

# Sustainability Strategy & Action Plan

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## Lead Organisation:

Sustainability West Midlands  
Project Manager: Anna Bright (Chief Executive)

## Customers:



## Project Duration:

November 2019 – February 2020

## The Project

In July 2019, SWM member, [City of Wolverhampton Council](#), became the first local authority in the Black Country to declare a Climate Emergency. The council commissioned SWM to provide an independent review of their draft sustainability strategy and action plan, the methodology for calculating their carbon footprint, and input to their citizens assembly.



## Aims

The council had recently completed their draft Sustainability Strategy and Action plan and were keen to ensure that it was independently reviewed prior to going out for public consultation. SWM undertook this review with consideration of:

- The clarity of the scope. This included activities and priorities within the Council's remit including energy supply and demand for the estate, transport and waste along with natural capital.
- Wider 'place' making activities (e.g. support to residents and businesses)
- Links to other relevant priorities and outcomes including:
  - International policy and direction such as the Sustainable Development Goals
  - National policy and strategy including the Climate Change Committee Net Zero Report, Resources & Waste Strategy, the Clean Growth Strategy, the Industrial Strategy, and the 25 Year Environment Plan
  - Local policy including the West Midlands Carbon Reduction Target, Local Industrial Strategy, the West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy, the West Midlands Sustainability Roadmap to 2030 and the Black Country Plan
- Guidance such as:
  - Ashden's 'Climate Action Co-Benefits Toolkit – Cutting Carbon and Improving People's Lives'
  - The SCATTER emissions tool for local authorities
  - The data, evidence and methodology used (for carbon footprinting)
  - Ownership, deliverability, and monitoring
- Good practice from other local authorities both locally and nationally

## Challenges

The main challenge of the project was the delivery timescale which was very short. However, SWM are a small organisation and therefore able to mobilise and respond quickly. We are also able to draw on the expertise of our associates which was invaluable in the delivery of this project.

## The Outcome

SWM have developed criteria for reviewing local council climate action plans that contains 34 individual metrics based on a synthesis of good practice guidance and examples. The draft climate strategy and action plan were reviewed against the criteria, rated and future improvements suggested. A Red Amber Green (RAG) rating was used. Green indicates good progress at this stage. Amber indicates more progress required but given the development status of the strategy most of this is expected. Red indicates this should be a priority for further development work.

## Results

Of the 34 metrics within the criteria, the draft strategy and action plan scored 11 Green, 19 Amber and 4 Red. This demonstrates a strong commitment and direction in a draft plan prior to consultation, with lots of opportunity for further strengthening during the next development stages.

The priority issues highlighted include applying a similar carbon emissions methodology to the wider city area and ensuring vulnerable groups were engaged during the process, rather than assuming the citizen assembly alone would address this

### Our Climate Emergency Declaration pledged to:

- Make all council activities net carbon zero by 2028.
- Ensure all strategic decisions and budgets are in line with shift to net carbon zero.
- Ensure robust governance is in place to embed and champion Climate Change across the council.
- Appoint a Member Champion for Climate Change.
- Work with partners across the city and region to work towards a net carbon zero future.
- Request a review of the investment strategy within the West Midlands Pension Fund to give due consideration to Climate
- Lobby national and regional powers to secure greater resources for tackling Climate Change
- Hold a Citizens Assembly to direct work around Climate Change, and proactively include young people in co-producing strategy and future of the city.

## In the Future

The council are planning a series of workshops for councillors and officers, supported by SWM, to engage on the strategy and action plan and ensure that everyone is aware of how they can contribute.

## Links and Downloads

Details of all climate change and sustainability related activity are available on the council's [website](#), along with their '[Future Generations: Our Climate Commitment](#)' strategy.

## Contact Details

For further information on the project or to work with us in one of a variety of ways, please contact the SWM team on 0121 237 5890 or [enquiries@swm.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@swm.org.uk).