

Environment & Energy Board

Date	9 September 2021
Report title	Environment & Energy Programme Update
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Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Environment & Energy Board is recommended to:

- (1) Review the environment and energy programme update and provide comment/insight into the work being taken forward.
- (2) Identify areas of particular interest where there could be potential for specific collaboration with other work and stakeholders.
- (3) Provide feedback on how members would like to be engaged or informed on specific areas of the programme, outside of any Board meetings.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the environment and energy programme, including work on net zero, natural capital and circular economy. The paper also covers an update on the enabling activity being put in place to ensure successful delivery, including behaviour change, business and community engagement, data and financing.

2. Background

- 2.1 In June 2019 the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) declared a climate emergency and the Combined Authority Board agreed a target for the region to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2041. A 'green paper' was written to indicate how the region could take action in order to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2041. This was approved by the Combined Authority Board in January 2020 for consultation until 12th March 2020.
- 2.2 The unfolding events of the pandemic resulted in the feedback from the consultation being combined into 'WM2041: a programme for implementing an environmental recovery' which was approved by the CA Board in June 2020, outlining the priority actions for a 'green recovery' from Covid-19 including broader environment and energy work on natural capital and the circular economy.
- 2.3 Since the approval of that paper the environment and energy programme has developed into the following areas, with corresponding plans or strategies that shape the delivery:
- **Climate change** – decarbonising our economy and society to net zero by 2041 with the first Five Year Plan approved by the WMCA Board in March 2021.
 - **Energy** - leading on energy devolution, retrofit and energy infrastructure.
 - **Natural environment** – protecting, restoring and enhancing our green spaces, and improving our air and water quality.
 - **Circular economy** – designing out waste from our economy and keeping products and materials at their highest value.
- 2.4 Updates for the relevant environment and energy projects and actions that support delivery of the above are provided within this programme update, as well as the cross-cutting activity that includes:
- Programmes to support behaviour change; this was something that people asked for support with as part of the WM2041 consultation.
 - Work with business, particularly the development of a WM Net Zero Business Pledge launched in March.
- 2.5 The environment and energy governance arrangements are also covered including how WMCA is working closely with the constituent local authorities through a:
- Net Zero Officers Group.
 - Net Zero Directors Group.
 - Natural Capital Officers Group.
- 2.6 Other programme or project specific groups also meet to ensure consistent and effective input from stakeholders across the region.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The financial implications will emerge on a project-by-project basis and there are no implications as a result of the programme update.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no specific legal implications for the programme as a whole. Legal implications will be understood as part of the programme delivery for each area.

5. Equalities Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific equalities implications from this report – these will be assessed as project plans and business cases are progressed in more detail.

6. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 6.1 We see the delivery of our environment and energy programme as being very closely tied to the WMCA inclusive growth agenda and it will form a key part of the projects and programmes developed. Ensuring the climate change transition is fair and provides opportunities and improvements in quality of life for people across the West Midlands is a fundamental part of our approach to delivery.

7. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 7.1 The focus of much of the work will be on the 7 constituent authorities, but there will be some programmes where we will make links with non-constituent members, for example, around natural capital and other natural cross-boundary issues.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Environment and Energy Programme Update