

Environment and Energy Board

Date	9 th March 2022
Report title	Environment Behaviour Change Update
Portfolio Lead	Councillor Ian Courts - Environment, Energy & HS2
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Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Environment and Energy Board is recommended to:

- a) Note the opportunity and resources available for councillors through Involve's Local Climate Engagement Programme on participatory and deliberative public engagement.
- b) Note Commonwealth Games Carbon Literacy training for volunteers, citizens and businesses across the region.
- c) Consider, in your role as local leaders, how you could engage in future behaviour change campaigns and support the communications activity.

1. Purpose

This paper provides a progress update on delivery of the behaviour change programme relating to the Environment and Energy Board remit, covering citizen engagement as well as forthcoming and future campaigns.

2. Background

- 2.1 In May 2021, the Behaviour Insights Team (BIT) were commissioned to create a strategy and plan for how WMCA could effectively communicate ambitions and positively influence people's behaviour to achieve the region's net zero by 2041 goal, whilst ensuring we create a more equal, prosperous region.
- 2.2 In the research, BIT used different framings within environment communications to understand what messaging resonates the most with the public. Whilst all framings worked well, BIT recommended environmental communications should be kept

simple wherever possible. In addition, they identified that aligning messaging on climate change with co-benefits is a more successful way of promoting behaviour change. This is particularly the case when benefits can be identified as also improving health.

- 2.3 In addition to understanding how to frame messages, BIT surveyed almost 2,000 people across the region to understand the most effective messaging for our communications. The most popular strapline that emerged from this research was 'West Midlands Greener Together'. In response to the BIT work, "West Midlands Greener Together" branding guidelines have been developed and internal presentation templates are now being used by the Energy & Environment teams. WMCA environment campaigns have adopted the logo with assets developed to increase visibility of the brand. A dissemination plan is being developed to see the logo adopted by willing organisations across the region, to build a network of local partners who are working together on ensuring the region achieves net zero by 2041.
- 2.4 It is key to note that communications alone will have a limited impact on scaled and sustained behaviour change. Communication campaigns should be implemented in line with specific behaviour change interventions and plans, which were identified by BIT and which we have built on. The three areas of focus that their work initially pointed to were campaigns on the natural environment, sustainable food and home retrofit (outlined in the sections below).
- 2.5 BIT provided behaviour change frameworks to support implementing programmes and campaigns. Their EAST framework (make it easy, attractive, social and timely) are four simple principles for applying behaviour insights which are based on their own work and academic literature. The EAST framework has been used to develop the Right Tree Right Place campaign the WMCA launched in February 2022 and will be used, alongside other frameworks to plan future work.

Natural Environment Campaign

- 2.6 **Right Tree Right Place.** Within the Natural Environment Plan, published in September 2021, the CA committed to running a 'Right Tree, Right Place' campaign to support climate mitigation and adaptation and nature recovery across the region. The principles of 'right tree right place' were published on the Virtual Forest website.
- 2.7 The campaign launched on Monday 21st February, focusing on engaging the public to plant trees in their gardens or community spaces and register these on the Virtual Forest. To encourage this, three tree giveaways were organised to give away trees for gardens or community spaces;
- i. Monday 21st – joined the University of Birmingham half term activities called 'Secret Life of Trees' at The Exchange alongside Birmingham Tree People. The Mayor attended to support handing out 100 Rowan, Crab Apple and Hazel trees to the public.
 - ii. Wednesday 23rd – joined the City of Wolverhampton Council at Springvale Park to hand out 150 trees to the public. The Environment Team joined the

rangers and the Woodland Trust to help plant 1000 trees secured through the Emergency Tree Fund.

- iii. Thursday 24th – joined Coventry City Council park rangers at Allesley park to giveaway 150 trees to the public, joining the ranger's half term children activities.

- 2.8 All 400 trees were claimed with numbers on the Virtual Forest rising to 71,000. The giveaways were a trial to see what type of activity was the most popular, and lessons from these giveaways will help to shape the campaign for the 2022-23 tree planting season. Next season will focus on engaging educational institutions and businesses across all authorities in the WMCA area.
- 2.9 As well as the giveaways, a 'Choosing and Planting Trees' guidance document was created to help guide people in the best types of trees to plant in their gardens as well as how to plant and care for their trees. The guidance document is available to download on the [Virtual Forest website](#).

Natural Environment Awards

- 2.10 The awards will aim to showcase good practice across the region to enhance and protect the natural environment. Through the awards, we want to promote the creation of wildlife corridors and improvement of our natural corridors (both green and blue) whilst directing applications involving tree planting, to register these on the Virtual Forest. The awards will be open for nominations between May – June with winners and highly commended organisations announced in September each year by the Mayor of the West Midlands. We will work with relevant organisations to co-sponsor the following award categories:

Community – a community group/charity who deserve recognition for continued and ongoing effort to improve the natural environment. Applications must provide evidence of impact, how you engaged with the local community and ongoing maintenance of your project.

Businesses - a business (including SME's) who deserve recognition for continued and ongoing effort to improve the natural environment. Applications must provide evidence of impact, and of good leadership/championing practice in engaging and inspiring others within the sector as well as ongoing maintenance of your project.

Local Authorities - a local authority who deserve recognition for continued and ongoing effort to improve the natural environment. Applications must provide evidence of impact, stakeholders involved and schedule of maintenance. All local authorities within the West Midlands are encouraged to apply.

Education - a nursery, school, college or university who deserve recognition for continued and ongoing effort to improve the natural environment. Applications must provide evidence of impact, engagement with pupils and/or parents and of good leadership/championing practice in engaging and inspiring others.

Sustainable Food Campaign

- 2.11 The WMCA Environment Team secured £15k from DCMS to trial a behaviour change approach to encouraging sustainable food consumption at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games (CWG). The WMCA is working closely with the Sustainability Team at the CWG Organising Committee to design interventions that will reduce carbon emissions and increase sustainable food options bought at the Games.
- 2.12 Various interventions are being explored such as carbon labelling menus, as used by COP26 caterers, changing language on menus to avoid 'meat-free' and 'vegan' and instead promoting food provenance and taste, and incentivising sustainable options through meal deals and 'athletes' choice'. Interventions have been decided upon through desktop research and conversations with University of Birmingham Economics Professor, Dr Johannes Lohse, to understand the potential impact interventions will have at the CWG. The research will be shared with catering companies/venues across the region, to show which interventions were impactful in encouraging consumption of sustainable food options and the findings can support future events in the region in delivering sustainable food choices.
- 2.13 Catering contracts were awarded in January 2022, and WMCA presented at the CWG catering contractor workshop on 14th February to present the initiatives we are keen to trial in partnership with the caterers. Exploratory meetings are now planned with Amadeus (NEC caterers), Edgbaston Stadium caterers and Russell Partnership (University of Birmingham caterers).

Home Retrofit Campaign

- 2.14 The WMCA Energy Capital Team is developing a significant programme of work to support retrofit across all communities in the West Midlands, recognising the challenges of addressing fuel poverty and improving the home energy efficiency of low-income households. This work is being led by the SMART Hub.
- 2.15 In addition to this, retrofit will also need to work with the 'able to pay' and the work that the Behavioural Insights Team produced included an implementation plan to design a retrofit communication campaign aimed at homeowners with disposable income. Working with colleagues in Energy Capital, this campaign is currently being developed into a "Is your home fit for a heat pump?" campaign as well as a campaign to encourage homeowners to obtain an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).
- 2.16 "Is your home fit for a heat pump?" campaign will launch before April 1st when the government opens the Clean Heat Grant that aims to help existing small domestic buildings transition to low carbon heating systems for heating their homes. To ensure home occupiers are informed on the right retrofit choice for their home, the information campaign will launch to detail what is needed to install a heatpump and

what retrofit measures you will need to ensure your heatpump is efficient and householders aren't left with high energy bills.

- 2.17 EPCs contain information about a property's energy use and typical bill costs and recommendations about how to reduce energy use and save money. EPC's are valid for 10 years and are needed when renting and selling your home. This information campaign will promote the benefits of obtaining an EPC and is a low-cost solution to receiving advice on how to reduce energy use in the home, which will be a topical campaign in the current energy crisis.
- 2.18 Both campaigns are currently being developed and additional funding/ partnerships will be sought to lend credibility to the campaigns. Will explore possible collaborations with BIT to ensure the campaign is underpinned by behavioural science and communicated with the right approach.

Citizen Engagement

- 2.19 **Net Zero Citizens Panel.** A Citizens Panel is being formed to allow the public to co-design and co-produce elements of the developing Environment Team and Energy Capital work. Following on from soft market testing conducted in November 2021, an invitation to tender is being developed to appoint public participation specialists to create the panel. The appointed specialist would be required to develop a clear and strategic programme that will bring a representative group of people from across the West Midlands together to make decisions and influence policies and interventions to achieve our net zero targets.
A budget of £150k has been allocated to support this work over two years.
- 2.20 **West Midlands Greener Together Community Forum.** The purpose of the Forum is to create a space for environmental NGOs, climate activities, community groups, the public and others from across the region to discuss the route to net zero and inspire collaboration. The Forum will provide an open and inclusive platform for the sharing of information which is relevant to the region's journey to net zero as well as providing a space for the WMCA and other organisations to update one another and the wider community on the work being undertaken to achieve these targets.
- 2.21 The first meeting will be held on Thursday 31st March 6-8pm online, with future meetings taking a hybrid approach and held in accessible venues across the region. Ed Cox (WMCA Director of Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform) will take the role as co-chair and to ensure the Forum is representative of the region. At the first meeting, a second co-chair will be nominated and appointed. Terms of Reference for the Forum have been drafted and shared with local climate groups and environmental NGOs for comment and the TORs will be agreed upon at the first meeting.
- 2.22 **Carbon Literacy for the Commonwealth Games.** As part of creating a legacy from the games, WMCA in partnership with the CWG Organising Committee's Sustainability Team is creating Carbon Literacy training for volunteers, citizens and businesses within the West Midlands. The objective of the training, in line with

[Carbon Literacy Project](#) (CLP) guidelines is to enable people to understand and confidently communicate the climate emergency. Also, to identify what actions both as part of a group or organisation and as individuals they can take to tackle the emergency. Participants will be required to complete 8 hours of learning, through online modules, documentaries and an online participation workshop in order to gain official CLP accreditation.

- 2.23 Funding has been secured from BEIS, the CWG Organising Committee and WMCA and will allow approximately 5000 participants to gain accreditation. The training shall be launched in May 2022 to the CWG volunteers and a post-games plan shall be in place by July 2022 to ensure the training is delivered to citizens across the region.
- 2.24 **Local Climate Engagement Programme (LCE).** WMCA applied and has been successful in being accepted onto [Involve's LCE programme](#), designed to support local authorities and partnerships to plan, commission and deliver high quality public engagement with climate decision-making, in a way the benefits both WMCA and the local population. WMCA are in the coaching group, where 5 officers will join other local authorities in an intensive training course and mentoring group.
- 2.25 The programme includes a 2-hour self-guided resource for councillors to support them to think through how participatory and deliberative public engagement relates to their role. Self-guided learning resources are also available for the Senior Leadership Team and Senior Managers. WMCA will share the resources with the Board once they are available, as well as plan communications activity to ensure that everyone who could benefit from the course is aware of it.

Future campaigns

- 2.26 In addition to the development of the campaigns outlined above, it is anticipated that future campaigns will include:
- **Air quality** - the decision to develop a regional air quality framework was approved by the February Combined Authority Board. Interventions identified had a number linked to behaviour change and the CA will work with local authority partners to understand where regional campaigns may be beneficial.
 - **Sustainable food** – building on the outcomes of the CWG work, plans are to develop a programme of work associated with ensuring sustainable food is affordable, accessible and encouraged across the region. The CA will work with local partners to understand current campaigns, such as Birmingham City Councils Food Trails project and support WMCA's circular economy workstream.
 - **Citizen survey** – to understand the impacts of the Energy & Environment teams work, an annual attitudes survey will be conducted to understand how the CA's work is influencing the public's knowledge and attitudes towards addressing the climate emergency. Possibility to use the BIT survey as a baseline and to continue to understand public perception of the CA's current and future work.
 - **Transport for West Midlands (TfWM)** – behaviour change is a priority in the Local Transport Plan, particularly around demand reduction and a shift to sustainable forms of transport. Early conversations are being had with TfWM to discuss shaping

the CA's approach to behaviour change by setting aims and objectives and linking with a wider piece of work on citizen engagement.

- **Support for adaptation measures** – these might include activities to support nature-based solutions for making places and communities more resilient, e.g. how to plant gardens to reduce flooding (rain gardens).

3. Financial Implications

There are no finance implications as a result of this paper. Any financial implications will be considered on a project-by-project basis, with funding and approval sought through the appropriate channel/authority.

4. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications as a result of this paper. Any legal implications will be considered on a project-by-project basis.

5. Equalities Implications (*)

The work that has been undertaken and planned to address behaviour change is central to the addressing the challenges related to climate change; as achieving net zero requires significant behaviour change. However, we have been clear from the outset that WM2041 must also have significant social and economic benefits for the region. The work that we will be taking forward to address these issues will be driven by behaviour change principles and data available to us, ensuring interventions consider equalities issues in their design and therefore constructed and targeted appropriately and equitably.

6. Inclusive Growth Implications

This report links to a number of the WMCA's eight inclusive growth priorities, which are identified as 'a catalyst for improved and sustained outcomes for people place, co-designed with partners and beneficiaries'. Delivering a behaviour change programme of work will support outcomes around:

- reduction of health inequalities;
- addressing climate resilience through the promotion of nature-based solution to dealing with climate change;
- Improving education and learning around the climate emergency;
- supporting the principle of powerful communities through engaging in deliberative democracy to help citizens feel influential; and,
- equality (reducing the numbers of people living in deprivation, which includes lifting people out of 'green deprivation' and fuel poverty).

7. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

The behaviour change programme of work covers all local authorities of the West Midlands and the delivery will also involve non-constituent members, where appropriate.

8. Other Implications

None.

9. Schedule of Background Papers

None