacerbate this further with people driving more than before.
- 4.26. Given the importance of transport and mobility, TfWM is already currently undertaking research to understand the level of technological and behavioural change that would be required to meet the region's carbon reduction ambitions. This is extending to understand potential mobility preferences as people start to move around more following lockdown.
- 4.27. The consultation on WM2041 already indicated that people were supportive of active travel as a means to act on climate change (33% placed this as their top option). This has been galvanised further during the COVID-19 lockdown with the public's new support for active travel, quieter roads and telecoms (work from home and e-commerce) will help mitigate this risk. A number of local authorities have already adjusted public spaces and highway layouts to

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<sup>3</sup> Energy Networks for the Future: A dialogue about the future of the electricity distribution networks, Regen (<https://www.regen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Regen-Energy-Networks-for-the-future-web.pdf>)

support social distancing e.g. High Streets, stations and to increase capacity for walking and cycling.

- 4.28. On 9th May the Government announced an 'Emergency Active Travel Fund', with £250m to be made available immediately to support delivery of temporary schemes such as pop up cycle lanes and widening pavements. This is the first stage of a £2 billion investment, as part of the £5 billion in new funding announced.
- 4.29. Government has announced that funding and delivery will be co-ordinated through Mayoral CAs. TfWM has asked local authorities to propose potential schemes. These are subject to relevant review and approvals but demonstrate the level of ambition in the region. The proposals will be discussed and overseen through the new Transport Cell, as set out in the Recovering the Transport System report.
- 4.30 Guidance for the Emergency Active Travel funding is yet to be published, but it is understood that up to £17.2 million will be made available to the West Midlands. Access to this will be subject to the ability to meet specific criteria set out by the Department for Transport and the monies will be made available in two tranches. The ability to implement ambitious measures very quickly is understood to be a critical factor in DfT's assessment of any proposals. A verbal update will be provided at the CA Board on the latest position by the Portfolio Lead for Transport.
- 4.31 Actions being led by TfWM include:**
- ***Supporting and working with Local Highway Authorities to fund and deliver wider pop up cycle routes, implement pedestrian improvements and to improve the availability of bikes to all communities.***
  - ***Develop a longer-term active travel package based on our ambitious regional Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.***

#### **Urban Transformation Fund**

- 4.32. In February 2020 the WMCA submitted its Budget proposal for a £200m Urban Transformation Fund (UTF) to deliver thousands of new homes on challenging brownfield sites, a programme that was referred to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Budget speech on March 11th as part of the announcement of a national £400m Brownfield Fund.
- 4.33. In response to a request from HMG and the ongoing impact of COVID-19, the initial UTF site programme has been reappraised for immediate impact. This stimulus package reflects the need to boost economic recovery, continue delivering the Brownfield regeneration programme and restore confidence in the market whilst maintaining value for money, robust governance and delivering genuine additionality.

- 4.34. The proposed Fund was developed with a focus on the contribution of sites to wider priorities – including town centre renewal, affordable housing, levelling up the economy, climate change and zero carbon housing.
- 4.35. The interventions proposed include a broad range of activities to support sustainable development (e.g. transport upgrades, infrastructure investment, demolition works, remediation), unlocking delivery on challenging brownfield sites along new and existing public transport corridors. These works will then support the delivery of new homes being built using advanced eco-friendly modular construction techniques in line with the region's WM2041 Climate Action Plan and ambition to achieve a zero carbon homes standard by 2025.
- 4.36. Action: Housing and Regeneration Team to continue dialogue with HM Government to secure funding for Urban Transformation Fund with Phase 1 deployment focused on immediate impact.**

### **Communications and behaviour change**

- 4.37. Communications is an integral part of delivering the WM2041 plan. In order to achieve our objectives to reduce carbon emissions, we need to work collaboratively with business, local authorities and the citizens of the region. Everyone will need to make their contribution in order to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2041.
- 4.38. Climate change is a broad and complicated subject and citizen's motivations for taking action are varied. Early consultation has shown that not all of our citizens feel it is a serious issue. The challenge for our communications is to understand those motivations and to use them to write clear, simple messaging that unlocks positive behaviour change. There is much to be learned about behaviour changes during the Covid-19 crisis and the different ways in which citizens have learned to respond to crisis, enjoy their local natural environment and adopt different form of active travel.
- 4.39. In order to achieve this impact, our communications on climate change across the region need to be clear and consistent. Inconsistent or complex messaging will result in confusion and a lack of understanding on the impacts and necessary action.
- 4.40. In order to achieve these outcomes we will develop an overarching communications strategy with local authorities that supports the aims of WM2041. Each initiative will also require a bespoke communications plan to focus on the delivery of the specific project objectives.
- 4.41. Throughout the project, we will regularly collect audience insight using online surveys to ensure messaging remains relevant and effective.

4.42. **Actions: In the first phase the communications team will:**

- **Work with local authorities to develop an overarching communications strategy for WM2041 which, in the short term builds on behaviour change adopted during the Covid-19 crisis.**
- **Develop a communications plan and behaviour change campaign for 'Active Travel'. This work is already underway with TfWM.**
- **Develop a communications plan for each of the projects identified in paragraph 4.7.**

### **12-month Priorities: Acceleration and embedding phase**

4.43. These are activities that need to be pursued over the next 12 months as key priorities within the wider recovery programme. They include:

- A regional retrofit programme
- Zero carbon homes charter and routemap
- WM Circular Economy routemap and action plan
- Electric Mobility
- Green neighbourhoods, natural capital and a WM National Park
- Investment, procurement and assets
- Disclosing carbon emissions to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)

### **Regional retrofit programme to tackle fuel poverty and carbon emissions**

4.44. Tackling domestic fuel efficiency is a significant challenge. It was also the most highly rated response that the WMCA should take on addressing climate change (from the WM2041 consultation process). High level estimates from the Chartered Institute of Housing are as follows: 'The West Midlands Combined Authority covers some 860,000 homes. Let's suppose 30% of these meet reasonable energy efficiency standards (Energy Performance Certificate Band C). This means that 600,000 need 'retrofitting' with insulation and other measures to bring them up to the standard'.

4.45. The advantages in tackling this challenge are that retrofit: will be a big part of addressing fuel poverty and will have positive implications for carbon emissions reduction, job creation, skills development, innovation, support to the supply chain and a boost to the construction sector, for example.

4.46. Whilst there is a close correlation between improving energy efficiency of homes and reducing fuel poverty, there are additional issues and complexities associated with the latter that we need to recognise. This will undoubtedly be exacerbated by COVID-19; we know some of our more vulnerable people will be adversely affected and the supply chain impacted through lack of demand for products and services. The regional Fuel Poverty Taskforce is already working on this through its programme, Warm Homes Save Lives, and this will feed into the Regional Retrofit Steering Group.

**4.47. Action: The first meeting of the cross-directorate Regional Retrofit Steering Group will take place in w/b 25 May. It will be supported by a local authority-facing working group. We will develop a series of workstreams including:**

- Business case and finance, for example around a 'West Midlands Future Fund' (see above), a green bond or social investment bond linked to skills training (see below);
- Delivery & supply chain
- Local approach
- Skills base and training to ensure we have enough people able to deliver the programme of work.
- Devolution asks, for example around devolution of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) to be used regionally.
- Work to reduce fuel poverty, which will be led by the Fuel Poverty Taskforce

**4.48. Details of options and delivery frameworks will be brought to both to the Energy and Environment Board and the Housing and Land Boards at their forthcoming meetings in autumn 2020.**

#### **Zero carbon homes routemap**

4.49. The routemap (being taking forward by the Housing and Regeneration Team) will provide understanding of the steps that are needed to reach a zero carbon homes standard by 2025. It will include an approach to both new build and retrofit projects.

4.50. The current plan is to have a Zero Carbon Homes Charter ready for launch in autumn 2020 to be included in the Single Commissioning Framework. There is opportunity within the Single Commissioning Framework to include more on carbon reduction measures more generally. This approach was agreed by the Housing and Land Board in April 2020.

**4.51. Action: The Housing and Regeneration Team will run a workshop with the UK Green Building Council in June 2020 to kick off the programme with a view to a Charter being launched in autumn 2020.**

#### **Circular Economy Routemap and Action Plan**

4.52. A regional approach to resource efficiency could be developed during 2020; adopting a circular approach is something that will benefit business as well as the public sector. This is part of a wider approach to waste reduction.

4.53. A routemap would enable us to explore alternative business models such as incentivised return, leasing and sharing. A similar routemap completed for the London Waste and Recycling Board indicates that by 2036, the circular economy could provide London with net benefits of at least £7bn every year

and 40,000 new jobs (12,000 net additional jobs) in the areas of re-use, remanufacturing and materials innovation.

4.54. We do not know what and where the current opportunities are in the West Midlands, but there is likely economic advantage and potential to create jobs. The routemap would help us understand this better.

**4.55. Action: The Circular Economy Taskforce will bring a draft Routemap and Action Plan to the Energy Environment Board by the end of 2020.**

### **Electric mobility**

4.56. Enabling the uptake of electric vehicles, through infrastructure provision, will be an important part of both emissions reduction and delivering on clean air priorities. The CA Board has previously approved (in Feb 2020) the next steps around vehicle charging and enabling energy infrastructure.

4.57. Whilst there will be a focus on active travel as part of the recovery from COVID-19, avoiding a high carbon rebound might also be enabled by use of electric vehicles. This could be cars, but we also the need to understand the role that will be played by, e-bikes and micro-mobility modes, e.g. e-scooters.

4.58. In relation passenger and light goods vehicles, however, we will need to ensure that we are able to accelerate implementation of charging infrastructure for ULEVs to meet the forecasted take up of such vehicles in the West Midlands.

4.59. Alongside this, we will need to ensure that we are working towards future-proofing the regional automotive sector through supporting its shift towards production of electric vehicles. A West Midlands Gigafactory will be an important part of the infrastructure to enable this.

**4.60. Action: Work with Energy Capital, local authorities and TfWM to implement actions arising from the WM ULEV strategy for EV charging infrastructure and secure investment for infrastructure roll-out.**

### **Green neighbourhoods, natural capital and a WM National Park**

4.61. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen how important access to green space and natural capital has been important for people's physical and mental health; 63% of people are now saying that being active is more important than ever before<sup>4</sup>.

4.62. The community action that has happened in response to COVID-19 has seen people (re)connect more extensively with their neighbourhoods. This revaluing of place could be continued with programmes supporting expansion of natural capital.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Sport England's Active Lives survey

- 4.63. We will work with colleagues at BCU to realise the potential of the WM National Park in providing a strategic context for natural capital and landscape.
- 4.64. The Virtual Forest website, a platform set up by the WMCA to bring tree planting initiatives together, is being redeveloped to increase its functionality around natural capital growth and to make it more comprehensive.
- 4.65. Action: We will establish a multi-agency WM Natural Capital Working Group, building on the existing Natural Capital Roundtable, to develop a more coherent approach towards natural capital across the WMCA, working with regional expertise and concepts already in development and bringing forward key opportunities for action. A review of options will be brought to the Environment Board in autumn 2020.**

### **Investment, procurement and assets**

- 4.66. As part of the on-going business transformation process we will support a more detailed review to ensure that WMCA is encouraging sustainable procurement, which entails both green public procurement (GPP) and socially responsible public procurement (SRPP). Work done by Ashden and Friends of the Earth has suggested that this is one of the most effective things that public authorities can do to reduce their carbon emissions<sup>5</sup>.
- 4.67. We will support the Assets Team in ensuring WMCA is showing leadership around its own operations and assets. This will include: continuing to develop the internal Environmental Management System and broadening its scope to incorporate the new brownfield land assets; ensuring that the WMCA estate responds to the climate emergency by working towards achieving net zero carbon emissions, taking on board actions in WM2041; and, that WMCA retains ISO14001 certification (this is showing that carbon outputs continually reduce).
- 4.68. We are also considering new processes and mechanisms by which we can streamline existing tools like the WM Design Charter, Inclusive Growth Toolkit, Single Commissioning Framework etc to ensure all WMCA investment drives more inclusive and sustainable growth.
- 4.69. Action: To bring forward further details of a programme to ‘decarbonise WMCA’ and show leadership in responding to the climate emergency to relevant programme boards of the Combined Authority in conjunction with plans to develop more co-ordinated mechanisms to drive more inclusive and sustainable growth.**

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ashden.org/programmes/top-31-climate-actions-for-councils>

## **Disclosing carbon emissions to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)**

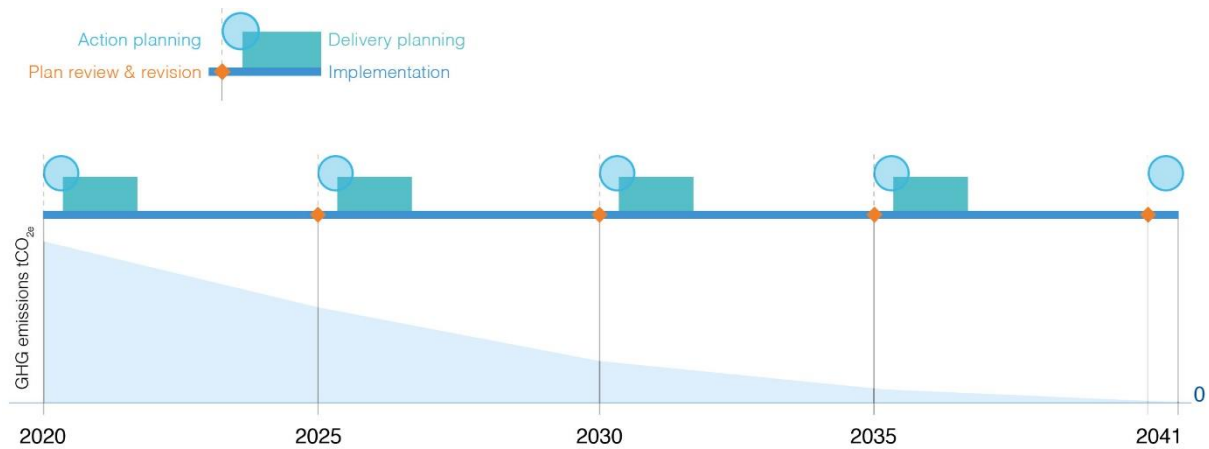
- 4.70. A frequently recurring comment made as part of the WM2041 consultation process was that there needs to be transparency in relation to monitoring and measurement of carbon emissions. The CDP is a globally recognised way for cities and private sector to do this.
- 4.71. The reporting is done annually and will help us understand where the gaps are in our current plans and delivery. Wolverhampton and Coventry already report. Birmingham is reporting for the first time this year as well.
- 4.72. If the CA Board approves this paper and works actively towards a first WM2041 5-year delivery plan (see below) WMCA is very likely to receive a good score with the CDP assessors.
- 4.73. Action: Complete the 2020/2021 report by the deadline of August 26<sup>th</sup> 2020.**

## **5. Looking to the next five years and beyond**

- 5.1. From a piece of work Arup undertook with WMCA as part of the next steps for WM2041, they found the following:
- Of the 73 actions outlined in the plan, we have estimated that 38 are likely to be invest-able in their own right; the remaining 35 actions would likely require bundling with other actions in order to attract investment (for example, stakeholder engagement actions may be effectively packaged with capital improvement projects).
  - We have estimated that 35 actions may be under the direct control of WMCA (including TfWM). The remainder would require cooperation and/or collaboration with other actors, including central government, local authorities, industry, academia, developers, citizens, the NHS, and major infrastructure/ property owners, such as Birmingham Airport.
- 5.2. Delivery on climate change will be both complex and complicated and therefore we need to prepare clear plans to ensure progress is being made. The proposal is a commitment to building five yearly delivery plans (four in total) with targets, to include interim carbon budgets and other metrics. This will take time to do and will need us to commission external support. This piece of work will begin immediately and will provide us with a clear plan to 2026 (in the context of reaching net zero by 2041). This responds to one of the most frequently recurring suggestions made through the consultation process. The five year delivery plan and regional carbon budget will be the principal basis upon which any energy and environmental negotiation might take place within a future devolution settlement.



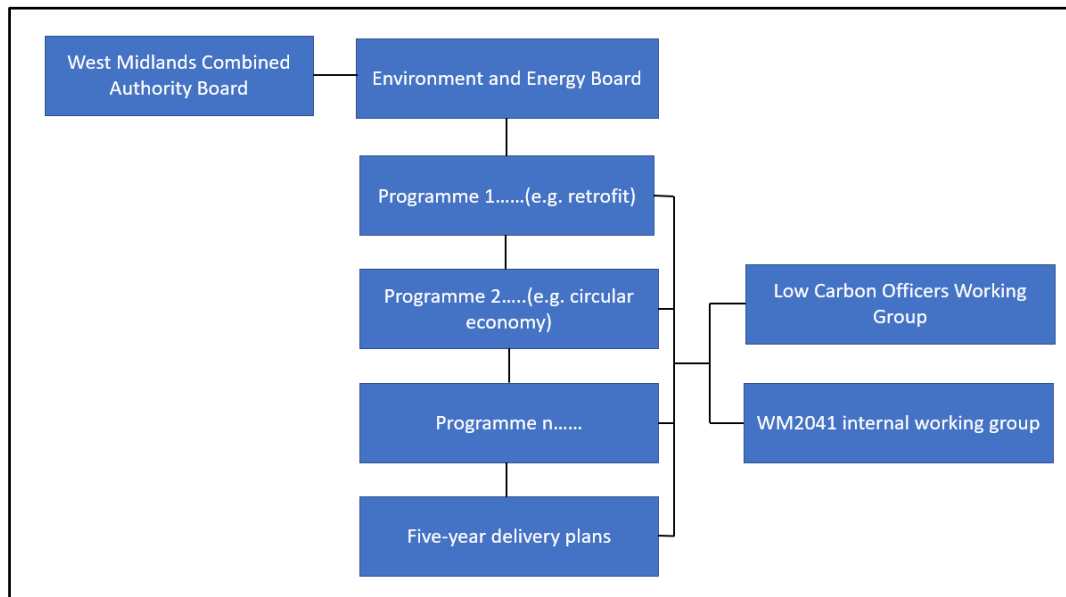
- 5.3. The diagram below (and the graphic in Appendix 2) describe how we might take this forward, and the different elements involved. These were produced by Arup to support thinking about the next steps for WMCA on climate change.



## Governance

- 5.4. A clear priority is to build a governance structure that is effective for delivery, and that brings together stakeholders from different sectors, to reflect the shared challenge we are facing. To do this effectively, there needs to be consideration of:
- 5.5. **The Energy and Environment Board** currently provides political leadership to this work. This will be the route through which the decisions and actions around the delivery plans (both in relation to the COVID-19 response and the five-year plans) will be taken.
- 5.6. **A local authority Low Carbon Officers Group** has been established for the constituent authorities to come together; and will meet every six weeks going forward. The group provides the opportunity to share the progress of work on WM2041 and wider strategy work, for example on Devo Next. Local authorities are also able to share the latest work that they are doing on addressing climate change. As this group matures it will be the place where thought can be given to collaborating for delivery on specific programmes of work.
- 5.7. **Internal arrangements.** A cross-directorate internal group has been established to share what is happening across the different WMCA teams. As the action plans are developed, this will become important for designing plans and for supporting delivery.
- 5.8. **Project-specific arrangements.** Each of the different elements of delivery will require bringing stakeholders together in different ways to ensure progress is made quickly. The plans above have identified groups and taskforces that will be established to steer the work forwards. Different arrangements will be put in on a programme-by-programme basis as we move forwards.

## Suggested governance structure for WM2041 :



### *Next steps for the five-year climate action plans:*

- 5.9. We suggest that the following should be progressed as part of the next steps for the WM2041 five year plans:
- 5.10. Commit to developing **five yearly delivery plans with targets, to include carbon budgets and other metrics**. There will be an externally commissioned piece of work, which will need to be cross-cutting and inclusive of all stakeholders, working closely with local authorities.
- 5.11. **Revise the WM2041 strategy document** in light of the feedback that that came through the consultation. This will be a shorter document than the previous iteration, providing high-level direction of travel. The actions, currently in this document, will be taken forward through five-year plans.
- 5.12. **Hold a facilitated meeting with Leaders and Chief Executives** as part of building collaboration and coordination around strategy and delivery. We need to make sure that everyone is on board with the delivery of WM2041 as a joint effort, and that the five-year action plans are co-owned by local authorities and other regional partners. This is particularly important given the shared nature of the actions.
- 5.13. **Build an ongoing engagement programme** with the people of the region, which will need to blend with approaches taken by local authority partners, as well as existing community-led activity. Early indications from the WM2041 consultation are that this will need to include both intensive involvement in shaping the agenda and around particular programmes of activity, but also ongoing information, advice and guidance relating to the overall agenda and specific projects within that.

- 5.14. Support the **development and implementation of a carbon literacy training programme** to support development and leadership the workforce will need to make this happen. This will be a pilot at the WMCA to begin with but could be rolled out further, particularly within the public sector, as it will be tasked and held to account for delivery.

## 6. Summary of recommendations and actions

6.1 The WMCA Board is recommended to:

- Receive the summary of the consultation feedback on WM2041 set out in the appendix of the main report.
- 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.
- Approve the programme of activity identified in this Board paper including key priorities to be developed in the coming 12 months, alongside the development of a 5-Year #WM2041 Delivery Plan.
- Agree the need for a coordinated approach around tackling climate change and an effective approach to governance as set out in 2.13.

6.2. We are developing a Delivery Programme of urgent action that we can progress in the coming 12 months. This is particularly pertinent as we consider a post-COVID-19 transition to a 'healthier, greener' West Midlands and will include:

- Establishing the financing options for infrastructure delivery as well as to support continuity of community action and activity on addressing climate change.
- Developing plans for a large-scale fuel poverty and retrofit programme as well as a Circular Economy Taskforce and routemap to support resource efficiency in the region, whilst also providing economic opportunity and jobs across the region.
- Support for the route to net zero emissions in the built environment through the development of a standard for new builds, unlocking delivery on challenging brownfield sites and implementing a retrofit programme.
- Enabling a reduction in emissions through transport as we promote and enable active travel as we come out of lockdown as well as supporting roll out of EV charging infrastructure.
- Realising the full potential of procurement processes through a revision to the WMCA procurement policy and the Single Commissioning Framework and show leadership, as a Combined Authority, around our own emissions reduction through procurement, audit, reporting and approaches to commissioning and investment.
- Providing a review of options around natural capital and how we take a strategic approach to green space.

- 6.3. Work towards a process of five-year carbon budgets and action plans, with the first one put in place to cover the period from 2021-2026. This will involve:
- Holding a facilitated meeting with Leaders and Chief Executives as part of building collaboration and coordination around strategy and delivery. The five-year action plans should be co-owned by local authorities and other regional partners.
  - Implementing proposals for the governance arrangements that need to be in place to make us effective, in terms of democratic legitimacy, regional collaboration and overall pace and delivery.

## **Appendix 1: The results from the consultation**

### **Introduction**

This appendix provides an overview of the different types of data gathered to understand how some of the people in the West Midlands feel about climate change, as well as the WM2041 plan itself. It also brings together a high-level overview of the business/ organisation response to the WM2041 plan. The results of the public consultation should be treated as insights, rather than a representative overview of what people in the West Midlands think about climate change or the WM2041 plan. There is however valuable information on how we should communicate with people, as well as understanding what people feel some of the obstacles are. The information was obviously gathered before the full implications of COVID-19 were understood, however the UK's National Assembly on Climate Change, which has continued virtually through the lockdown, has shown no diminishing of interest in addressing climate change as an issue with 107 of the initial 110 participants still joining the events.

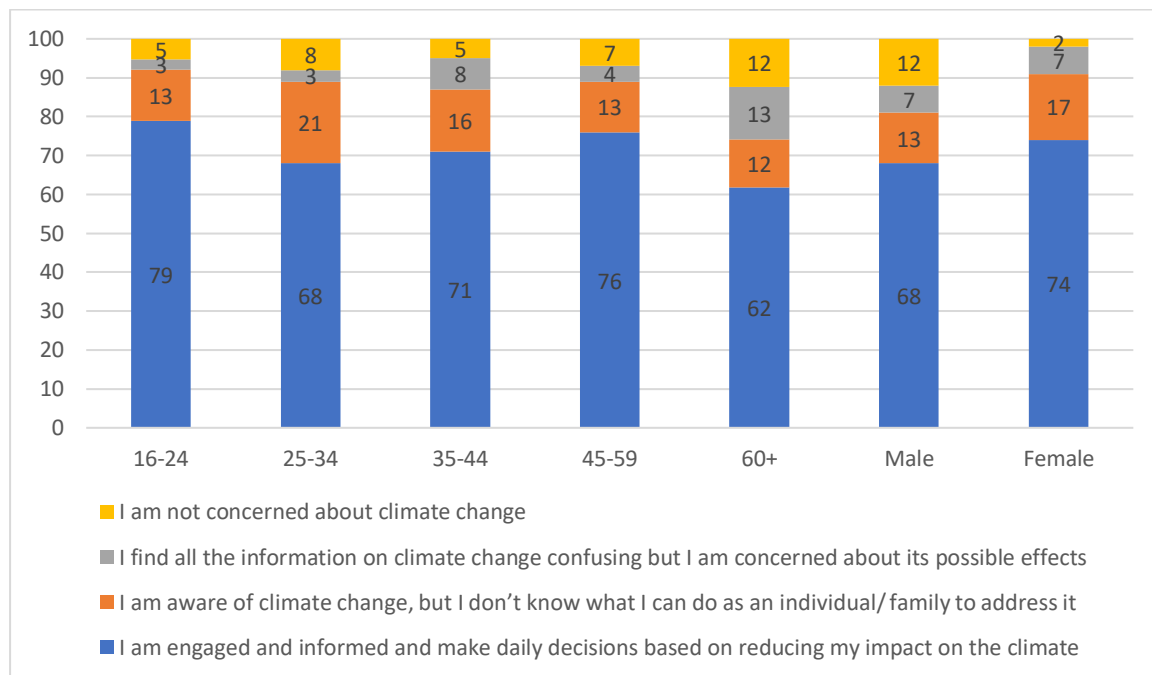
### **Results from the WMCA questionnaire**

The aim of this questionnaire was to ascertain some high-level feedback from the consultees, whilst also providing an opportunity for people to add comments through some 'free form' text boxes. The following sections take the questions that were asked one-by-one and provide the responses in a quantitative and, where appropriate, qualitative format. The latter is a selection of the responses, which demonstrates the range of opinion.

#### ***Which of the following most closely describes your position on climate change?***

- I am engaged and informed and make daily decisions based on reducing my impact on the climate: 70%
- I am aware of climate change, but I don't know what I can do as an individual/ family to address it: 15%
- I find all the information on climate change confusing, but I am concerned about its possible effects: 7%
- I am not concerned about climate change: 8%

## Position on climate change by age and gender



### ***Which actions do you think are the most important for the West Midlands to take to tackle climate change?***

Respondents were asked to rank 10 climate change actions that the West Midlands could take to tackle climate change in order of importance, an overall ranking out of 100 was calculated for each action to see which was considered as most important overall. There was space provided for people to add in additional actions if they didn't feel a particular issue was covered.

In terms of the issue people ranked first, the results break down as follows:

1. Reduce road traffic (walking and cycling more): 33%
2. Conserving energy in buildings: 19%
3. Plant and conserve more trees: 13%
4. Reduce petrol and diesel vehicles: 13%
5. Reduce the use of single use plastics: 12%

When taking all responses into account conserving energy in buildings was ranked as the most important action, this was closely followed by reducing road traffic/walking and cycling more.

Ranked as third most important was planting and conserving more trees, followed by reducing the use of single plastics (fourth place) and reducing petrol and diesel vehicles (fifth place).

Ranked in tenth place and given the least importance was buying organic/local produced seasonal foods.

## Potential Climate Change Actions Ranking, Score And % Rating Action Most Important

Ranked score out of 100 calculated using following weighting 1<sup>st</sup> most important=100; 2<sup>nd</sup>=90; 3<sup>rd</sup>=80; 4<sup>th</sup>=70; 5<sup>th</sup>=60; 6<sup>th</sup>=50; 7<sup>th</sup>=40; 8<sup>th</sup>=30; 9<sup>th</sup>=20; 10<sup>th</sup>=10 divided by valid base

	Rank	Total score out of 100	% most important
Conserve energy in buildings such as homes and offices including making changes to existing buildings	1	73	19
Reduce road traffic/walking and cycling more	2	70	33
Plant and conserve more trees	3	62	13
Reduce the use of single use plastics	4	58	12
Reduce petrol and diesel vehicles	5	57	13
Reduce need to travel e.g. by introducing flexible working	6	53	6
Use more electric cars	7	44	4
Encourage more 'green' business into the West Midlands	8	43	3
Increase the amount of energy produced locally	9	42	5
Buy organic/locally produced/seasonal food	10	42	3

### ***Are there any other actions which you think are important for the West Midlands to take to tackle climate change? (Other - please write in)***

182 respondents gave further suggestions as to actions the West Midlands could take to tackle climate change. Comments were grouped together under key themes for purposes of analysis. The main suggestions are in the table below.

The top further suggestions focused on investing in a better/more effective public transport network (25%), with a further 10% stating public transport should be free/cheaper.

8% thought that recycling in the West Midlands needed improving, with less going to landfill and wider recycling options.

7% thought new buildings should be green/more energy efficient.

### **Top Further Suggested Actions West Midlands Could Take Over Climate Change**

Base : 182 respondents who gave a further comment

	Responses	%
Invest in a better/more effective public transport network as alternative to car	46	25
Free public transport/cheaper public transport/ increase tax to pay for free PT	18	10
Make recycling easier/more options for household recycling/reduce waste going to landfill/tetra pak recycling	14	8
New buildings/developments to be green/more energy efficient new homes	12	7

Encourage repair and longevity of use /second-hand market/borrowing library to reduce consumption	11	6
Support for households/business to make energy efficient changes to their buildings/retro fit grants	11	6
Dedicated cycle infrastructure/safer for cycling	11	6
Unwilling to make any behavioural changes/don't believe in climate change/against climate change schemes	11	6
Policies to incentive business financially to reduce carbon/encourage business to be more sustainable	9	5
More investment in renewable energy/investment in solar/wind	9	5
Scrap polluting modes of public transport e.g. electric Metro; diesel buses	9	5
Encourage people to eat greener/low carbon food	8	4
Invest in more green spaces/pasture as well as planting trees/ensure green spaces are maintained	7	4
Less investment in fossil fuel producing companies e.g. via pension funds	7	4
Incentives to encourage green businesses/green producers/create green jobs	7	4
Stop HS2	6	3
Limit air travel/reduce flights	6	3

These are just examples of some of the responses that were put forward:

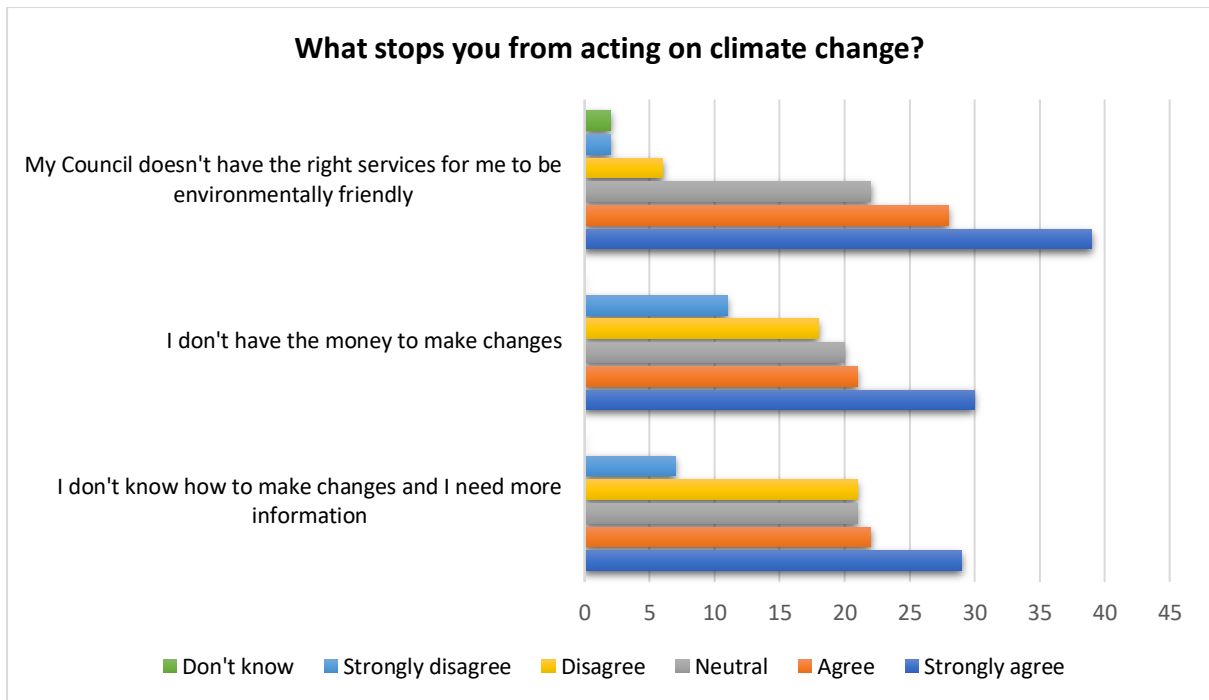
- Take it seriously - all new buildings should have solar panels on them and electric car charging points -all schools/public buildings/supermarket car parks/etc should have car charging points.
- Free public transport and a scrappage/swappage scheme for most polluting cars. We need to create climate jobs by installing solar panels on all public building and inviting all private buildings to be part of this. We need to insulate homes too.
- Improve public transport and safe cycle routes, provide grants or interest free loans for home energy efficiency improvements. reintroduce FITs for renewable energy such as solar panels.
- It makes no sense to invest in fossil fuels through the West Midlands Pension Fund. To tackle climate change, the fund should invest in local green infrastructure.
- Quantify your aims - or you sound naive and disingenuous i.e. don't just use words like 'improve', 'increase', 'more' but state how to measure the change.
- Impossible to answer this question as I have no concerns about climate change.

***How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements on what stops you or other people you know from acting on climate change?***

- 'My council doesn't have the right services to help me be more environmentally friendly'
- 'I don't have the money to make changes'
- 'I don't know how to make changes and I need more information'

(Figures below are given in percentages)





***Do you have any other comments on what stops you or other people you know from acting on climate change?***

This was free form text – the responses below are a sample of those taken from the consultation:

- Individuals are at the mercy of poor transport infrastructure, lots of people would love to leave the car at home but local bus and train services are too poor.
- Information on how make changes and what changes we can make.
- I cannot answer this question as what stops me acting on climate change is not what stops other people.
- Leadership on the issue. Large enough scale initiatives that most citizens can get behind.
- People are stopped from acting on climate change because they consider the likely impact is not worth spending a lot of money on.
- There has been no change in council behaviour /services in the wake of declaring a climate emergency. Business as usual has continued (i.e. promoting and funding road schemes).
- Even people who are homeowners need help to improve insulation and solar power.
- Please focus on systematic change not individual change.

**Where do you get most of your information on climate change?**

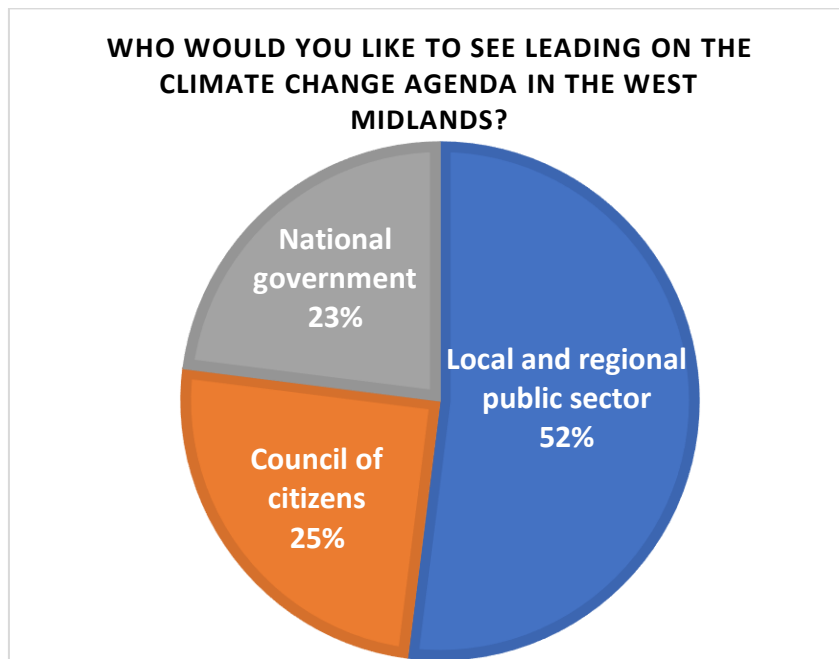
People were asked to select their top 3 options (shown in the table below), but there was space to include elements that had not been included in the closed questions:

	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>
Newspapers	36%	35%	29%
TV	42%	32%	26%
Social media	40%	34%	26%
From talking with family	15%	30%	55%
From government	12%	38%	50%
From reading books on the subject	64%	21%	15%
Podcasts	8%	45%	47%
Radio	24%	38%	39%

Other sources of information include:

- Academic journals
- Websites: a variety were given, including UKGBC, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, the BBC, NASA, the British Antarctic Survey, the Committee on Climate Change, government websites
- First-hand observations on how things are changing
- Environmental groups
- Public meetings
- TED Talks
- Through study

**Who would you like to see leading the climate change agenda in the West Midlands?**



94 respondents gave further suggestions as to who should lead on climate change locally. The table below summarises the main responses: 14% suggested that experts and scientist should lead, while 12% suggested everyone should take a lead.

### Further suggestions on who should lead on climate change

Base: 94 respondents

	Respondents	%
Experts/scientists	13	14
Everyone	11	12
No one/waste of time/no such thing as climate change	10	11
Backed up by national government	9	10
All of them/all of the above	8	9
Individuals/members of the public	7	7
Mix councillors/citizens in partnership	5	5
Local councils	5	5
Businesses	4	4
Local referendum needed on climate change ideas/consult widely	4	4

There was some free-from text to enable people to provide a response to 'Other' – this is a sample of those:

- Local councils should have this role. They know the area/region and what can or can't be done.
- Combined Authorities in combination with councils, businesses, charities and the public.
- A combination - important role of local councils & regional bodies, but need for council of citizens
- Every level needs to be addressing this issue
- Citizens should be involved but I worry that a council of citizens would not actually have any power.
- National Government and regional bodies with local councils and business. Not one body can deliver.
- Unbiased scientists who will look at ALL the facts not a social agenda.

***If there is anything you think we've overlooked or haven't given enough emphasis to in our plans, please provide details below.***

This was an open-ended question and 215 respondents provided a valid response to this question. Responses were grouped together under similar themes for purposes of analysis. The table below provides a summary of key responses.

- The main comment focused on the need for there to be more emphasis on improving public transport (16%).

- Respondents also believed there should be more emphasis on saving/creating green spaces/planting more trees (9%) or more investment in cycling (8%).
- There were a number of comments relating to buildings with 7% equally wanting grants to improve the sustainability of buildings or for new developments to be green and sustainable.
- There was a sentiment amongst some that the plan lacked clear actions/timescales (7%). In line with this there was also a feeling that the plan needed more urgency and action was needed now (6%).
- Echoing sentiments throughout this report 7% wanted more emphasis on improvements to recycling.

## Suggestions for improvements to the plan

*Base: 215 valid responses*

	Responses	%
More emphasis on improving public transport/more investment in public transport to reduce car use	35	16
More on saving and creating green spaces/plant more trees/more high quality trees	19	9
More investment for cycling/more emphasis on improving cycling	17	8
Building insulation grants/old green deal/retrofit programme for buildings/use of renewables in buildings	16	7
Planners/new development to incorporate these sustainable policies/green focus part of planning application	14	7
Lack of clear actions/timescales/needs measurable goals and responsibilities	14	7
More on recycling/more emphasis on recycling/recycling of wider range of products	14	7
Urgent action needed/changes need to be made more quickly/need to act quickly	13	6
Public transport to be free/cheaper public transport will encourage use	12	6
Make it more relevant to people/what changes people can make and effect	11	5

These are some of the responses:

- 'More engagement within schools would be useful, to provide children with a climate education. From an early age, children will be informed of the practical and sustainable ways in which they can help to combat the climate crisis'.
- 'More local examples of how real local people have made eco changes with no negative impact on their lives. I would be encouraged if I knew someone down the road was making these changes as it would encourage me to give it a crack'.
- 'I think that we should be working more with other regions. Or if this is already happening, the plans should provide that line of sight with regional, national and international goals. Environmental issues cross boundaries and the people move/travel around the UK for work/social activities. Different regions have different plans/goals and issues around environmental issues and activities are

not standardised making it difficult for to know what's acceptable and not. Waste is a prime example'.

- 'The reality of having a knowledgeable and skilled workforce in place to carry out the work needed, the size of the retrofitting task needed (we will have 70% of the buildings have now in 50 years time), mobilising private business to get behind the initiative and getting the general public on board'.
- 'Get balanced information from actual scientists (not just the doomsayers) & do not make decisions based on knee jerk reaction. Revisit & closely study the logistics of your proposals which will turn the Midlands back to pre-industrial times'.
- 'You simply must NOT set a blanket ban fossil fuel cars until a viable alternative is available. I have yet to see a FULL economic costing (and risk analysis) for using electric vehicles. To make them remotely viable, there must be a Government contribution to the purchase price. Even then they remain unsafe to travel long distances especially in winter. Perhaps WMCA should provide every home with a really basic, cheap & cheerful electric car for local use?'

### ***Do you want to be included going forward?***

When asked if people would like to be kept informed, 76% of people said that they would like to be kept up-to-date. In total, 59% of people said they would like to be part of a citizens group looking at tackling climate change.

### ***Novoville***

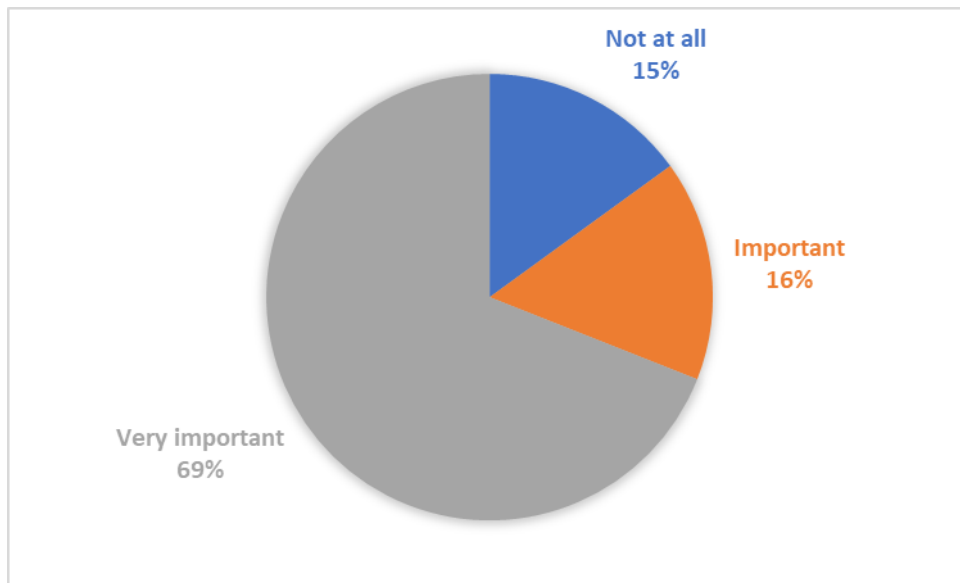
The sections below outline the results that came through from the Novoville work. This was a process that used chatbots on Facebook Messenger to get a high-level overview of people's feelings about climate change and the types of action that people are already taking, as well as what prevents them from doing more. There was much less opportunity for free text in this survey.

### **According to experts, how likely is it that the current warming trend is the result of human activity?**

From the results:

- 23% of people thought that there was a 65% likelihood that climate change is caused by human activity.
- Another 23% thought that it was an 85% chance.
- 54% of people thought that there was a 95% likelihood.

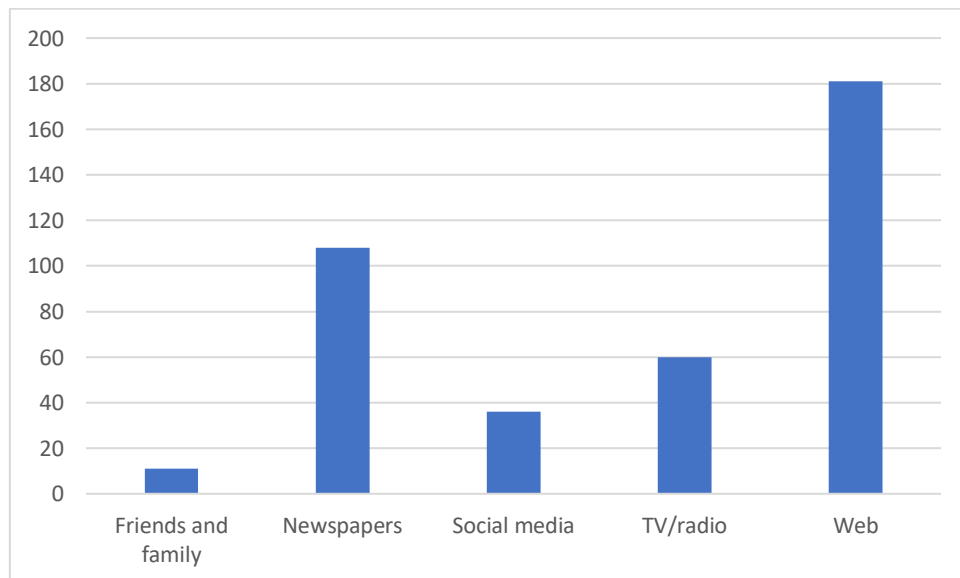
### Compared to other issues, how important do you think climate change is?



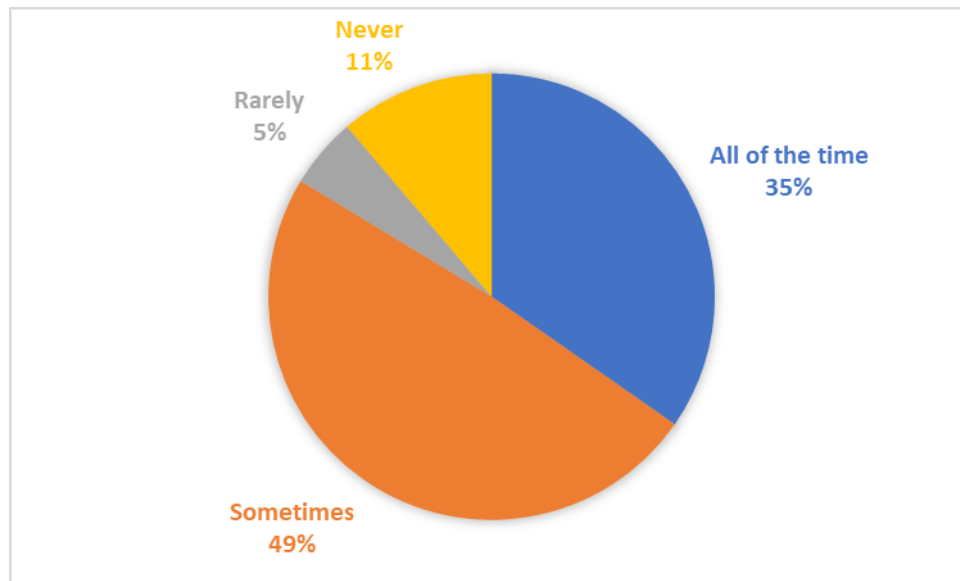
### How would you rate your knowledge about climate change?

- I don't know anything: 6%
- Basic: 18%
- Knowledgeable: 70%
- Expert: 6%

### Where do you get your information about climate change from?



### **How often do you consciously try to diminish your carbon footprint?**



### **What do you do in particular to reduce your carbon footprint?**

This was an open-ended question. The responses could be largely grouped into:

- Mobility – using public transport, reducing the number of flights taken, walking, cycling and using a car less.
- Food – both eating local as well as following a vegetarian or vegan diet
- Being conscious of energy consumption, for example turning things off at home and not over-heating the house.
- Recycling and waste reduction, particularly single use plastics.

### **What obstacles do you and others encounter in trying to reduce your carbon footprint?**

Again, this enabled people to add their own text into the questionnaire. It should be noted that many people (83%) left this section blank. The responses covered the following broad areas:

- That it won't make any difference. People particularly suggested that individual actions will not have any effect. For example: *'I think something on a massive scale is needed rather than expecting everyone to do little things. One huge effort is needed'*.
- Several people indicated that they didn't know how to respond to climate change and didn't have the information to act.
- Others said that they thought climate change as an issue, or the human element of it, was not real and therefore did not require action.

### **Who do you think should take the lead on action on climate change?**

In terms of who this group thought should provide the lead on climate change, the responses were quite different:

- Central Government: 52%
- Corporations: 21%

- Individuals and family: 14%
- Councils: 3%
- Regional authority: 10%

### ***In-depth workshops***

This work was taken forward with The Democratic Society (Demsoc), who have extensive experience in working with people and communities on climate change. They ran two participatory workshops with groups across the CA area to understand their thoughts on the plan and find out people's preference for long-term engagement on #WM2041. The aim was to target different cohorts to gain and compare insight. The workshop session plan was co-designed by Young Combined Authority, WMCA and Demsoc.

Two workshops were held (a third was unable to go forward because of restrictions that came into place around social gatherings). They were with two groups of people: one in Dudley and the other in Solihull. The feedback from the workshops were as follows:

### **Dudley Young People's Group (10 young people aged 16-25)**

- Education relating to climate change could feature more strongly in the plan – letting people know what's in the plan, why actions are important and how this might affect them.
- In relation to 'Our future will respect our heritage,' young people added 'We will learn from our mistakes,' as well as 'being proud of where we live.'
- Inclusion of vulnerable groups, specifically homeless young people, was seen as important, in connection with 'taking everyone with us'.
- Getting regular updates and information out was raised, especially when things change so fast – like legislation on car use.
- Worry about having the right skills for the upcoming future workplace was expressed.
- Rewarding good behaviour, such as using public transport and recycling, was mentioned.
- A lack of confidence was cited as a potential barrier to involvement, including not knowing enough about what stage policies are at, what is planned, and the best way to be involved in this. Updates that could address are important.
- In one case it was suggested that communication about coming changes is what would be most important to some people, more than being involved in these decisions.
- There was lots of feedback on the format, content and style of the plan itself. Suggestions included shorter, easier to read versions and using diagrams and videos.
- The young people were keen that work is done on how the plan is disseminated, so more people know about it and know how they can get involved in it. It was felt that young people should be involved in developing future communication around this topic to make sure it works for this audience - for example by working with colleges.



### **Experts by Experience (EbE) Solihull CIC (6 people, mixed age groups)**

- This group highlighted not leaving anyone behind, as the most important principle in the climate change plan.
- Having information that's accessible was seen as really important - and an important aspect of democracy.
- While there was interest in the combined authority's climate change plan, it was felt that it is too long and too hard to take in. Suggestions for making it more accessible included: a spoken version with visuals, a video of someone explaining it, using colour combinations that work better for people with dyslexia, and using pictures and bullet points.
- Members of the group were interested in helping improve the accessibility of information in the future, and in helping reach a younger demographic.
- It's important to be aware of who is left out amidst changes being made. For instance, one participant couldn't use public transport and so wanted other environmentally friendly travel options.
- The direct personal impact of changes was recognised as an important concern, and something that people would like to have a say on. There was a desire to collaborate with local authorities on how to improve quality of life amidst these changes, rather than just being told about them.
- Potential barriers to involvement include not being invited to collaborate, lacking knowledge of consultations, and time constraints.
- Friends, family and carers were highlighted as trusted sources.
- There was interest in sharing views digitally as well as working together face to face – with suggested options including online surveys, social media, email or text messages. Getting involved online from home can help overcome time barriers.
- Participants wanted occasional updates on the plan, unless there were important developments. Preferred channels of communication included social media, text, email and face to face.

### ***The response from business/ organisations***

In total there were 31 responses to the WM2041 plan from the public, private and third sectors. The responses came from:

- Birmingham City Council
- Coventry City Council
- Black Country LEP
- Arup
- Cemex
- Energy Capital (a coordinated response from the Board)
- UK Green Building Council
- Friends of the Earth
- Climate Alliance Network for the West Midlands
- National Express
- Sustainability West Midlands

- Circular Economy Club
- Royal Town Planning Institute
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (who coordinated a response from: West Midlands and Oxfordshire, CBI; Arcadis; HS2 Ltd; Institution of Civil Engineers; Chartered Institute of Building; RIBA; Innovation Alliance for the West Midlands; Planning Futures; Chartered Institute of Housing; and, RICS itself).
- TDC Air Quality, Congestion and Environmental Sustainability Lead Member Reference Group
- Tyseley Energy Park
- Karakusevic Carson Architects
- Adelan
- RSPB
- Central England Quakers
- Midlands Energy Hub

There were some very detailed responses to the plan, as well as some additional suggestions included for specific areas of activity. We will work with the outputs of the submissions in developing the next steps for WM2041, over the next 12 months and in terms of building the five yearly delivery plans.

### **Response to the consultation**

The consultation exercise was split into a number of different elements, which resulted in a wide range of responses from members of the public, as well as from organisations. We asked four questions as part of the consultation:

- Was anything missing?
- What are the barriers and challenges as well as the opportunities?
- What should accountability and governance look like?
- How should we involve citizens?

The following text draws upon the responses that were made by **more than one** organisation. We will also be taking into account the other comments and suggestions that were made as we go forwards.

### ***Was anything missing?***

- Interim targets are needed on the route to taking emissions to net zero by 2041, split by priority area. Retrofit was used as the example: e.g. how many houses would we complete each year? What are the costs of doing so? What would the carbon savings be? Etc.
- Role of procurement: this needs to be strengthened through the report as it is an important way for the public sector to drive change
- More emphasis required on decarbonising energy production.
- Reversal of damage to nature and ecosystems – broadening focus from biodiversity net gain to encompass active management and conservation.
- Divestment from fossil fuels – particularly, but not exclusively, relating to the West Midlands Local Government Pension Fund. This is already in WM2041, but organisations wanted to emphasise it.

- More emphasis on embodied carbon, particularly in construction.
- More ambition around transport plans and investment into them – where is it coming from and what are the priorities?

### ***Opportunities***

- Be more explicit about links with flagship infrastructure projects, particularly how we will work to influence projects like the Commonwealth Games, Coventry City of Culture and HS2.
- Identify opportunities around hydrogen and hydrogen fuel cells.
- How to maximise the opportunities around skills in low carbon industries.

There was almost no discussion of challenges and barriers, possibly because these have been well-rehearsed in the past and were covered within the report. Partners appear confident that these are not just words, so the focus in responses was focused on enabling and accelerating change.

### ***Accountability and governance***

- There needs to be greater clarity about powers and where they sit – for example, what sits with the WMCA, what powers sit with the local authorities. The reality is that there is significant overlap in these powers, and leadership is often created by where resources are funnelled to, so is therefore subject to change. However, the five year delivery plans will be an opportunity to provide some clarity with regards to delivery in this space.
- Need to build a partnership across ALL sectors this will require us to think carefully about the governance for delivery and what it should look like.
- Need annual reporting to understand how we are progressing against a range of measures – not just carbon.

### ***Citizen engagement***

Nothing conclusive came from the organisational responses, but this has been considered in a broader sense via the wider public consultation and the work led by The Democratic Society (summarised above).

### ***Big ideas***

As well as the responses to our specific questions on the plan, and the introduction of additional actions that we might want to consider, some of the organisations came forward with strategic enhancements that should form part of the next steps:

- We should include Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions in the plan
- Clarify the role of local authorities in meeting the WM2041 target
- Be clear on financing
- Develop an action plan

### ***Additional actions***

In addition to some of the high-level ideas and thinking, there were some more specific suggestions made for inclusion into the WM2041 climate plan. The action WMCA

takes will now be bundled into the five-year delivery plans and these will be considered as part of that process.

- Ban diesel gen-sets in the city centre due to their well-known and unpopular emissions
- Do we need some type of Environment Infrastructure Levy?
- Embed environmental requirements into the Single Commissioning Framework
- Use data from the Nature Recovery Network to guide decision-making.
- Reference local assets - e.g. Black Country Geopark due to receive UNESCO approval
- Explore how to decarbonise historic buildings.
- Ban car idling – should be put in place by WMCA and enforced by local authorities
- Zero emission taxis and buses should be supported within the 5 years timescale, particularly in the cities and larger towns, in respect of CAZ requirements.
- Need more on decarbonisation of heat, localised energy and renewables
- Be clear on measures to support the supply chain
- Identify alternative fuels for larger vehicles
- Consider e-bikes – their role and how we accommodate them
- Provide training and information for planners on devolved energy, energy storage etc
- Include the role of the sharing economy

## Appendix 2: The elements of the 5-year action plans

