

**WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY COMMITTEE &  
WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT COMMITTEE**

**ITEM 22**

**19 JUNE 2020**

**REPORT SUMMARY SHEET**

**UPDATE ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLANNING**

**Purpose**

This report provides an update on climate emergency planning, including progress towards developing a Climate Emergency Action Plan.

**Summary**

In July 2019, the West of England Combined Authority Committee agreed an action to work up the options and actions for delivering carbon neutrality by 2030.

This report provides an update on the work currently underway to develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan and details how the climate emergency is factored into the authority's planning for Covid-19 recovery.

To ensure full engagement with officers and politicians on the emerging Climate Emergency Action Plan, the Plan will be submitted to the October committees. This will ensure effective engagement with core officers, including transport, business and skills officers, initially diverted onto Covid-19 crisis management and members at every stage of the work. It will also ensure that the work set out in this report will provide up to date data and help to inform the Covid-19 recovery planning process, ensuring that climate emergency ambitions are properly integrated.

**Impact of Covid-19 pandemic**

The Combined Authority has actively reviewed its key activities and work programme to reflect changing priorities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific issues relating to the Covid-19 situation that impact on or are addressed through this report are as follows:

Work on COVID-19 recovery planning is underway, steered by the West of England Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce. The aim of the Taskforce is to address the adverse impacts of the Covid-19 outbreak and to drive economic recovery that reflects the region's priorities of clean and inclusive growth.

This work offers the opportunity to consider how we can better integrate low-carbon solutions within our plans for economic recovery in a way that boosts growth and puts the region on a firm long-term low carbon footing. The region is already a low carbon market leader and has created a low carbon sector sub-group to form part of the Covid-19 recovery taskforce in recognition of this; recovery plans should build on these strengths and give thought to how we can create growth and jobs within the low carbon, renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors.

The changes created by lock-down, such as increased working at home, reduced car travel and more cycling and walking have demonstrated that the changes needed to achieve a low-

carbon future can be less dramatic and more publicly palatable than previously thought. This creates an opportunity to consider how we can maximise on this shift in public behaviour to deliver plans and projects that reduce carbon emissions such as plans that encourage more cycling and walking.

The work set out in this report will provide up to date data and help to inform the Covid-19 recovery planning process, ensuring our climate emergency ambitions are properly integrated through this approach.

### **Recommendations**

The **WECA Committee** is asked to note this update report on climate emergency planning and development of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The **Joint Committee** is asked to note this update report on climate emergency planning.

**Contact officer:** Jessica Lee

**Position:** Head of Strategy & Policy

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**REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY  
COMMITTEE / JOINT COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 19 June 2020**

**REPORT TITLE: Update on climate emergency planning**

**DIRECTOR: JESSICA LEE, HEAD OF STRATEGY & POLICY**

**AUTHOR: HELEN EDELSTYN, SENIOR POLICY MANAGER**

#### **Purpose of Report**

This report provides an update on climate emergency planning, including progress towards developing a Climate Emergency Action Plan.

#### **Recommendation**

The **WECA committee** is asked to note this update report on climate emergency planning and development of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The **Joint Committee** is asked to note this update report on climate emergency planning.

#### **Background / Issues for Consideration**

##### **Context**

In July 2019 the West of England Combined Authority Committee agreed to develop an action to plan to work up the options and actions for delivering carbon neutrality by 2030.

This report provides an update on the work currently underway to develop a CE Action Plan and details how the climate emergency is factored into our planning for Covid-19 recovery.

To ensure full engagement with officers and politicians on the emerging CE Action Plan the Plan will be submitted to October Committees. This is an ambitious timeframe that makes sure that we can effectively engage with core officers, including transport, business and skills officers, initially diverted onto COVID-19 crisis management and politicians at every stage of the work. It will also ensure that the work set out in this report will provide up to date data and help to inform the Covid19 recovery planning process; ensuring our climate emergency ambitions are properly integrated.

#### **Action taken since January Committee**

At the same time as developing the CE Action Plan work continues to accelerate on existing carbon reduction programmes and initiatives. Since January WECA has:

Accelerating the shift to low carbon transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued to tackle congestion and improve public transport options, encouraging people to leave their cars at home through the adoption of JLTP4, consultation on bus strategy and LCWIP improvements</li> <li>Secured investment for future of public transport through Future Transport Zone funding from DFT</li> </ul>
Improving our buildings & placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since 2019, supported 54 SMEs to receive a free energy survey as part of the Green Business Grant Scheme</li> <li>Granted a total of £165,000 to 20 SMES at an average grant value of £7,500 to help them reduce their emissions and reduce their energy bills</li> <li>Started to develop the framework for the Spatial Development Strategy</li> </ul>
Enabling clean smart affordable energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Granted £500k through the Local Energy Scheme to a community led onshore wind turbine project based in Avonmouth (subject to planning permission)</li> <li>The 4.2 megawatt (MW) turbine will save 5.8k tCO<sub>2</sub>e annually and over 147k tCO<sub>2</sub>e during its 25 year lifetime.</li> </ul>
Fostering Clean Growth & Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued to offer businesses across the region support to grow and innovate through the Growth Hub and delivery of the Green Business Grants as set out above</li> <li>Created a low carbon sector group to help inform Covid-19 recovery</li> </ul>
Protecting, preserving & enhancing the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported the development of a West of England Green Infrastructure Strategy; promoting the role of the natural environment in climate adaptation</li> </ul>
Leading the way as a public sector organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated the Terms of Reference for boards and committees to ensure that climate change is at the heart of our decision-making process</li> <li>Established a Covid-19 Economic Recovery Taskforce, including a low carbon sector group to ensure climate change and green growth is at the heart of the West of England's recovery plans</li> </ul>

We also continue to support the innovative small and large businesses based in the region, to go further and faster to develop the technologies to help tackle climate change on a global scale. The strong history of engineering and innovation within the West of England means that the region is a low carbon market leader and well placed to be at the forefront of innovation, design, manufacture and export of low carbon goods and services. Airbus, and the aerospace industry based in the north of Bristol, are already leading a radical low carbon design approach to the future manufacture of aircraft wings that will have global demand. The global low carbon market is expected to grow amongst small, medium and large businesses. The West of England is well placed to carve out a significant share of this expanding market.

### **Covid-19 recovery planning**

Work on COVID-19 recovery planning is underway, steered by the West of England Regional Recovery Taskforce. The aim of the Taskforce is to address the adverse impacts of the Covid-19 outbreak and to drive economic recovery that reflects the regions priorities of clean and inclusive growth.

This work offers the opportunity to consider how we can better integrate low-carbon solutions within our plans for economic recovery in a way that boosts growth and puts the region on a firm long-term low carbon footing. The region is already a low carbon market leader and has created a low carbon sector subgroup to form part of the Covid-19 recovery taskforce in recognition of this; recovery plans should build on these strengths and give thought to how we can create growth and jobs within the low carbon, renewable energy, energy efficiency sectors.

The changes created by lock-down, such as increased working at home, reduced car travel and more cycling and walking, have demonstrated that the changes needed to achieve a low-carbon future, can be less dramatic and more publicly palatable than previously thought. This creates an opportunity to consider how we can maximise on this shift in public behaviour to deliver plans and projects that reduce carbon emissions such as plans that encourage more cycling and walking.

The work set out in this report will provide up to date data and help to inform the COVID19 recovery planning process; ensuring our climate emergency ambitions are properly integrated.

### **Engagement**

WECA officers will continue to work in partnership with UA officers throughout the development of the CE Action Plan. This includes the Sustainability Officers Group and Heads of Planning; this approach should ensure a co-produced plan that represents the views of the region. Further details on what form this engagement will take is set out in more detail in following sections of this report and builds upon on the engagement that has already taken place including engagement on the commissioning brief for the regional evidence base.

### **The CE Action Plan**

The Action Plan will set a series of high-level principles to cut emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. These principles will provide clear regional direction and allow

flexibility in terms of local delivery. The Action Plan will also provide a basis for strategic discussions with Government on funding, regulation and delivery. This approach respects that regional and local actors will have different ambitions and approaches, whilst creating a space to find innovative solutions together.

The CE Action Plan will have a broad scope, taking both adaptation and mitigation into account. Reducing our emissions by acting on the causes of climate change (e.g. decarbonising transport, building zero carbon homes and increasing the sources of clean energy) is more commonly known as mitigation. However, addressing the emissions that cause climate change will not be enough. The Action Plan will also consider how we can adapt and act to manage the risks of climate change impact. This will include how we manage and use our natural habitat and environment.

The CE Action Plan will set out action under the following six high-level principle areas, addressing both how the region will reduce emissions and work towards the adaptation and mitigation of the effects of climate change.

1. Accelerating the shift to low carbon transport
2. Improving our buildings & placemaking
3. Enabling clean smart affordable energy
4. Fostering Clean Growth & Innovation
5. Protecting, preserving & enhancing the environment
6. Leading the way as a public sector organisation

## **Developing the evidence**

In line with best practice, we are taking a robust evidence-based approach to developing the Action Plan. To support this approach, we have commissioned a contractor to work alongside us to build upon the work already done by UAs and prepare a full regional evidence base. This evidence-based approach will ensure our CE Plan is credible and built upon up to date knowledge and expertise.

The commissioning of this piece of work brings additional capacity, expertise and added value allowing us to develop a complete regional picture and support officers to develop the options for the best next steps for delivering carbon neutrality.

The brief for the commission was drawn with input from the Unitary Authorities through the Infrastructure Officer Board and Sustainability Officers, all of whom were supportive of the approach and timetable for the work. It was commissioned using WECA's Public Services Framework, and WSP with Regen having been appointed to undertake the work.

Both WSP and Regen are industry leaders in their respective fields. Both companies bring independent expert advice and insight on all aspects of the climate emergency including technical expertise, industry research and policy knowledge that they will bring to this piece of work. WSP also bring experience of working at a regional level, having worked with Liverpool City Region to help inform their climate emergency action plan.

The commissioning brief includes a 2 phased approach to the work to ensure that officers and politicians are content and supportive of the work as it progresses.

## **Phase one – summary of existing analysis:**

There is existing evidence from across the UAs providing a baseline of emissions and indicative actions or strategies to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. However, different

methodologies have been used and each UA is at a slightly different stage of development in their climate emergency response. Both BANES and Bristol have launched their evidence base and action plans and are beginning to engage external stakeholders and businesses in this (though some of this work has been paused as a result of the ongoing covid-19 pandemic). There is a need to develop a regional picture that brings together the work at UA level; providing a consistent baseline of regional emissions and summary of action required to become carbon neutral by 2030.

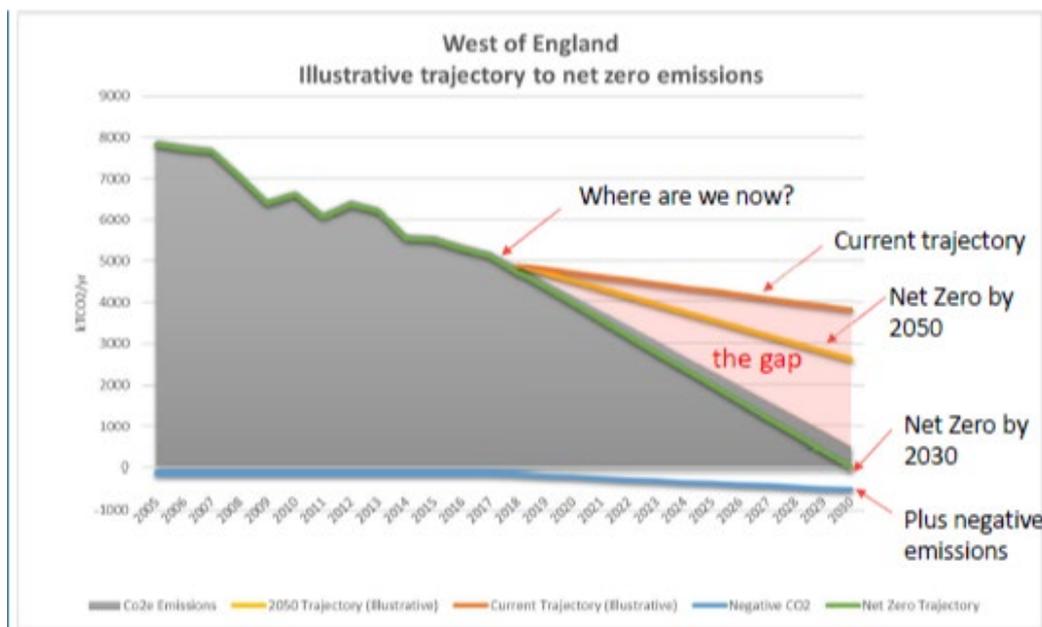
For the first phase of work, the contractor will bring together the evidence available to show the regional picture and the actions already identified across the region to become carbon neutral by 2030. This will provide a consistent and detailed evidence base across the region that is currently missing due to the different approaches taken by the UAs and help inform WECA's activity. The existing evidence available includes:

- One City Strategy & supporting evidence
- BANES – Climate Emergency Progress Report, Climate Emergency Study Discussion Pack, Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan
- South Gloucestershire – carbon baseline
- North Somerset – Climate emergency strategy & action plan
- WECA – Energy Strategy evidence base

The final output for this phase will provide WECA with a complete summary of base line emissions for the whole region.

### Summary of Phase One Evidence

The summary findings from the phase one evidence review I are in draft format and are being finalised by WECA and UA officers. Drawing from UA evidence and national data sources, the draft phase one report provides a consistent evidence base across the region.



In 2017, the West of England emitted 5,320kt of Carbon. This represents a 34% reduction since 2005.

A key outcome of the phase 2 work will be to test and validate this trajectory and to identify a set of actions that the region can take that bridge the gap and help accelerate UA CE commitments. To inform this the draft phase one work has reviewed existing commitments made by UAs and highlighted areas of commonality; providing the framework for WECA action that supports, helps accelerate and provides additional value. The table below shows a short summary of commonality:

High-level principles	Common regional priorities
<b>Fostering Clean Growth &amp; Innovation</b>	Support the region's strengths in research & development and green business innovation
<b>Accelerating the shift to low carbon transport</b>	Significant reduction in transport emissions and modal shift towards public and active travel.
<b>Improving our buildings &amp; placemaking</b>	Significant reduction in emissions from homes and buildings, with a particular focus on retrofit.
<b>Enabling clean smart affordable energy</b>	Increase the generation of low carbon energy in the region
<b>Protecting, preserving &amp; enhancing the environment</b>	Ensure the region is resilient to climate change by improving green infrastructure.
<b>Leading the way as a public sector organisation</b>	Use public sector influence to re-enforce positive change.

## Phase 2: Developing the options for action and identifying the barriers and constraints

This next phase of the work will be led by politicians ensuring that CE action planning is politically led and agreed. The first step of this phase will be to develop and agree with politicians a set of criteria to assess a long list and short list of actions. This criterion will include factors that determine the success and impact of actions, such as funding availability, the regulatory framework and carbon / mitigation impact.

The next step of this phase will be the identification of a long list of options for action across the 6 high-level principle areas. This work will be developed through a series of thematic workshops involving senior officers leading on transport, housing and planning, business and skills and investment. This approach will ensure that the package of options for political consideration and agreement fully considers other commitments and work already underway to identify a set of best next steps for achieving carbon neutrality.

Mayors and leaders will then be asked to consider and assess the long list of actions against the agreed criteria to establish a short list. This process will ensure that all shortlisted actions are politically, financially and legally feasible. This work with Mayors and Leaders will take place in a workshop format and during the weekly calls already in diaries.

Whilst the exact pathway to carbon neutrality cannot be fully known at this time, the below table provides several examples of the sorts of actions that will be considered throughout phase 2 against each high-level principle.

High-level principles	Examples
<b>Fostering Clean Growth &amp; Innovation</b>	Use skills initiatives such as AEB to increase the number of people with green skills (e.g. home retrofitting, clean tech, green finance, renewable energy) within the

	<p>region to facilitate the transition to zero carbon</p> <p>Strengthen enterprise support and innovation provision to help businesses understand their carbon footprints; implement mitigation activities and zero-carbon innovation; and develop the region's low carbon supply chain.</p>
<b>Accelerating the shift to low carbon transport</b>	<p>Using our planning transport levers (Interim JLTP4, Bus Strategy, LCWIP) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work towards decarbonising the public transport system</li> <li>• Facilitate a modal shift towards public transport, walking and cycling.</li> <li>• Sustainable transport input to strategic planning for housing and employment and complementary policies.</li> <li>• Encourage reduced tailpipe emissions.</li> <li>• Decarbonise freight distribution including encouraging shift from road freight to rail/water.</li> <li>• Consider developing an agreed carbon assessment methodology for transport schemes and new developments</li> </ul>
<b>Improving our buildings &amp; placemaking</b>	<p>Integrating climate resilience into new development including exploring the potential for a zero carbon homes standard, considering solution for renewable energy supply and integrating good quality design that incorporates GI within new development and working with UAs to increase the opportunities for retrofit</p> <p>Upscale Green Business Support to support more small &amp; medium sized businesses</p>
<b>Enabling clean smart affordable energy</b>	<p>Upscale the Low Carbon Challenge Fund Local Energy Scheme and the Rural Community Energy Fund to encourage more renewable energy within the region</p> <p>Develop a strategic evidence base to support renewables development.</p>
<b>Protecting, preserving &amp; enhancing the environment</b>	<p>Publishing and continuing to support the WOE Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy that will evidence the multi-benefits of GI, including climate change adaptation, across the West of England, exploring opportunities to deliver GI within new and existing projects, plans and programmes.</p>

<p><b>Leading the way as a public sector organisation</b></p>	<p>Provide political leadership in lobbying government for additional funding &amp; legislative powers for:</p> <p>Changes to National Grid to improve grid capacity and improve its ability to incorporate renewable energy that is locally generated</p> <p>New planning powers and funding to increase the amount of renewable energy within developments.</p>
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### Consultation

3 No statutory consultation is required as part of this work.

### Public Sector Equality Duties

4 The public sector equality duty created under the Equality Act 2010 means that public authorities must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

4.1 The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

4.2 The general equality duty therefore requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.

### Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate:

In July 2019, the WECA committee allocated £250,000 towards climate emergency actions. January 2020 committee agreed that authority for this sum be delegated to WECA CEX in consultation with the UA CEXs and in line with CE and Energy Strategy

objectives. Phase 1 and 2 of the analysis have already been approved by CEXs and will be funded from the £250,000 CE budget.

Advice given by: Malcolm Coe, Director of Investment and Corporate Services

**Legal Implications:** None specific to this report.

Advice given by: Shahzia Daya, Director of Legal Services

### **Climate Change Implications**

On 19 July 2019, the West of England Combined Authority declared a climate emergency, recognizing the huge significance of climate change and its impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of the region's residents. The Combined Authority is committed to taking climate change considerations fully into account as an integral part of its governance and decision making process.

Each report/proposal submitted for Combined Authority / Joint Committee approval is assessed in terms of the following:

Will the proposal impact positively or negatively on:

- \* The emission of climate changing gases?
- \* The region's resilience to the effects of climate change?
- \* Consumption of non-renewable resources?
- \* Pollution to land, water or air?

Particular projects will also be subject to more detailed environmental assessment/consideration as necessary as part of their detailed project-specific management arrangements

*Taking the above specifically into account, please comment on any climate change implications arising as a result of this report, and include details of any mitigation:*

This report provides an overview of WECA's developing response to the climate emergency declaration and ambition for carbon neutrality by 2030. It provides an update on the progress made since the January committee and towards the development of the of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

In developing a Climate Emergency Action Plan, WECA will seek to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change across the six different principles outlined in the paper.

### **Land/property Implications**

There are no direct land/property implications arising from this report.

Climate change is likely to have significant on going implications for both land and property, and decisions about how we manage and use these assets. As the Climate Emergency Action Plan is developed, including specific actions and projects for investment, WECA will further review any land and property implications.

Advice given by: David Carter, Director of Infrastructure

**Human Resources Implications:**

11 There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report.

Climate change could have on going implications for human resources and decisions about how we manage our staff. As the Climate Emergency Action Plan is developed, including specific actions and projects for investment, WECA will further review any human resources implications.

Advice given by: Alex Holly, Head of HR

**West of England Combined Authority Contact:**

Any person seeking background information relating to this item should seek the assistance of the contact officer for the meeting who is Ian Hird / Tim Milgate on 07436 600313; or by writing to West of England Combined Authority, 3 Rivergate, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EW; email: [democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk)

Appendix One: Levers of Responsibility



