

Combined Authority Sustainability Benchmarking

Technical Report – analysis of strategies

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WEST MIDLANDS
COMBINED AUTHORITY

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About Sustainability West Midlands

We are the sustainability adviser for the leaders of the West Midlands. We are also the regional sustainability champion body for the West Midlands, as designated by government. We are a not-for-profit company that works with our members in the business, public and voluntary sectors. Our Board is private sector led and has cross-sector representation; they are supported by our team of staff and associates.

Our vision is that by 2020 businesses and communities are thriving in a West Midlands that is environmentally sustainable and socially just.

Our role is to act as a catalyst for change through our advice to leaders, to develop practical solutions with our members and share success through our communications.

www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk
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Executive Summary

Sustainability West Midlands (SWM) is the sustainability delivery partner for the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). This report is part of an ongoing support programme to help the WMCA integrate sustainability within its strategy and operations, drawing on good local and national practice.

This report looks at how the WMCA is performing against the other combined authorities (CAs) in England in terms of reported sustainability activity in leadership, strategy and delivery and provides a series of recommendations to improve performance.

This is the first sustainability benchmarking exercise undertaken for CAs and the intention is to repeat this annually to help measure progress and identify and share good practice. The research for this report was carried out in August 2017 and then reported to the WMCA to inform their environmental priorities and action plan in September 2017 and a national good practice event with Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in October 2017.

Summary of Results

Summary of scores awarded to each combined authority reflecting their progress on sustainability

Combined Authorities	Sustainability performance of combined authorities (%)					Overall Sustainability Score (Ranking of CA given in brackets)
	Social Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality	Environment Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience	Business, Low carbon economy, business support, buildings, resource efficiency	Energy Energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency	Transport Public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure	
Cambridge & Peterborough	14	6	8	8	17	11 (9)
Greater Manchester	64	75	64	61	78	68 (1)
Liverpool City Region	44	42	44	58	60	49 (3)
North East	19	7	23	41	50	28 (6)
Sheffield City Region	15	36	42	30	36	31 (5)
Tees Valley	11	25	39	33	19	27 (7)
West of England	11	8	19	14	19	14 (8)
West Yorkshire	39	45	33	36	52	41 (4)
West Midlands	56	44	50	42	70	52 (2)

0% - 16.49% Minimal Evidence	16.5% - 49.9% Some evidence	50.0% - 83.0% Good evidence	83.1% - 100% Leading evidence
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As Table 1 shows, none of the CAs demonstrated leading practice against the overall sustainability criteria which would be 80% or higher. Greater Manchester CA was the strongest performer (68%) followed by the WMCA (52%) and Liverpool City Region (49%). The results section of this report highlights detailed good practice across all CAs.

Recommendations for the WMCA

The main report includes a detailed set of actions to help the WMCA move from its current baseline towards leading sustainability practice; i.e. a move from 52% to 80% or higher.

Key recommendation: Establish an embedded sustainability delivery partner or manager within the WMCA whose sole responsibility is to ensure that sustainability related activities and targets outlined in the Strategic Economic Plan and the mayoral manifesto can be achieved. This is the key action that will help to achieve the WMCA's sustainability ambitions, enable the other recommendations to be implemented and to enable the WMCA to achieve 80% or higher in future benchmarking exercises.

Further recommendations include:

Leadership

- Move forward proposals to establish an environment / sustainability Board, led by the portfolio holder for environment into which the work undertaken by the partner or manager can be fed.
- Clarify the precise remit of the Environment Portfolio holder and enable each portfolio lead to produce a specific plan of priorities and activities.
- Acquire the mayor's support to ensure that the above activities are endorsed and to help draw down funds and opportunities nationally to develop the WMCA offer on transport and energy.

Strategy

- Ensure that activities and targets related to sustainability in the SEP are joined up and complement the mayoral manifesto. Considering adding a renewable energy uptake target.
- Ensure reporting on the monitoring of targets and activities against the SEP is transparent and clear. Include further monitoring using habitat loss, flood risk, air quality and fuel poverty data.
- Publish reporting of the above on a designated sustainability page on the WMCA website.
- Produce an Annual Review and ensure that sustainability progress is incorporated into this.
- Ensure each strategy related to sustainability complements each other and that there is no unintentional overlap.
- Undertake a climate change risk assessment analysing the threats and opportunities posed by increasing extreme weather on, for example, health, infrastructure and the natural environment. Develop an understanding on how green infrastructure can help tackle these issues.
- Use the Science and Innovation Audit and SWM Futures Toolkit to monitor forward-thinking organisations and institutes that can help to address long-term issues, develop projects and involve them in decision making.

Delivery

- Consider using the environment criteria, or an adapted version thereof, created for assessing the impact of HS2 on the natural environment for wider WMCA projects to ensure they consider sustainable development and the impact on the environment.
- Ensure sustainability projects are considered in any discussions around further devolution.

Recommendations for other Combined Authorities and National Organisations

SWM can share the results of this study with other individual combined authorities if they wish to see the details and justification of their allocated scores. We can also suggest areas for improvement and develop an improvement plan with their local partners. For national organisations seeking to identify good practice around a particular sustainability theme we can also provide some further analysis.

Contact enquiries@swm.org.uk for more information.

1 Introduction

Sustainability West Midlands (SWM) is the sustainability delivery partner for the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). This report is part of an ongoing support programme to help the WMCA integrate sustainability within its strategy and operations, drawing on good local and national practice. It looks at how the WMCA is performing against the other combined authorities (CAs) in England in terms of reported sustainability activity in leadership, strategy and delivery.

This is the first sustainability benchmarking exercise undertaken for CAs and the intention is to repeat this annually to help measure progress and identify and share good practice. The research for this report was carried out in August 2017 and then reported to the WMCA to inform their environmental priorities and action plan in September 2017 and a national good practice event with the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in October 2017.

The other benchmarking report SWM has produced¹ provides an overview and analysis of the data used to underpin sustainability performance and monitoring in the WMCA area and how these compare to the eight other CAs areas in England.

1.1 Background to developing support for the WMCA

To deliver our mission, we have developed a set of sustainability priority actions for the West Midlands based on collaborative research worth around £1 million and the support of over 200 local leaders and stakeholders in 2010. Since then, we have been the only region in the UK to have a clear vision, plan, action and annual monitoring² to help achieve a more sustainable future. This has been possible due to our independent nature, our evidence based approach and the support of a range of partners.

As a result of this, in 2015 we conducted a high-level sustainability review at the beginning of the process when the WMCA was being created.³ We later used this, along with feedback from our networks and members, to help work with the team developing the WMCA Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) which was to provide the overall strategic framework for the CA.

In July 2016, SWM was officially recognised as the sustainability delivery partner for the WMCA. This involves continuing to provide strategic advice, evidence, research and events to support the integration of sustainability within the WMCA and the continued alignment

¹ Combined Authority Sustainability Benchmarking Technical Report – analysis of metrics:

<http://bit.ly/2yEu0vG>

² Latest annual 2016 monitoring report of the Roadmap 2020 priorities and actions

<http://www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk/resourcess/swm-2020-roadmap-monitoring-report-2016/>

³ Draft sustainability review of WMCA proposed powers, SWM 2015

<http://www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WMCA-draft-SD-review-25-11-15.pdf>

of our members, networks and partner good practice to accelerate the delivery of the SEP to create a better future.⁴

In early 2017, as part of our support programme, we used our annual roadmap monitoring and research to help update the WMCA Performance and Monitoring Framework (PMF). As a result of this and our track record of sustainability benchmarking for LEPs⁵ and local authorities,⁶ we were commissioned to undertake additional work to look at how the WMCA area was performing compared to the other eight CA areas in England.⁷

The results presented in this report have since been used to inform the WMCA environment priorities and improvement plan agreed by the WMCA Board and Mayor on 8 September 2017.⁸

The results also formed part of a national good practice event with the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in October 2017⁹.

This is the first sustainability benchmark undertaken for CAs and the intention is to repeat this annually to help measure progress and identify and continue to share good practice.

1.2 Structure of this report

The rest of this report covers:

- The methodology used to help with the annual update of progress.
- The national results and good practice examples.
- The benchmark results for the WMCA and recommendations to improve future performance.

⁴ See SWM website on WMCA support programme: <http://bit.ly/2sJoHra>

⁵ Fit for the Future: <http://bit.ly/1Kp0c0A>

⁶ Local authority benchmark: <http://bit.ly/2oD6lw2>

⁷ Combined Authority Sustainability Benchmarking – analysis of metrics: <http://bit.ly/2yEu0vG>

⁸ See <http://www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk/resources/wmca-environmental-priorities/>

⁹ Fit for the Future II: <http://bit.ly/2AtGRR6>

2 Methodology

This section describes how we have measured the combined authorities' leadership, strategy and delivery of sustainability related activity. The analysis was desk based perusing relevant literature for sustainability activity or commitments and scoring this in a similar way to the mechanism used for other benchmarking exercises we have done.

All the data and findings described below were inputted into a master spreadsheet to help analysis and to draw from when producing this report and identifying good practice case studies.

2.1 Combined authorities analysed

Nine combined authorities were analysed in total. These are:

- Cambridge & Peterborough
- Greater Manchester
- Liverpool City Region
- North East (no mayor)
- Sheffield City Region (no mayor)
- Tees Valley
- West of England
- West Yorkshire (no mayor)
- West Midlands

Some of these are more mature than others and we recognise this will reflect sustainability performance and activity to date. Hence, it is important that the below methodology is simple enough to be replicated and so that the benchmark can be repeated each year to keep a track of progress over time.

2.2 Criteria – what were we looking for?

Using previous research we have undertaken as a framework,¹⁰ we developed simple criteria against which we assessed sustainability progress of each CA. This is described below and can be used again to repeat the benchmark in future years.

The criteria included a set of 12 key questions, under the headings of leadership, strategy and delivery.

Under each of the 12 key questions for each CA, we grouped the findings into five separate themes to make it clearer on which issues each CA was showing stronger or weaker evidence of progress. These themes were:

- **People:** Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality

¹⁰ For example, Fit for the Future: <http://bit.ly/1Kp0c0A>

- **Environment:** Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
- **Economic (Low carbon economy):** Low carbon economy, business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use
- **Economic (energy):** Energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
- **Economic (transport):** Public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure

There is naturally overlap between these categories, for example the energy efficiency of homes will influence fuel poverty levels in each area, but we have segregated the evidence as a best-fit, based on the overall priority and activity taking place. However the thematic approach ultimately makes it easier to determine progress against key areas of sustainability quickly, rather than filtering through a myriad of data to find key aspects.

The table below sets out the full set of 12 key questions and thematic sub-questions used.

Table 1: Criteria used for sustainability assessment of published CA websites, strategies, and reports

LEADERSHIP
1. If there is an elected Mayor is there any evidence in their manifesto around key sustainability issues?
1.a People Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality
1.b Environment Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
1.c Economic - low carbon economy business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use
1.d Economic - energy energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
1.e Economic - transport public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure
2. On the cabinet or board of the Combined Authority is there any evidence of clear responsibility for key sustainability issues?
2.a People Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality
2.b Environment Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
2.c Economic – low carbon economy business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use
2.d Economic – energy energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
2.e Economic – transport public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure
3. In the supporting officer and partner structure Is there evidence of staff and working groups responsible for the integration and delivery of key sustainability issues?
3.a People Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality
3.b Environment Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
3.c Economic – low carbon economy business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use
3.d Economic – energy energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
3.e Economic – transport public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure
STRATEGY
4. Is there an overarching strategy produced by the Combined Authority for the area? How are key sustainability issues integrated and monitored into the strategy or strategies?
4.a People Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality
4.b Environment Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
4.c Economic – low carbon economy business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use
4.d Economic – energy energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
4.e Economic – transport public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure
5. Is there a strategy or strategies that focuses on an issue or issues relating to sustainability that provides details on commitments and future projects?
5.a People Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality
5.b Environment Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
5.c Economic – low carbon economy business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use

5.d Economic – energy	energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
5.e Economic – transport	public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure
6. Is there evidence of long-term issues being considered and a structured process against which to monitor them, e.g. climate risk, demographics, technology etc.	
6.a People	Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality
6.b Environment	Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
6.c Economic – low carbon economy	business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use
6.d Economic – energy	energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
6.e Economic – transport	public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure
7. Is there an evidence base setting out the scale of the CA's strengths and opportunities related to the low carbon and resilient economy?	
7.a People	Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality
7.b Environment	Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
7.c Economic – low carbon economy	business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use
7.d Economic – energy	energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
7.e Economic – transport	public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure
8. Is there evidence of the CA measuring and monitoring sustainability metrics, such as carbon emissions, renewable energy generation, health inequality and/or air pollution levels?	
8.a People	Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality
8.b Environment	Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
8.c Economic – low carbon economy	business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use
8.d Economic – energy	energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
8.e Economic – transport	public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure
DELIVERY	
9. Is there evidence of a commitment to integrate or fund the development of specific programmes that will help deliver sustainability objectives?	
9.a People	Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality
9.b Environment	Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
9.c Economic – low carbon economy	business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use
9.d Economic – energy	energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
9.e Economic – transport	public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure
10. At overall programme level, what systems are in place to monitor and appraise the overall impact of all funded activity on sustainability objectives?	
10.a People	Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality
10.b Environment	Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
10.c Economic – low carbon economy	business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use
10.d Economic – energy	energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
10.e Economic – transport	public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure
11. Is progress on sustainability being reported externally and, if so, how?	
11.a People	Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality
11.b Environment	Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
11.c Economic – low carbon economy	business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use
11.d Economic – energy	energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
11.e Economic – transport	public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure
12. Has the CA identified new powers and responsibilities that further devolution would help to deliver local sustainability priorities?	
12.a People	Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality
12.b Environment	Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience
12.c Economic – low carbon economy	business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use
12.d Economic – energy	energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency
12.e Economic – transport	public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure

2.3 Literature reviewed

For each combined authority, we analysed the following literature sources as standard:

- Combined authority website
- Latest combined authority annual review/report where one exists
- The devolution deal and any further devolution deal
- The mayoral manifesto or plan, in circumstances where a mayor has been elected
- An overarching strategy or SEP, where one exists
- Science and Innovation Audits undertaken that cover all or part of a combined authority area, where applicable
- Other strategies relevant to the sustainability agenda; this included strategies/plans focusing on:
 - Climate change / sustainability / environment
 - Flooding
 - Low emissions
 - Electric vehicles
 - Transport
 - Buses
 - Air quality
 - Infrastructure
 - Health and social care
 - Growth and Reform / investment
 - Sustainable Urban Development
 - Spatial planning

There was no limit on the number of other relevant strategies analysed so this is an exhaustive list at the time of research (August 2017) and based on publicly available information.

This involved in reviewing over 80 websites, strategies and reports. These are listed in the Annex.

In each document or website, we searched for keywords that helped us to navigate to the most pertinent parts of the publication and ensured we covered ground relevant to the whole scope of sustainability. The words searched for were as follows:

Sustainable/ility, Carbon, Emission, Climate, Energy, Efficient/cy, Renewable, Smart grid, Heat, Decentralised/isation, Clean, Electric, Offshore, Power, Transport, Vehicle, Cycle/ling, Walk, Pollution, Air quality, Health, Inequality, Waste, Recycle/ing, Environment, Green, Tree, Biodiversity, Nature/al, Ecological/y, Wildlife, Adapt, Resilient/ce, Flood.

2.4 Scoring

We analysed each of these five thematic areas against each of the twelve criteria outlined in section 2.2 for each combined authority. We scored these either 0, 1, 2 or 3 depending on level of progress determined by the literature, i.e.:

0 - Minimal evidence	1 - Some evidence	2 - Good evidence	3 - Leading evidence
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This scoring system has been used by all our previous benchmarking exercises outlined previously and is a simple indicator of progress against the criteria and themes identified. In the case of this report, a combined authority could score a 3 if the literature demonstrated clear commitments and activity above and beyond work being undertaken elsewhere that contributed to the sustainability agenda, or if there was clear evidence of established implementation, such as a carbon reduction target that is embedded across multiple strategies.

This score was then converted to a percentage score for the purposes of this report. This was done by taking the awarded score 0-3 (y) and the maximum possible score of 3 and using the following sum:

$$(y \div 3) \times 100$$

The scoring system, when converted to a percentage, is as follows:

0% - 16.49% Minimal Evidence	16.5% - 49.9% Some evidence	50.0% - 83.0% Good evidence	83.1% - 100% Leading evidence
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A total score for each combined authority was calculated by adding the scores given for each theme against each criteria. This provided a ranking of all nine combined authorities analysed.

For the following two criterion, no score (rather than a '0' score) was awarded if a mayor has not been elected or if there is no further devolution. We recognise that this is not in the complete control of the combined authority and therefore would be unfair to score a '0' if there is no evidence of progress, for example, within a mayoral manifesto if no mayoral election has yet been called.

- If there is an elected Mayor is there any evidence in their manifesto around key sustainability issues?
- Has the CA identified new powers and responsibilities that further devolution would help to deliver local sustainability priorities?

2.5 Limitations and lessons learnt

There are a few limitations to the research that may reduce the clarity and accuracy of the results. Ways that these could be addressed in future are shown in *italics*.

- The scoring could be somewhat subjective based on the evidence interpreted by the review team. *However, the same scoring system has been used in several SWM benchmarking reports and the principal researcher and reviewer is often the same individual, therefore there is a consistency and understanding of the system across multiple analyses.*
- There can still be a gap between stated intention and action on the ground and literature may not reflect reality. *In future, this could be resolved by interviewing an individual who works for or at a combined authority to determine what activity is happening. This approach has been successfully taken more recently in our latest review of LEPs.*
- Combined authorities were set up to devolve specific powers from Whitehall to local areas. There may be a need for them to focus on specific issues and may not have the capacity or budgets to consider wider sustainability issues. *We feel, however, that sustainability can be integrated into the majority of programmes and will reap many benefits pertaining to strengthening the economy, protecting the environment and addressing health inequalities.*
- Some combined authorities in this assessment are far less mature than others. Moreover, in those where mayors have been elected they have only been in power for a few months upon undertaking this assessment. *We recognise this and appreciate that this is an initial snapshot; we expect to repeat this assessment each year during which time progression of less mature authorities ought to catch up and learn from those that are more mature. Indeed, this report represents a good starting point.*

3 National results and good practice

3.1 Summary

This section provides a brief overview of how each combined authority is performing on sustainability aspects, based on the methodology outlined in the previous section.

Table 2: Summary of scores awarded to each combined authority reflecting their progress on sustainability

Combined Authorities	Sustainability Criteria for Combined Authorities (%)					Overall Sustainability Score (Ranking given in brackets)
	Social	Environment	Economic – Low carbon economy	Economic – Energy	Economic – Transport	
Cambridge & Peterborough	14	6	8	8	17	11 (9)
Greater Manchester	64	75	64	61	78	68 (1)
Liverpool City Region	44	42	44	58	60	49 (3)
North East	19	7	23	41	50	28 (6)
Sheffield City Region	15	36	42	30	36	31 (5)
Tees Valley	11	25	39	33	19	27 (7)
West of England	11	8	19	14	19	14 (8)
West Yorkshire	39	45	33	36	52	41 (4)
West Midlands	56	44	50	42	70	52 (2)

Table 3: How the authorities are performing on actions related to leadership, strategy and delivery.

	Leadership	Strategy	Delivery	Overall Sustainability Score (Ranking given in brackets)
Cambridge & Peterborough	24	11	0	11 (9)
Greater Manchester	76	68	63	68 (1)
Liverpool City Region	67	51	35	49 (3)
North East	7	43	18	28 (6)
Sheffield City Region	0	56	15	31 (5)
Tees Valley	11	37	22	27 (7)
West of England	0	28	15	14 (8)
West Yorkshire	7	63	32	41 (4)

West Midlands	49	63	42	52 (2)
Average	27	47	27	

Key to colour coding

0% - 16.49% Minimal Evidence	16.5% - 49.9% Some evidence
50.0% - 83.0% Good evidence	83.1% - 100% Leading evidence

As Tables 2 and 3 show:

- Greater Manchester is the best performing combined authority area on sustainability issues, followed by the West Midlands and Liverpool. *This will at least partly be due to how long these combined authorities have been operating; certainly Manchester is more mature than many of the others, with the West Midlands making rapid progress in 'shadow' and then 'official' form.*
- West of England and Cambridge and Peterborough are the poorest performing to date. *Likewise, these are relatively new authorities which may explain this.*
- No combined authorities are yet showing 'leading evidence' against any of the metrics. The average sustainability score across all combined authorities is only 36%, which is fairly low. *It may be that sustainability has not yet been fully integrated into key devolved priorities.*
- The metric against which there is greater progress is around transport, averaging 45% overall. The lowest is activity against the social aspects, at 30%. *This is unsurprising given that most combined authorities' devolution deals focus significantly on providing more powers to local transport networks.*
- The top three performing authorities and the bottom three performing authorities have recently elected metro mayors; the middle three ranked fourth, fifth and sixth have not. There was no evidence of a mayoral manifesto or plan in two of these bottom three performing combined authorities, an absence of which is likely to have contributed to the poor scores. The top three all had strong mayoral manifestos all of which contained aspects of sustainability.
- There is a huge variation in combined authorities showing leadership on sustainability (Table 3). Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region have mayors passionate about the sustainability agenda and a Board and/or officers who can help deliver activity. In other cases such as Tees Valley and West of England, despite having a mayor, there is no evidence of them publishing their manifesto or plan.
- Strategy is comfortably the strongest area, with most CAs recognising the need to integrate aspects of sustainability into their strategic plan, to implement targets or to produce sustainability-specific related plans.
- However translating this strategic evidence into delivery is so far proving more difficult, with only Greater Manchester showing good evidence of delivering sustainability projects to date.

3.2 Good Practice – the 12 key sustainability questions

Most of the 12 key sustainability questions under the leadership, strategy and delivery headings focused on the type of processes and structured required. The table below provides examples of good practice within these areas. This is a good starting point for all

combined authorities as a checklist to enable ambition and the implementation of sustainability activities.

Table 4: Summary of good sustainability processes and structures

Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a cabinet member responsible for addressing sustainability issues, such as air quality, natural environment and carbon reduction (which could include several aspects). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example: <i>Liverpool City Region has established portfolio holders for Spatial Planning, Environment and Air Quality as well as Energy and Renewables and other for Transport.</i>¹¹ • Ensure a board of local environment and sustainability professionals is implemented to identify challenges and drive forward solutions; ensure this feeds into the mayor's office. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example: <i>Greater Manchester's Low Carbon Hub</i>¹² <i>brings together a Board of experts from across different sectors to drive forward the agenda and enable sustainability to be embedded to that activities can be delivered.</i> • Ensure the combined authority has staff at officer level who are able to take forward activities identified by the mayor, cabinet member and Board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example: <i>Greater Manchester has a Director of Environment</i>¹³ <i>at the combined authority who leads on delivery for the sustainability agenda.</i>
Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate relevant targets and key activities into an overall strategic plan, such as carbon reduction, air quality improvements, increases in green infrastructure, reduction in health inequality, economic performance and so on. This will ensure that projects that are commissioned are addressing both strategic and sustainability objectives at the same time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example: <i>West Midlands has embedded targets related to carbon reduction, health inequality, economic productivity and air pollution into their main Strategic Plan.</i>¹⁴ • Produce a sustainability or environmental strategy setting out ambitions for the next five years, expanding on but referring back to the main strategic plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example: <i>Most combined authorities have a transport and/or low emissions plan that aims to reduce carbon and air pollution from transport, as well as increase healthy lifestyles through active travel. Greater Manchester's Climate Change and Low Emission Strategy</i>¹⁵ <i>is the best example of a strategy focusing on sustainability.</i> • Undertake an infrastructure assessment that includes sustainability at its heart, for example public transport networks and flood risk. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example: <i>Sheffield's Integrated Infrastructure Plan</i>¹⁶ <i>is an excellent example of how a combined authority can focus on the opportunities and threats to local infrastructure from a sustainability perspective, including flood risk, green infrastructure, energy, sustainable transport and the low carbon economy.</i>

¹¹ <http://liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/portfolios-385>

¹² <http://gmlch.onthepatform.org.uk/>

¹³ <http://gmlch.onthepatform.org.uk/users/mark-atherton>

¹⁴ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/strategy>

¹⁵ <http://bit.ly/2yNqfA5>

¹⁶ <https://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/economic-strategy/scr-integrated-infrastructure-plan/>

- Develop a robust evidence base (for example a Science and Innovation Audit, Low Carbon Goods and Services analysis or a flood risk assessment) to outline current strengths and opportunities in sustainability in the local area and use these to focus priorities and initiatives.
 - **Example:** *The West Midlands has published a Science and Innovation Audit¹⁷ that covers the whole combined authority area that identifies smart energy systems, next generation transport and sustainable construction as three of its for market driven priorities.*

Delivery

- Most of the combined authority areas have the same or similar boundaries to existing Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and in some cases unitary councils. In these cases, combined authorities should work closely with their LEPs and local authorities to maximise delivery of projects and activities (as demonstrated in Greater Manchester and Tees Valley). A good example would for Cambridge and Peterborough to work closely with the Greater Cambridge, Greater Peterborough LEP on the low carbon agenda, given that the LEP has already demonstrated good practice and could support the CA through maturity.
 - **Example:** *The Tees Valley Collective¹⁸ is one such example enabling partnership working to take advantage of the potential for becoming leaders in carbon capture and storage technology.*

¹⁷ <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1682/west-midlands-sia-final-for-publication-21617.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/what-we-are-delivering/infrastructure/teesside-collective/>

3.3 Good practice – the 5 sustainability themes

Getting the basics right is important. Then it is possible to develop more detailed policies and actions for delivery. The table below provides a summary of some of the good practice by the 5 detailed sustainability themes being undertaken in the combined authority areas and suggests ideas that other combined authorities could replicate. This is not an exhaustive list and is designed to provide a snapshot of ideas and activities taken from the various sources of literature analysed. The letters in brackets indicate which combined authority is undertaking this activity.

- Cambridge & Peterborough (C&P)
- Greater Manchester (GM)
- Liverpool City Region (LCR)
- North East (NE)
- Sheffield City Region (SCR)
- Tees Valley (TV)
- West of England (WoE)
- West Yorkshire (WY)
- West Midlands (WM)

Table 5: Summary of good sustainability thematic practice and commitments in combined authorities

Social – health inequality
<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a Fairness and Social Justice Advisory Board to review every aspect of the Metro Mayor's and Combined Authority's policy and practice [LCR]. <p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of health inequality targets within devolution, including closing the gaps of those with the best health compared to the worst [GM]. • Healthier Together and Mental Health strategies look at reducing health inequalities [GM]. • Transport Plan for Growth makes a very strong link between transport infrastructure and its impact on health and wellbeing; integration is strong here [LCR]. • Health and Wealth: Closing the Gap in the North East has been published which outlines a series of recommendations as to how to reduce the high health inequality gap [NE]. • Transport Strategy clearly states that: "To improve the transport system in a way that it makes a significant contribution to improving the health and overall wellbeing of people living and working here" is a cross-cutting theme [WY]. • The health inequality gap is being measured as part of overall performance and is included in the main strategic plan [WM]. <p>Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong on impact of ageing and dementia on society and how the CA needs to address this [NE, SCR, TV, WM].
Social – fuel poverty
<p>Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of desire to transform existing housing stock and using new housing development as a catalyst to providing healthy, safe, warm and affordable homes [GM].

- Ambition to “have implemented the UK’s largest housing retrofit programme to reduce fuel poverty for housing association residents” [LCR].

Social – air quality

Leadership

- “The Combined Authority Shadow Board will bring forward proposals that would enable the Mayor and Combined Authority to implement Clean Air Zones in the Combined Authority area” [WoE].

Strategy

- Air Quality Action Plan looks at implementing clean air zones, green infrastructure, cycle provision, low emission vehicles and freight management [GM].
- Very strong integration of air quality into the main strategic plan and publication of three strategies (Bus, Transport and Low Emissions) that focus heavily on reducing air pollution [WY].
- Air quality targets included in the main overarching Performance Management Framework for the strategic plan [WM].

Delivery

- Expansion of existing railway stations and development of new ones to reduce inner-city air quality [LCR].
- Activities include establishing Clean Air Zones, upgrading bus fleets, encouraging walking and cycling, electric vehicles, implement Eco Stars fleet initiative, emission abatement technologies etc. [WY].
- Integration of air quality measures, including a Clean Air Zone and upgrading bus fleets included in the mayor’s plan. A Low Emissions Bus Strategy has been produced containing recommendations [WM].

Environment – natural capital, green infrastructure and biodiversity

Strategy

- Climate Change and Low Emission Strategy includes targets around natural environment, for example, “over 3 million trees planted by 2035 and natural capital embedded into investments” [GM].
- Commitment to the cleanest river standard by 2030 and commit to a discharge free Mersey by 2040 [LCR].
- Integration in the strategic plan, i.e. “high quality green infrastructure design will be central to the way in which we plan and shape places and developments and the corridors that connect them” [WY].
- Biodiversity, habitat loss and green infrastructure is being actively monitored as part of the implementation of the region’s transport strategy [WM].

Delivery

- Embracing of the City of Trees initiative to establish a City Forest Park and back the plan to plant three million trees [GM].
- Secured €20m funding for a Water Framework Directive focused LIFE Integrated Project which will support Natural Capital capacity for the next 2 years [GM].
- Deliver an ambitious tree-planting programme across the City Region, with a particular focus on engaging schools and young people [LCR].
- Deliver an ambitious programme of natural economy, green infrastructure and green space as part of its recognition of having a high value natural capital [LCR].
- Prioritisation of development of brownfield sites and spend £200m on decontamination [WM].
- Several projects being commissioned that will include the integration of green infrastructure as standard to improve biodiversity [WM].

Environment – climate resilience
Leadership

- Partners will develop an integrated approach to flood risk reduction bringing together relevant partners and resources and includes natural flood management, SUDS and businesses resilience [WY].

Strategy

- Strong emphasis on climate adaptation in strategies and current activity includes becoming a full partner in a Climate Resilient Cities and Infrastructures project [GM].
- Infrastructure Plan details many flood defence projects, including SUDS, mandatory flood risk assessments, defence programmes to unlock strategic sites, etc. [SCR, TV].
- Flood risk review and subsequent Integration in the strategic plan, i.e. "We will ensure we implement investments in new or enhanced natural assets that help to reduce flood risk" [WY].

Delivery

- Improving the resilience to extreme weather of bus infrastructure and transport networks [WY].

Economic – low carbon economy and skills
Strategy

- Embedded targets around increasing GVA in the low carbon sector by 2030: +£2bn GVA, +1,000 jobs, +2,000 new qualifications [WM].

Delivery

- Engage with people across Greater Manchester to help them gain the carbon literacy they need to adopt more sustainable lifestyles [GM].
- Develop skilled workforces and provide new leading-edge skills training to strengthen the low carbon goods and services sector and enable businesses to access low carbon markets [GM].
- Establish an investment fund to promote new renewable and community energy businesses and initiatives, as well as supporting businesses already operating in the sector [LCR].
- Embed resource efficiency to support productivity, growth and quality across the business base and support globally competitive firms operating in the low carbon sector [WY].
- "Black Country Enterprise Zone will create up to 7,000 new jobs by 2038, in priority support sectors including environmental technologies" [WM].

Economic – sustainable procurement
Delivery

- A Social Value procurement framework has been developed and agreed by the GMCA and adopted by all ten Authorities [GM].
- "We will ensure that the CA uses smart procurement procedures, supply chain management and local labour clauses in contracts to maximise social value" [LCR].
- Adopt sustainable procurement principles to BS8903 Expert standard to ensure a balance of social, ethical, environmental and economic impacts are undertaken throughout the procurement process [WM].

Economic – waste management
Strategy

- Improving waste collection, disposal, recycling and public sector efficiency and resource use is a key part of the Climate Change and Low Emissions Strategy [GM].
- Importance of the circular economy integrated into the main strategy, including support for organisations, mentoring, demonstration projects and supply chain support [TV].

Delivery

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “We will seek to move up the waste hierarchy, pursue opportunities for exporting waste processing services and integrate with electricity and heat generation” [SCR].
Economic – energy
Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Low Carbon Project Delivery Unit is a specialist team part-funded by the CA to support Greater Manchester to deliver a low carbon energy projects across the city-region [GM]. Development of an Energy Alliance building on existing academic, research and industry-facing strengths in the local area [NE]. Teesside Collective is a cluster of energy-intensive industries with a shared vision: to establish Teesside as the go-to location for... Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), supported by the CA [TV]. Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambition to advance a Low Carbon Energy Strategy for the City Region, integrated with waste and utilities [SCR]. Using a Strategic Infrastructure Plan to incorporate future activity related to energy, including heat networks, energy efficiency and CCS [TV]. Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the CA to enable acceleration of the delivery of a low carbon energy investment pipeline worth up to £200m, to include smart grids, heat networks, energy trading and energy efficiency [GM]. Central government to support with energy efficiency, community energy and business energy tax reform as part of a further devolution deal [GM]. “We will make the most of our key natural assets to create a Renewable Energy Company to harness the river Mersey and use offshore tidal energy to power our homes and workplaces” [LCR]. The creation of a £20m National Centre for Energy Systems Integration will bring together energy expertise from across the world to work collaboratively on future energy networks [NE]. The scale of the CA means it can seek ELENA funding for a large-scale energy project to generate and manage energy demand to benefit businesses and residents [WM].
Economic – transport
Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low Emission and Climate Change strategy specifically focuses on transport and sets out numerous 'we will' actions, including ULEV uptake, low emission taxis, low emissions vehicle procurement, minimum standards for buses, improve walking and cycling etc. [GM]. Target setting within the Growth and Reform Plan: "we are repositioning cycling as a long-term element of the commuting mix in GM, with an ambitious target of 10% mode share by 2025." This is achievable through £22m of DfT investment [GM]. An Electric Vehicle Strategy has been produced by Merseytravel, which includes: establishing charging infrastructure, e-car and taxi clubs and 'e-mobility hubs,' charging point guidance and feasibility work for low emission freight [LCR]. Target setting: 25% more trips made by bus made by 2026, 50% more trips made by rail by 2026 and 100% more trips made by bicycle [WY]. Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the Buses Bill to help set emissions standards, implement smart ticketing systems, improve frequency and quality of services etc. [C&P, GM, LCR, NE, SCR, WY, WM].

- "We will utilise potential devolved powers to re-regulate the buses and to only buy clean electric or hydrogen buses from 2020." £0.42m funding has already been commissioned for emission reducing and fuel saving devices to be fitted to buses [LCR].
- Implementation of an Apprenticeship Bike Scheme, supporting individuals to access employment and skills with a free bike [LCR].
- Utilisation of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF), for example £11m requested from Local Growth Funding to deliver LSTF activity [SCR].
- First UK trial of tram train technology, presenting the opportunity for effective and affordable mass transit connectivity to deliver a 21st Century mass transit network [SCR].
- Investment partly from the CA will support the establishment of a new Institute for Advanced Automotive Propulsion Systems, a global centre of excellence delivering transformational research and innovation in the development of ultra-low emission vehicles [WoE].
- Work with the freight industry to improve freight movements and environmental performance, including providing electric vehicle infrastructure and supporting larger HGVs with alternative fuels [WY].
- Increase overall spending on cycling forty-fold to £10 per head across the West Midlands (up from 25p per head), by seeking new Government funding and improve facilities such as parking, cycle to work schemes, shower facilities and awareness [WM].
- Huge investments in cycle infrastructure and changing practices, including a Cycle Charter allowing this upgrade to be endorsed at all levels of seniority and politics. "By 2033, we want to raise cycling to 10% of all trips" [WM].
- An effective and well used intelligent mobility solution which supports integrated travel across all means of transport, enabling people to make sustainable travel choices using live travel information and seamless payment systems which span multiple modes [WM].

3.4 Case studies

The following section provides further depth on some good examples of sustainability thematic activity taking place that are either run or supported by the combined authority.

Greater Manchester: Leading the Way

GMCA has demonstrated leadership in low carbon integration, demonstration and implementation since its inception and continues to do so as a result of:

- Ambitious targets: 48% reduction in carbon by 2020 from 1990 levels.
- Whole Place [Implementation Plan](#) which sets its climate change activities.
- The establishment of the [Low Carbon Hub](#), providing collaboration.
- A [Green Growth Team](#) set up to help support businesses.
- Delivery of projects through their Low Carbon Project Delivery Unit, including heat networks, smart grids and an Energy Procurement Agency.



Sheffield: Grey to Green

This is [an exciting project](#) transforming Sheffield's Riverside Business District from 'grey' redundant road space into 'green' flower meadows and wetlands in a growing business and living area.

£3.4 million has been invested in Phase 1 and over time further phases will turn redundant roads into attractive new linear public spaces. This will include innovative perennial flower meadows, an interlinked sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS), rain gardens, public art and high quality paved footways and street furniture. All this will create an attractive setting for existing and new investment and jobs, as well as improve the city's resilience to climate change.



Tees Valley: Circular Economy

TVCA has long championed the case for low carbon approaches to production as a means of meeting carbon reduction targets and improving competitiveness. Due to the region's strengths, the CA is embedding the concept of the circular economy into all its activities. Two features include:

Foresight design: Examining all aspects of production and then looking at related opportunities for the use and reuse of by-products, waste and heat; and

Integration: Combining large heat users with communities to provide opportunities for other industrial processes and enterprises, co-located to maximise collaboration.

More information is found in their [SEP](#).



North East: Go Smarter

[Go Smarter](#) is the sustainable travel hub for individuals, organisations and businesses to turn to for details on their commute and how to travel sustainability from A to B. It includes walking and cycling routes, bus and train timetables and advice on sustainable driving. There are also specific sections of the hub:

Businesses: The [Go Smarter Business Network](#) provides a forum for businesses encouraging them to work together to address local transport issues, as well as offering a range of member benefits and exclusive travel offers.

Schools: Go Smarter promotes sustainable travel through a comprehensive range of [school](#) projects. These help to educate and encourage parents and children to make achievable changes to their journeys.



West Yorkshire: Flood Resilience

As a response to the broad extent and impact of previous flooding and because a greater frequency and severity of future floods are likely due to climate change, the leaders of the WYCA [commissioned a review](#) of this, to report on:

- the economic impact of the floods;
- the lessons learned by and best practice for emergency response and civil contingency arrangements;
- how recovery from such civil emergencies can be improved;
- the potential steps that need to be undertaken to improve the resilience and preparedness for the future.

The study helped to develop a series of recommendations to adapt to flood risk.



West of England: Low Emission Transport

The Institute for [Advanced Automotive Propulsion Systems](#) (IAAPS) will be a new research and innovation facility based at the Bristol and Bath Science Park. It will be industry-led and compete on a global scale to deliver future generations of advanced propulsion systems.

The facility will offer deep insights into the complex nature of transitioning to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles. This will include the electrification of vehicles, as well as unique layouts and configurations of the propulsion system for driverless cars. It will help build the UK's propulsion capacity for the future.

The combined authority is part-funding this initiative through the Local Growth Fund.



Liverpool City Region: Healthy Travel

The combined authority is working with partners to help embed health and wellbeing across its main priorities, especially by encouraging active travel. The combined authority is clear about the importance of this for its residents and for the economy. Activities include:

- Encouraging a shift from the car to cycling, walking and public transport.
- Helping Public Health colleagues to better address issues of childhood obesity by promoting better travel choices within schools.
- Integrating travel modes into health and wellbeing strategies.

The combined authority has also pledged to monitor walking and cycling via the Index of Usage. More details are in their [Transport Plan](#).



West Midlands: Energy and innovation

The combined authority is promoting the low carbon economy and has built key local strengths into its [Strategic Economic Plan](#) including transport, buildings and energy.

These issues were reinforced by the new mayor launching the [Science and Innovation Audit](#) in which 75% of its market driven priorities are related to these areas. Energy is a particular strength and related market opportunities are being exploited by specific partnership projects. For example, the [Energy Capital](#) initiative is looking at promoting inward investment and looking for other opportunities through further devolution, including Energy Innovation Zones. The West Midlands also leads way in developing partnerships to support these initiatives, for example through the [Innovative Low Carbon Working Group](#).



4 WMCA results

This section provides a more detailed analysis of how the WMCA is performing on sustainability to date and recommendations on what it could do to improve this further.

Table 6: WMCA score in terms of progressing the 5 key sustainability themes and the overall score awarded to the WMCA

People	Environment	Low carbon economy	Economic – energy	Economic – transport	Overall score
56%	44%	50%	42%	70%	52%

The analysis shows the extensive good practice that the WMCA has already demonstrated on sustainability issues. In order to improve, maintain momentum and ensure that projects can be implemented, there are many things that the CA can do now that should not be particularly onerous or resource intensive to implement, such as the amalgamation of targets and using existing tools.

The key is to find the resource to establish a long-term sustainability partner and/or team embedded within the CA that is able to drive forward the agenda; at present it is difficult to see how this can happen and how targets can be monitored without this mechanism, with the possible exception of transport through Transport for West Midlands.

Table 7 provides details on how the WMCA scored against each of the criteria and for what reasons, and how this score could be improved by implementing a series of next steps (far right column). Comments drawn from this analysis and the subsequent recommendations are based on literature that was reviewed in August 2017.

The recommendations in bold are key ones that often overlap, but will make a big difference, such as resourcing a sustainability team. The other recommendations are those that are more specific to the topic or are secondary in terms of making a big improvement on the benchmark performance next year.

0 - Minimal evidence	1 - Some evidence	2 - Good evidence	3 - Leading evidence
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Table 7: Overall analysis of WMCA progress on sustainability and recommendations

Metric	Score 0-3	Overall comments on evidence of progress	Next steps / recommendations
LEADERSHIP			
1.If there is an elected Mayor is there any evidence in their manifesto around key sustainability issues?			

Metric	Score 0-3	Overall comments on evidence of progress	Next steps / recommendations
1.a People Health inequality, fuel poverty, air quality	2	The mayor understands key sustainability issues, particularly around transport and is backing several existing projects. There is a clear demonstration of projects and ambition within the manifesto.	Key recommendation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Mayor should support the development of an environment / sustainability Board and staffing structure to ensure his aspirations can become reality. Other recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure that there are regular progress updates on pledges and proposed activities related to sustainability.Use influence to draw down funds and opportunities nationally to develop the WMCA offer on transport and energy in particular.Learn from work going on in Greater Manchester and Liverpool to strengthen natural capital and environmental aspirations.
1.b Environment Carbon emissions, green infrastructure, biodiversity, natural capital, climate resilience	1		
1.c Economic Low carbon economy, business support, low carbon buildings, waste, recycling and re-use	2		
1.d Economic Energy systems, renewables, district heating, energy efficiency	2		
1.e Economic Public transport, cycling/walking, low emission vehicles and infrastructure	3		
2. On the cabinet or board of the Combined Authority is there any evidence of clear responsibility for key sustainability issues?			
2.a People	2	Overall, it seems most aspects of sustainability will be covered by the portfolio holders in post.	Key recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Further clarity on what each designated portfolio holder will cover would be helpful, e.g. does air quality fall under the transport or environment remit?Can each portfolio holder produce a specific plan of priorities and activities?
2.b Environment	2		
2.c Economic – low carbon economy	2		
2.d Economic – energy	2		
2.e Economic – transport	2		
3. In the supporting officer and partner structure Is there evidence of staff and working groups responsible for the integration and delivery of key sustainability issues?			
3.a People	0	No evidence of this. This is quite concerning given the ambitions outlined in the	Key recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Establish an embedded sustainability delivery</u>

Metric	Score 0-3	Overall comments on evidence of progress	Next steps / recommendations
3.b Environment	0	various strategies. Transport for West Midlands can address sustainable transport issues, but aside from this it is not clear who is ensuring that targets are met and that projects are implemented.	<p><u>partner or manager within the WMCA whose sole responsibility is to ensure that sustainability related activities and targets outlined in the SEP and the mayoral manifesto can be achieved. This is the key action that will help to achieve the WMCA's sustainability ambitions, enable the other recommendations to be implemented and to enable the WMCA to achieve 80% or higher in future benchmarking exercises</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish an environment / sustainability Board, led by the portfolio holder for environment into which the work undertaken by the individual / organisation can be fed and priorities driven.• Ensure the Board meets regularly and reports into the main WMCA Board.
3.c Economic – low carbon economy	0		
3.d Economic – energy	0		
3.e Economic – transport	2		
STRATEGY			
4. Is there an overarching strategy produced by the Combined Authority for the area? How are key sustainability issues integrated and monitored into the strategy or strategies?			
4.a People	2	A good spread of sustainability related targets, strengths, opportunities and activities are included in the main Strategic Economic Plan which shows commitment. It is a bit light on specific programmes that are being/will be undertaken and also how targets will be monitored.	<p>Key recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that activities and targets related to sustainability in the SEP are joined up and complement the mayoral manifesto.• Ensure reporting on the monitoring of targets and activities against the SEP is transparent and clear.
4.b Environment	2		
4.c Economic – low carbon economy	2		
4.d Economic – energy	2		
4.e Economic – transport	2		
5. Is there a strategy or strategies that focuses on an issue or issues relating to sustainability that provides details on commitments and future projects?			

Metric	Score 0-3	Overall comments on evidence of progress	Next steps / recommendations
5.a People	3	There are some excellent potential projects and activity demonstrated across numerous different strategies that focus solely or partly on sustainability issues, which is good to see. There is less discussion on energy or the low carbon economy compared to some other CA's but it is still mentioned as an important component. The key question will be how this is delivered in light of the lack of evidence of an environment or sustainability team.	Key recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish a sustainability team, supporting body and/or Board to ensure these activities can be delivered (see above)Ensure each strategy complements each other and that there is no unintentional overlap; again, a sustainability team/Board could ensure this is the case.
5.b Environment	3		
5.c Economic – low carbon economy	2		
5.d Economic – energy	2		
5.e Economic – transport	3		
6.Is there evidence of long-term issues being considered and a structured process against which to monitor them, e.g. climate risk, demographics, technology etc.			
6.a People	2	Long term issues are generally well addressed and considered, excluding climate resilience. It is less clear how these will be monitored going forward.	Key recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Undertake a climate change risk assessment analysing the threats and opportunities posed by increasing extreme weather on, for example, health, infrastructure and the natural environment.Ensure that any proposed projects that include the development of green infrastructure analyse the impact it could have on mitigating climate impacts such as flooding and overheating.Use the Science and Innovation Audit findings to monitor forward-thinking organisations and institutes that can help to address long-term issues and involve them in decision making. Other recommendations
6.b Environment	0		
6.c Economic – low carbon economy	1		
6.d Economic – energy	1		
6.e Economic – transport	2		

Metric	Score 0-3	Overall comments on evidence of progress	Next steps / recommendations
			<ul style="list-style-type: none">Work through the SWM Futures Toolkit to identify and address long-term uncertainties.
7. Is there an evidence base setting out the scale of the CA's strengths and opportunities related to the low carbon and resilient economy?			
7.a People	1	Energy and transport strengths and opportunities are well understood, but less understanding of other aspects. The recently published Science and Innovation Audit helps to set out the key strengths; three of the four market driven priorities are sustainability related.	Key recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none">See two comments above regarding climate risk and green infrastructure.Ensure data pertaining habitat loss, flood risk, air quality, fuel poverty levels and health inequality is analysed to determine locations of concern and opportunity. Other recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none">Peruse the WM Low Carbon Investment Prospectus for a greater indication of the region's low carbon economic strengths.
7.b Environment	0		
7.c Economic – low carbon economy	2		
7.d Economic – energy	3		
7.e Economic – transport	3		
8. Is there evidence of the CA measuring and monitoring sustainability metrics, such as carbon emissions, renewable energy generation, health inequality and/or air pollution levels?			
8.a People	2	The WMCA is one of the strongest at attempting to set targets on various sustainability issues, including carbon emissions, air quality, health inequality, cycling uptake and green infrastructure. The only concern is that there is some discrepancy between the listed targets and it is not clear if they match.	Key recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none">Pool together the various targets from the different strategies and ensure they are complementary. Remove any that are out of date.Consider implementing a renewable energy target to strengthen the case for clean energy championed by the Energy Capital initiative.Establishment of a sustainability supporting team would help to ensure all targets are consistently monitored. Other recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure progress against each target is published
8.b Environment	3		
8.c Economic – low carbon economy	2		
8.d Economic – energy	0		
8.e Economic – transport	2		

Metric	Score 0-3	Overall comments on evidence of progress	Next steps / recommendations
			transparently and in an engaging manner.
DELIVERY			
9. Is there evidence of a commitment to integrate or fund the development of specific programmes that will help deliver sustainability objectives?			
9.a People	2	Some projects being / have been implemented pertaining to sustainability; in time, a lot more will need to be demonstrated given the ambition displayed in key strategies. The Annual Review could have done more to raise sustainability up the agenda.	Key recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none">Establishment of a sustainability team / supporting organisation will help to ensure projects are implemented on the groundCapitalise on existing initiatives (such as Energy Capital) and strengths (as detailed in the Science and Innovation Audit) to help focus and catalyse projects Other recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none">Produce an Annual Review and ensure that sustainability projects are incorporated into this.
9.b Environment	1		
9.c Economic – low carbon economy	1		
9.d Economic – energy	1		
9.e Economic – transport	2		
10. At overall programme level, what systems are in place to monitor and appraise the overall impact of all funded activity on sustainability objectives?			
10.a People	2	The various targets and the Environment Strategy show that all projects are likely to consider their impact on sustainability issues. Joining these targets up would help further, as would more detail on how sustainability has already been considered in non-sustainability projects commissioned by the CA.	Key recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">See comments above regarding targets.Consider using the environment criteria, or an adapted version thereof, created for assessing the impact of HS2 on the natural environment for wider WMCA projects to ensure they consider sustainable development and their impact on the environment.
10.b Environment	2		
10.c Economic – low carbon economy	2		
10.d Economic – energy	1		
10.e Economic – transport	2		
11. Is progress on sustainability being reported externally and, if so, how?			
11.a People	2	Once the relevant documents are discovered it is clear that the CA is	Other recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Produce an Annual Review and ensure that

Metric	Score 0-3	Overall comments on evidence of progress	Next steps / recommendations
11.b Environment	2	expressing how important sustainability is. The weakness are 1) the Annual Review, which does not include much information; 2) the website, which does not show how the CA is embracing the sustainability agenda; and 3) clarity over how the targets will be reported on. The Performance Management Framework does this to a degree but it is not a user-friendly document and is not prominent on the website.	<div>sustainability projects are incorporated into this.</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Create a sustainability page on the CA website containing details of projects, targets (and reporting of these) and strategies.
11.c Economic – low carbon economy	2		
11.d Economic – energy	1		
11.e Economic – transport	2		
12. Has the CA identified new powers and responsibilities that further devolution would help to deliver local sustainability priorities?			
12.a People	0	No evidence of further devolution at this stage.	<div>Other recommendations:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure sustainability projects are considered in any discussions around further devolution.
12.b Environment	0		
12.c Economic – low carbon economy	0		
12.d Economic – energy	0		
12.e Economic – transport	0		

5 WMCA Recommendations for Improvement

Referring to the tables in section 4, this sections summarises the recommendations that the WMCA should consider taking forward in order to achieve 80% or higher in years to come, in other words, leading practice.

Key recommendation: Establish an embedded sustainability delivery partner or manager within the WMCA whose sole responsibility is to ensure that sustainability related activities and targets outlined in the SEP and the mayoral manifesto can be achieved. This is the key action that will help to achieve the WMCA's sustainability ambitions, enable the other recommendations to be implemented and to enable the WMCA to achieve 80% or higher in future benchmarking exercises.

Further recommendations include:

Leadership

- Move forward proposals to establish an environment / sustainability Board, led by the portfolio holder for environment into which the work undertaken by the partner or manager can be fed.
- Clarify the precise remit of the Environment Portfolio holder and enable each portfolio lead to produce a specific plan of priorities and activities.
- Acquire the mayor's support to ensure that the above activities are endorsed and to help draw down funds and opportunities nationally to develop the WMCA offer on transport and energy.

Strategy

- Ensure that activities and targets related to sustainability in the SEP are joined up and complement the mayoral manifesto. Considering adding a renewable energy uptake target.
- Ensure reporting on the monitoring of targets and activities against the SEP is transparent and clear. Include further monitoring using habitat loss, flood risk, air quality and fuel poverty data.
- Publish reporting of the above on a designated sustainability page on the WMCA website.
- Produce an Annual Review and ensure that sustainability progress is incorporated into this.
- Ensure each strategy related to sustainability complements each other and that there is no unintentional overlap.
- Undertake a climate change risk assessment analysing the threats and opportunities posed by increasing extreme weather on, for example, health, infrastructure and the natural environment. Develop an understanding on how green infrastructure can help tackle these issues.
- Use the Science and Innovation Audit and SWM Futures Toolkit to monitor forward-thinking organisations and institutes that can help to address long-term issues, develop projects and involve them in decision making.

Delivery

- Consider using the environment criteria, or an adapted version thereof, created for assessing the impact of HS2 on the natural environment for wider WMCA projects to ensure they consider sustainable development and the impact on the environment.
- Ensure sustainability projects are considered in any discussions around further devolution.

Recommendations for other Combined Authorities and National Organisations

SWM can share the results of this study with other individual combined authorities if they wish to see the details and justification of their allocated scores. We can also suggest areas for improvement and develop an improvement plan with their local partners. For national organisations seeking to identify good practice around a particular sustainability theme we can also provide some further analysis.

Contact enquiries@swm.org.uk for more information.

6 Annex

The lists below provide the links to the sources that were reviewed when undertaking this research.

Cambridge & Peterborough

Website: <http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/>

The Constitution: <http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/assets/Combined-Authority/Combined-Authority-Constitution.pdf>

The Plain English guide to devolution:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/608527/Plain_English_Guides_to_Devolution_Cam_and_Peter.PDF

Devolution Deal: <http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/assets/Combined-Authority/Cambridgeshire-and-Peterborough-Devolution-Deal.pdf>

Mayor 100 day plan: <http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/assets/Mayor/The-Mayor-of-Cambridgeshire-and-Peterborough-100-Day-Plan.pdf>

Mayor's commitments: <http://www.jamespalmer4mayor.co.uk/>

Greater Manchester

Website: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/>

Health: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/info/20008/health_and_social_care

Low carbon section: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/info/20005/low_carbon

Low carbon Hub: <http://gmlch.onthepatform.org.uk/>

Low emissions plan: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/downloads/file/221/change_and_low_emissions_implementation_plan_2016-2020

Low carbon pledges and networks: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/info/20108/networks_and_pledges

Low carbon projects: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/info/20111/low_carbon_project_delivery_unit

Low carbon fund: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/info/20035/low_carbon_fund

Transport plan: <http://www.tfgm.com/2040/Pages/strategy/assets/2017/2-17-0078-GM-2040-Full-Strategy-Document.pdf>

Air quality plan: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/airquality>

Low emissions strategy: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/downloads/file/229/gm_low-emission_strategy_dec_2016 - contains useful summary of relationship with various plans on page 5.

Natural capital group: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/info/20109/natural_capital_group

Greater Manchester strategy (SEP equivalent): https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/downloads/file/8/stronger_together_-_greater_manchester_strategy

Growth and Reform Plan: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/downloads/file/10/gm_growth_and_reform_plan%20

Annual report (item 9): https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/286/joint_gmcaagma_executive_board

City Deal:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221014/Greater-Manchester-City-Deal-final_0.pdf

Devolution Deal:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/369858/Greater_Manchester_Agreement_i.pdf

Further devolution: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/devolution_november2015

Manifesto:
https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/andy4mayor/pages/68/attachments/original/1489493923/Andy_Burham_Manifesto_A4_12pp_copy.pdf?1489493923

SIA: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/downloads/download/69/greater_manchester_and_east_cheshire_a_science_and_innovation_audit_report_sponsored_by_the_department_for_business_energy_and_industrial_strategy

Liverpool City Region

Website: <http://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/>

Growth Strategy (SEP equivalent): <https://www.liverpoollep.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/SGS-Final-main-lowres.compressed.pdf>

Devolution deal:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/477385/Liverpool_devolution_deal_unsigned.pdf

Further devolution:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508118/160314_Further_devolution_to_Liverpool_City_Region_-_FINAL.pdf

Mayoral manifesto: <http://www.steverotheram.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/FINAL-Steve-Rotheram-Our-future-together-Screen-min.pdf>

<http://www.steverotheram.com/steve-rotheram-pledges-flagship-solar-scheme-for-liverpool-city-region/>

Mayor's portfolio appointments: <https://www.liverpoollep.org/news/metro-mayor-reveals-new-team-new-purpose-combined-authority/>

LCR SUD Strategy (joint CA and LEP): <https://www.liverpoollep.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/01-06-2016-LCR-DRAFT-SUD-LEP-Website-Version.pdf>

Report to mayor on sustainability – 2015: <http://liverpool.gov.uk/media/8806/mayoral-commission-on-environmental-sustainability-final-report-march-2015.pdf>

Transport plan: <https://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/local-transport-delivery/Documents/8375%20Plan%20for%20growth%20WEB%20FINAL.pdf>

EV strategy: <http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/local-transport-delivery/Documents/E-Mobility-Strategy.pdf>

Have not included LCR Sustainable Energy Action Plan – as only LEP branded and over 5 years old.

Have not included LCR & Warrington GI Framework – not CA and 4 years old

North East

Website: <http://www.northeastca.gov.uk/>

No devolution deal yet

No mayor

Sustainable Transport Behaviour Change Programme:

http://www.northeastca.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file_attachments/NECA%20Application%20to%20Access%20Fund%20September%202016.pdf

<http://gosmarter.co.uk/about-us>

New LEP SEP endorsed by CA: <http://www.nelep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/North-East-SEP-FINAL-March-2017.pdf>

Health and Wealth: Closing the Gap

http://www.northeastca.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file_attachments/Health%20and%20Wealth%20Closing%20the%20Gap%20in%20the%20North%20East%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf

Sheffield City Region

Website (joint CA/LEP): <https://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/>

Devolution deal: <http://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/SCR-Devolution-Agreement-2015.pdf>

SEP (LEP by endorsed by CA): <http://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/SCR-Growth-Plan-March-2014.pdf>

Integrated infrastructure plan (LEP and CA): <https://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/economic-strategy/scr-integrated-infrastructure-plan/>.

SIA: <https://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/sia/>

Doesn't include SCR Stern Review as published in 2009

No mayor

Tees Valley

Website: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/>

Cabinet: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/tees-valley-combined-authority/leadership/tees-valley-combined-authority-board/>

Staff structure: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Tees-Valley-Combined-Authority-Organisation-Chart.pdf>

SEP: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/TVCA207-SEP-Document-Full-WEB.pdf>

Devolution deal:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470127/Tees_Valley_Devo_Deal_FINAL_formatted_v3.pdf

Connecting the Tees Valley (Transport Plan): <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Connect2026.pdf>

Infrastructure Plan: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/SIP-EXEC-SUMMARY-Jan-2015.pdf> (not CA logo but endorsed as on website)

Renewables and low carbon: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/business/key-sectors/renewable-energy/>

Teesside Collective: <http://www.teessidecollective.co.uk/>

Cannot find mayoral manifesto

Not included: Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy 2010-2020 as not endorsed by CA and not on their website. <http://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/127632/tvccpreport.pdf>.

Not included: 'An assessment of the impact of climate change on the natural environment of the Tees Valley' because quite old and not endorsed by CA or on their website
<http://teesvalleynaturepartnership.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Impact-of-Climate-Change-on-Natural-Environment-Final-Report-May-2012.pdf>

West of England

Website: <https://www.westofengland-ca.org.uk/>
<https://www.westofengland-ca.org.uk/business/>

Devolution deal:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508112/160315_West_of_England_Devolution_Agreement_Draft_-_FINAL.pdf

Cannot find mayoral manifesto

SIA: <http://gw4.ac.uk/files/2016/10/SWW-SIA-MainReport-Final.pdf>

ULEV plan: <https://www.westofengland-ca.org.uk/region-leads-development-ultra-low-emission-vehicles/>

Joint Spatial Plan: acknowledged but not analysed:

<https://www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk/consult.ti/JSPIO2015/view?objectId=274387#274387>

West Yorkshire

Website: <http://westyorks-ca.gov.uk/>

Management Team: https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/about/senior_management_team/

SEP: <http://www.the-lep.com/LEP/media/New/SEP%20documents/SEP-2016-2036-FINAL.pdf>

No devolution deal

No mayor

Corporate plan (scroll to bottom): <http://westyorks-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/>

Bus strategy: <http://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/uploadedFiles/Content/Transport/West%20Yorkshire%20Bus%20Strategy%20Technical%20Report%20JULY%20FINAL.pdf>

Transport strategy (1): http://westyorks-ca.gov.uk/uploadedFiles/Content/Transport/Transport_Plan/Transport%20Main%20part%201%20reduced.pdf

Transport Strategy (2): http://westyorks-ca.gov.uk/uploadedFiles/Content/Transport/Transport_Plan/Transport%20Main%20part%202%20reduced.pdf

WY Low Emissions Strategy: <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/3590/west-yorkshire-low-emissions-strategy.pdf>

Flood review: <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/uploadedFiles/Content/News/Leeds%20City%20Region%20Flood%20Review%20Report%20-%20Executive%20Summary%20FINAL.pdf>

New Leeds City Region Infrastructure Investment Framework, to be developed by late 2017

West Midlands

Website: <https://www.wmca.org.uk>

Cabinet members: <https://www.wmca.org.uk/news/west-midlands-mayor-andy-street-names-his-team-for-the-coming-year/>

Annual review and 2017-18 plan: <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1381/wmca-annual-plan-2017-2018.pdf>

Devolution deal – November 2015:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/477421/West_Midlands_devolution_deal_unsigned_final_web.pdf

Strategic Economic Plan June 2016: <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1382/full-sep-document.pdf>

SEP Performance Management Framework: <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1389/sep-pmf-june-2016.pdf>

Investment Prospectus – June 2016 <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1370/wmca-forum-for-growth-prospectus.pdf>

Land Commission Final Report – Feb 2017 <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1412/wmlc-final-report.pdf>

Mental Health Commission Final Report – January 2017

<https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1420/wmca-mental-health-commission-thrive-full-doc.pdf> <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1419/uob-mental-health-in-the-wmca-report.pdf>

Transport - Movement for Growth June 2016

<https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/1099/movement-for-growth.pdf>

Cycling Charter August 2016: <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/1067/cycle-charter.pdf>

Low Emissions Bus Delivery Plan July 2016:

https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1366/west-midlands-low-emission-delivery-plan_elementenergy-for-transport-for-west-midlands_july2016.pdf

WMCA Environmental Policy June 2016

<https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1391/environmental-policy.pdf>

WMCA Environmental Strategy 2014-19 – rebranded Centro document as WMCA in June

2016: <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1392/environmental-strategy-2014-2019-pdf-2017-version.pdf>

SIA: <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/1682/west-midlands-sia-final-for-publication-21617.pdf>

Mayoral Renewal Plan – April 2017

<https://andy4wm.co.uk/RenewalPlan>

-END-
