



West Midlands  
Combined Authority

## Environment & Energy Board

<b>Date</b>	9 December 2020
<b>Report title</b>	WM2041 Net Zero Business Pledge
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**Recommendation(s) for action or decision:**

**The Environment & Energy Board is recommended to:**

- (1) Support the development of the WM2041 Net Zero Business Pledge.
- (2) Actively engage in its promotion (once it has gone live) to local businesses.

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This paper outlines the WM2041 Net Zero Business Pledge, including how we are working with businesses and the timetable for the next steps.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Achieving net zero by 2041 will require significant collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders. The business pledge is one of the ways that we are working to build relationships with the private sector. The concept came from discussions on the economic recovery from Covid-19 at the Economic Impact Group chaired by the Mayor. A number of businesses/ business organisations came forward and offered to work with the WMCA Environment Team in developing the pledge.
- 2.2 Throughout July and August, we held 1:1 conversations with everyone that had shown an interest in the pledge. These included large businesses (BT, Severn Trent); businesses organisations (Sutton Coldfield and Solihull branches of the Chambers of Commerce; Federation of Small Businesses); Make UK; Wylde Connections; Lloyds Bank Centre for Sustainable Business at the University of Birmingham and Coventry City Council (from the green business programme). This culminated in a workshop to think through the different elements of the pledge and how we will collaborate on it. This group of organisations will become our 'founding partners'.
- 2.3 We want every business in the West Midlands to help us tackle climate change and position the region as a leader in the net zero carbon economy.
- 2.4 For businesses, commitment to the WM2041 Net Zero Business Pledge will:
1. Position your business as a leader in the net zero carbon economy
  2. Reduce your environmental impact and cut costs
  3. Prepare your business for climate change impacts
- 2.5 The format for the pledge will be:

Pledge commitment	Commit to reduce your carbon emissions to net zero by 2041
	Work with others to unlock the region's commercial potential
Pledge opportunity	Act as a net zero ambassador for the West Midlands
	Highlight challenges to delivering net zero so we can tackle them together

2.6 In addition, the WMCA will commit to:

- Set environmental emissions targets for WMCA Operations
- Use our purchasing power to drive improvements in our supply chain
- Continue to work with partners and support the delivery of programmes to catalyse low carbon activity such as our work on the [Circular Economy](#), the [Low Carbon Homes Charter](#), our [Virtual Forest](#), and the [West Midlands Innovation Programme](#)
- Use our [Five Year Plans](#) as an opportunity to engage with business and develop effective partnerships for delivery in specific areas
- Support the development of new and innovative collaboration on environmental activity and the Net Zero Business Pledge
- Develop strong links with existing business networks and trade associations in order to provide the best support possible and drive activity against the Net Zero Business Pledge.

2.7 The pledge will be hosted on the WMCA website and will provide information on the actions that business can take to work towards being carbon light and, ultimately, move towards net zero. These actions will enable both small and large businesses to be able to demonstrate a commitment to achieving net zero by 2041. We are in the process of developing a logo that will be awarded to businesses making the pledge for use in their publicity.

2.8 The WMCA Environment Team will be working with Sustainability West Midlands (SWM) on running the administration, development and marketing of the pledge. SWM have extensive experience in working with businesses of all sizes to support them on their carbon reduction transition.

2.9 The plan is to launch the pledge in January 2021. We are continuing to work with our founding partners on exact wording and design of the pledge document as well as on the webpages that will host the final version. As interest in the pledge grows it is anticipated that there will be an accompanying events programme that will sit alongside it for which we will seek additional funding/ sponsorship.

### **3. Financial Implications**

3.1 We intend to have a service level agreement in place for SWM to support the roll out and administration of the pledge. We will be seeking funding from organisations to contribute to the activities that will accompany the pledge.

### **4. Legal Implications**

4.1 There are no legal implications as part of the production of the business pledge.

### **5. Equalities Implications**

5.1 There are no equalities implications as a result of the production of the business pledge.

## **6. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 6.1 The aim of the business pledge is to increase awareness and opportunities around carbon reduction to all businesses across the West Midlands. The production of the WM2041 Net Zero Business Pledge has taken views from a wide range of organisations to ensure that it is relevant and useful for both large and small businesses. We have worked hard to ensure that the language we are using in the pledge is accessible to non-experts so that they are able to get involved.

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

- 7.1 The business pledge will cover the all local authorities (constituent and non-constituent) and LEPs of the West Midlands Combined Authority.

## **8. Other Implications**

None.

## **9. Schedule of Background Papers**

None.