

**Birmingham Science City Innovative Low Carbon Working Group (ILCWG)
 Notes from 6 December 2017 meeting**

In attendance:

Name	Initials	Organisation
Alan Carr	AC	Birmingham Science City / Sustainability West Midlands
Alison Fulford	AF	National Grid
Andrew Todd	AT	University of Warwick
David Terry	DT	University of Birmingham
Gareth Deakin	GD	Advanced Propulsion Centre
Gareth Evans	GE	Sustainability West Midlands
Jamal Lea	JL	Aston University
Jon Bloomfield	JB	Climate-KIC
Lesley Bunting	LB	L&P Property
Martin Mizera	MM	Unicorn Power Ltd
Mike Woollacott	MW	Greenwatt Technology
Noel Street	NS	3DReid
Pam Waddell	PW	Birmingham Science City
Paula Gray	PG	Midlands Metro Alliance
Ric Bravery	RB	City of Wolverhampton Council
Richard Tandy	RT	Ørsted
Ruth Corral	RC	Worcestershire County Council
Sarah Newton	SN	Birmingham Science City
Suzanne Coles	SC	Energy Systems Catapult
Terry Ellis	TE	Mott MacDonald

1. Chair’s welcome and introductions

MW, Chair, opened the meeting and introductions were made. MW re-emphasised that the ILCWG is a unique group able to share information across different sectors, influence funding and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) activity and help to develop partnerships and collaborations.

2. Sustainable construction activity and projects

Please see [accompanying slides](#) for more information on National Grid’s work around sustainable construction projects and procurement. Key points in addition to the slides were as follows:

- Affordability of a bidder’s proposal for a construction related project still trumps their sustainability credentials; the low carbon aspect of a bid still needs to demonstrate a strong business case to be successful. However, the message is increasingly clear that reducing the carbon impact of projects also reduces the cost and contractors are now being challenged on this issue which represents a significant step forward and bidders are being asked to calculate their carbon as part of their proposals.
- Tier one suppliers are also beginning to innovate; National Grid is encouraging this by running innovation events. At present, there is a behaviour change process to go through in terms of supporting individuals and the organisation to embrace innovation, but a greater mix of energy companies will help stimulate innovation over time. Some contractors are also offering new processes and ideas but more can still be done. It was



emphasised that encouraging these contractors to innovate will allow them to pass their ideas to other suppliers for further innovation to take place.

- Auditing the carbon impact of projects subsequent to awarding a project to a contractor is challenging due to the resource commitments it requires, but auditing is carried out. Case studies of projects where the carbon reductions have been achieved are also captured and shared. It is also often the case that the engineers that develop the project are unaware of the carbon impact given that this is agreed at the design stage.
- There is also more that can be done around the wider sustainability impacts of projects in addition to carbon savings.
- There have also been cases where the carbon impact aspect of a proposal has been the deciding factor as to whether a bidder has been successful or not; this is usually if the prices of two prospective contractors are close but one has better carbon mitigation credentials. The risk of further increasing the weighting of the carbon impact within the procurement process is that it may put some bidders off applying and could lose credibility with some engineers.

Regarding more general activity, suggestions and next steps around the theme of sustainable construction, the following points were made by various attendees during the meeting:

- ILCWG attendees were asked whether a separate workshop focusing on sustainable construction would be of benefit; the consensus was that it would be. There could be local investment around this theme following its identification as one of the key market strengths in the [WM Science and Innovation Audit](#). AC will provide details on this as and when it is developed (**ACTION for AC to keep ILCWG informed**).
- TE stated that through his role at Mott MacDonald he is happy to help convene other relevant organisations to join the sustainable construction workshop and further discussions (**ACTION – AC to follow up with TE**).
- It was emphasised the infrastructure and construction are very closely aligned (for example, highways) and the two should be pointing in the same direction. The WM also has a huge amount of strength in these areas. Rick Robinson, who chairs the [Smart City Alliance](#) would be a good person to contact about this; he now works for Arup having just departed Amey (**ACTION – BSC Team to engage with Rick**).
- HS2 is also a huge player in the local construction space and should be included in any workshops and conversations. Innovation and SME support is also very high on their agenda and will be keen to join these discussions (**ACTION – HS2 to be included in future discussions on sustainable construction**).
- Aston University is to convene five workshops in 2018 as part of its Low Carbon SMEs programme (see item 6) and one of these will focus on sustainable construction (**ACTION – AC to discuss with JL how this could fit with the sustainable construction activity of the new Innovation Alliance**).
- 3DReid is strong on low carbon buildings and NS is also the regional chair of the Construction Industry Council and from that perspective there is evidence of repercussions of the Grenfell Tower disaster on industry procurement. The Industry Standard White Paper has also started focusing on construction and links with the environment.



3. Too green for its own name

Please see [accompanying slides](#) for more information on [Ørsted](#) and how they have transitioned to a company that is fully committed to renewable energy, after selling its fossil fuel business recently. Key points in addition to the slides were as follows:

- RT emphasised that Ørsted wants to engage with organisations and end-users on sustainability and clean energy; this covers all sectors including SMEs.
- Ørsted will continue to focus on the commercial energy market but not the residential sector. It is keen to work with clients on a holistic approach to energy and, through their 'Energy as a Service' model, helping them from energy source to their meter. The company is proving this concept in the UK and is now looking to upscale.
- Ørsted works with small and large organisations to influence energy management process and change but it is still coming up with some resistance as customers do not necessarily realise how complex energy management processes are and therefore how much help they may need.
- There have been some regulatory barriers for Ørsted that provides challenges for the organisation to achieve its aims around renewable energy, such as a reduction in renewable subsidies; Ørsted is lobbying to try and influence policy accordingly.
- Ørsted is also engaging on a national basis although is keen to work in the West Midlands given the region's strengths around energy.
- Ørsted also looks at energy storage wherever appropriate and the bulk of projects the organisations gets involved in includes battery storage.

4. Accelerating Thermal Energy Technology Adoption (ATETA)

Please see [accompanying slides](#) for more information. The ATETA programme focuses on supporting SMEs in the GBSLEP area in renewable thermal energy generation, use and thermal energy storage, as well as all energy system integration. It is also well connected with the [Energy Capital](#) and [Energy Research Accelerator](#) initiatives.

5. Development and consultation on West Midlands Innovation Alliance

Please see [accompanying slides](#) for more details on what the new Innovation Alliance looks like and the results from a recent questionnaire asking members of the Birmingham Science City Alliance what they value about the organisation and working groups. Key points in addition to the slides were as follows:

- A new West Midlands Innovation Board will commence in 2018; this is embedded in the WMCA structure 2018 and will take a strategic lead on innovation. This means that the current BSC Board will cease. It has not yet been decided who will sit on this new Board, but it will include a mix of university and private sector representation.
- The new Innovation Alliance for the West Midlands will supersede BSC in terms of building the innovation ecosystem and catalysing collaboration. There is a strong will to increase the focus on the existing working groups given their cross-sectoral nature and the positive feedback on their value from stakeholders. This will also include providing them with a way of forming stronger collaborative partnerships to help catalyse projects around innovation related to Science and Innovation Audit themes.
- SN asked some more questions of ILCWG members:
 - How many times a year do you think the working group should meet?
Unanimous response was four times, as present.





- Should the meetings always take place in the same location? *No, site visits are welcomed but it would be preferred if most meetings to take place near to a mainline railway station.*
- Should each meeting have a single focus or a mix of themes? *Overall a mix of themes was preferred, especially given the cross-over between aspects such as energy, transport, construction and infrastructure, albeit workshops run outside of WG meetings that focus on specific topics would be of benefit in driving forward specific agendas, e.g. construction.*
- ILCWG members were also encouraged to provide any responses to the following two questions/requests (**ACTION – ILCWG members to respond to the below by sending any information to AC**):
 - How could the working group meetings be improved to meet your objectives?
 - Please share any anecdotes on where membership of a working group has catalysed a partnership or project you have been involved in.
- A launch event for the Innovation Alliance is being convened on 30 January focusing on the industrial strategy, to which all ILCWG members will be invited (**ACTION – AC to circulate**).
- Other working groups BSC currently runs/co-runs include the [Innovative Health Working Group](#) and the [Birmingham Smart City Alliance](#), which focuses on how digital is driving city transformation; this includes issues around sustainability. Occasional joint meetings between these groups and the ILCWG could be beneficial in future.
- The new Innovation Alliance will focus primarily on the three LEP areas that make up the WMCA, i.e. GBS, Coventry and Warwickshire and Black Country. However, it was emphasised that the Alliance does not want to exclude other parts of the West Midlands and the network will continue to extend beyond this. All three LEPs are supporting the new Alliance and GBS and Black Country are providing resources.

6. New partnerships and funding opportunities

A reminder to ILCWG members that there is a pipeline of projects that sits alongside this group that AC manages (**ACTION – all members to contribute when appropriate**).

AC provided an update on the latest European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) calls and opportunities, the key points around which are:

- The low carbon (priority 4) ERDF call in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) originally scheduled for December will now not open. This is because the majority of the money has been spent, or the money has been bid for, although not all projects have been approved by DCLG. This means that there could be another call in March if some of the pending projects are unsuccessful.
- GBSLEP's £1.8m ringfenced priority 4 money for the Transitional Area, including East Staffordshire, Tamworth, Lichfield and Cannock Chase districts, has been transferred across to Stoke and Staffs LEP after difficulty spending the money through GBSLEP.
- [Pat Laughlin](#) from MEBC is now the lead on Priority 4 for GBSLEP; all related queries should be directed to Pat from this point forward.
- The focus on ERDF in the GBSLEP area will be on the [Sustainable Urban Development](#) (SUD) fund, the key aspects of which are as follows:
 - It is looking for projects that will benefit environmental mitigation within the HS2 proposed route.



- Eligible projects can contain elements that align to both priority 4 (low carbon) and 6 (environment) combined.
- Normal ERDF rules and regulations apply, such as required outputs and 50% grant funding.
- There will only be one call, open now until 30 March 2018. Projects will also be reviewed at an additional other point, namely 31 January 2018.
- £11.6m is available in this call, split roughly two-thirds priority 4 and one-third priority 6.
- [Nathan Smallwood](#) from Birmingham City Council (the accountable body) is the main contact for any queries.
- [This webpage](#) provides full details of the call and eligibility.
- Other WM LEPs may have low carbon calls out now; a full list of calls [can be found here](#).
- There is also a research and innovation (priority 1) call [now open](#) in GBS and Black Country LEP areas focused on cross-LEP projects addressing the priorities from the WM Science and Innovation Audit.

A roundtable update was convened:

- SWM has produced a benchmark of LEPs, core cities and combined authorities; the former two on low carbon and climate change progress, the latter on all aspects of sustainability including natural capital, health inequality and air quality. The former two, funded by BEIS, will be published shortly and the latter [has just been published](#). A [national event](#) was convened in October reflecting these findings.
- SWM convened its [latest Annual Conference](#) recently that helped to feed into the WMCA's next steps regarding the environment and sustainability.
- SWM is currently producing a briefing on the Clean Growth Strategy; this will include its context around innovation. It should be published in the next couple of weeks and will be circulated to the group by AC (**ACTION**).
- AC promoted the [Low Carbon Growth Support Project](#), led by Groundwork West Midlands and supported by SWM. It supports SMEs in GBS and Black Country LEPs with a free energy efficiency audit and grants towards energy efficient equipment and specialist consultancy. Please signpost to any SMEs in the relevant geography (**ACTION for all members to support**).
- PG described her 'on the ground' experiences with companies and innovation; in many cases, innovation is happening but ideas are not being shared or exploited and cross-fertilisation is not always happening. It would be helpful for the new Innovation Alliance to provide a mechanism to allow this to happen more readily.
- JB provided an update on Climate-KIC: its funding runs until 2025 and there is an £83m budget for next year to run professional education, innovation and entrepreneur programmes. There are opportunities for sponsorship available (**ACTION – ILCWG members to speak to JB if this is of interest**).
- Unicorn Power has moved to a new office in Leamington Spa recently and has signed a contract for three biomass generating units. The company is focusing on the energy needs for islands, especially desalination plants and anaerobic digestion.
- Aston University is running an ERDF funded [low carbon business support programme](#) for SMEs in the GBSLEP area. Free energy diagnostics are offered which take up to two to five days and the SMEs can obtain support from academics. Some SMEs can then obtain





grant funding of up to £12.5k. The focus is on businesses operating in the manufacturing and process sector. The scheme runs until February 2020.

- GD showed some slides on the latest funding and collaboration opportunities from the Advanced Propulsion Centre; see [accompanying slides](#) for more information.
- The Built Environment Climate Change Innovations ([BECCI](#)) project is running for another two years and covers Black Country and Marches LEAs. The project provides free support for SMEs in the development of products and services that reduce carbon usage.
- City of Wolverhampton Council is going ahead with its electric taxi programme and the infrastructure implementation phase is about to commence.
- A partnership between Warwick Manufacturing Group at the University of Warwick, Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Coventry City Council has been awarded £80 million to establish a new [National Battery Manufacturing Development Facility](#) (NBMDF); this was part of the [Faraday Challenge](#). The announcement was made by The Rt Hon Greg Clark, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, while attending an energy conference on the University of Warwick campus recently. This reinforces the West Midlands as a region of strengths in the automotive industry. This could be a future agenda item for the ILCWG (**ACTION – AC to liaise with AT about this**).
- UoB runs the website and marketing for Energy Capital; DT will provide an email address so that members of the Alliance can feed into its content (**ACTION – DT to send to AC**).
- RC outlined the [Worcestershire Low Carbon Opportunities Programme](#) that targets diverse clean technology innovators and a network for SMEs focusing on clean tech innovation has now been set up. There will also be a series of events in 2018 that members of the ILCWG are welcome to attend once they have been organised (**ACTION – RC to share details with AC**).
- Energy Systems Catapult (ESC) is supporting the new [Energy Innovation Zones](#) and on 28 March there will be a launch of a paper that reflects these new initiatives at an event at University of Birmingham (**ACTION – SC to send event details to AC**).
- ESC is also interested in large scale demonstrators with a focus on the end consumer; there could be opportunities to collaborate with other sectors on this (**ACTION – ILCWG members to contact AC if interested in obtained more information**).
- Sponsors are sought for [Venturefest WM](#) 2018; discussions on this are currently in the early stages and this year it will be self-funding, but do let PW know if you are interested in sponsorship or exhibiting (**ACTION**).
- MW, on behalf of Susan Lee from the University of Birmingham, provided an overview of the Transforming Birmingham project; an event is taking place on 25 January about which more details will be provided soon.
- There is still work on-going to establish a Low Emission Transport Showcase at Stoneleigh Park, which will provide a place in the WM where research, innovation and low carbon activities can come together and smart buildings and transport can be showcased. Further details available from MW.
- NS from 3DReid stated that he is interested in being part of the ILCWG going forward and further developments. 3DReid is strong on low carbon buildings and is also interested in following up discussions on the Tyseley Energy Park.





- National Grid is looking to put together a designing out waste workshop and a series of events are currently being mapped out (**ACTION – AF to send details of events to AC once set up**).
- AT suggested that the ILCWG and wider Alliance could have a role to play in influencing the Shared Prosperity Fund consultation; is there an opportunity for us to feed into this and could we do an event? (**ACTION – BSC Team to consider**).

7. Dates of future meetings

Thursday 15 March 2018, 14:00 – 17:00

Thursday 7 June 2018, 14:00 – 17:00

Venues TBC

