

**West of England Local Enterprise Partnership
Board meeting – 1 October 2020**

CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Purpose of the report

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 the draft Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The plan has been developed with input from representatives from our unitary authority partners, who have given their time, knowledge, expertise and skills to inform its content through a series of workshops. We will continue this co-production approach as we implement the actions in this plan.

We have also worked closely with business and community groups, through the low carbon sector group, to understand their needs and how WECA can help foster green innovation and invest in the skills needed to make sure our region takes advantage of the economic benefits of clean growth.

LEP Board is asked to

- Note the draft climate emergency action plan in advance of the 9 October meetings of the WECA Committee and West of England Joint Committee.
- Recognising that addressing the climate change emergency will require action from a wide range of partners across the region, consider the role the LEP Board can play in focusing and coordinating that activity. Considering:
 - actions Board members organisations can take;
 - the Board's role in stimulating, and providing a focus for activity both between Board members organisations and with the wider business community;
 - the Board's role in identifying and championing best practice examples and low carbon innovation;
 - the role the Board wants to take in the implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan including whether the Board wishes to a group / champion to take forward work in this area.

Background

Context

Climate change poses a clear and serious threat, affecting our future environment and prosperity of our region. The IPCC's recommendations are clear – limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees (rather than 2 degrees) between now and 2052 will significantly reduce the effects of global warming.

Government has recognised this, and the UK is the first country to commit to becoming net carbon zero by 2050. WECA has gone further than this, committing to carbon neutrality by 2030. This is in line with our partner Unitary Authorities.

WECA is committed to playing our role in influencing and supporting local action through the funding and strategic policy decisions we make, but we do not have the powers or funding to deliver this goal on our own. We will need to work in partnership nationally, regionally and locally to accelerate our journey towards net zero carbon future. This draft action plan sets out the actions WECA will take, within our powers, to support the rapid delivery of this climate emergency goal for the West of England.

The plan is not intended to be fixed, nor can it predict an absolute pathway to carbon neutrality. Over the next few years there will be decisions nationally on the future of our energy production and supply, as well as investment in new green fuels; these decisions by Government will influence our ability to reach our climate emergency goal regionally. By focusing our efforts on the steps, we can take now and over the next five years, to support and enhance local delivery we are putting the West of England on the pathway towards net zero carbon and are not constrained by the big and structural decisions Government needs to take to make our net zero carbon future possible.

The diagram below sets out how responsibility lies between the stakeholders.



Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

The climate emergency action plan will be a key part of our Covid-19 recovery plan. It is about supporting our climate emergency goal alongside securing our economic future following the covid-19 outbreak. It will be a part of a set of plans for the region, that stem from our Local Industrial Strategy, and take the ambitious action needed to deliver clean and inclusive economic growth.

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 towards the decarbonisation of the transport system and increase cycling and walking and the use of public transport; building on positive behaviour change following the covid-19 lockdown period
- Help business and local people benefit from growth in the green economy; maximising government green recovery investment in the region and supporting our businesses to build back better