
WMCA Environment and Energy Insights

We're Greener Together!

Hello, and welcome to the May Edition of our Environment & Energy Insights bulletin.

In the bulletin, you'll find coverage of the diverse work underway across the region, including circular economy, business support and the Net Zero Neighbourhoods.

We will be continuing to bring you an edition every other month, so please let us know if you have got any stories or news you would like to share in a future edition of the Environment & Energy Insights. Get in touch at environment@wmca.org.uk

News from WMCA

The Reuse Hub: circular economy in Wolverhampton

The Reuse Hub, Wolverhampton opened in July 2024 and works to reduce the carbon footprint of the construction sector in the region by working with local construction providers to recover surplus and usable materials that can be remarketed to the local community. The Hub stocks a wide range of materials from plasterboard to doors, and insulation to paving slabs. If you or your organisation are in need of materials for a project, or have surplus materials you'd like to dispose of sustainably, you can reach out to the Reuse Hub team [here](#).

The Reuse Hub was one of the projects funded by the WMCA Community Environment Fund, which you can find more about [here](#).



West Midlands Resource Reuse Network

Since April 2024, the WMCA has been piloting an approach to industrial symbiosis in the region through the West Midlands Resource Reuse Network (WMRRN). Industrial symbiosis refers to an approach to industrial decarbonisation which involves matching businesses together so that waste products can be reused in other sectors and industries.

Following a successful first year of pilot delivery, the WMCA is pleased to share that the WMRRN has been extended for an additional year, now running until at least March 2026. Since its launch, the WMRRN project has successfully engaged over 200 businesses in the region in the circular economy. The WMRRN has also practically delivered resource exchange opportunities for businesses which have ranged from the use of fibreglass dust and shop blast in industrial abrasives, to the extraction of silver from discarded medical products.

The extension of the project means that the WMRRN will continue to support businesses in the delivery of cost and carbon savings through greater material efficiency. More information on the WMRRN and how businesses can get involved can be found [here](#).

£15 million for the Business Energy Advice Service

Mayor of the West Midlands Richard Parker has announced that the Business Energy Advice Service (BEAS) pilot scheme, led by the WMCA and funded through the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, has secured another £15 million to support businesses to cut their energy usage and bills.

Businesses can apply for a free energy efficiency audit leading to an opportunity to secure between £1,000 and £100,000 of match funding to implement the recommended measures. Measures could include supporting investment in new machinery and equipment, improved manufacturing processes, or LED lighting, solar power, heat pumps, and insulation.

So far, BEAS has supported 2,400 businesses to identify measures to decarbonise and reduce energy demand, and this new funding will allow another 1,300 to benefit from the pilot and reduce the regions carbon emissions, as part of the journey to net zero by 2041.

Find out more about the extension of the BEAS programme [here](#).



Mayor Richard Parker with Sam Back and Oli Hurlow, founders of Attic Brew Co in Stirchley, Birmingham

Climate adaptation world cafes:

As part of the UKRI-funded project, [West Midlands Adapt](#), the University of Birmingham and Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) are running workshops to collect a regional understanding of community perspectives and lived experiences of severe weather and climate adaptation from a diverse range of citizens.

These workshops will take the form of world cafes - a structured conversational process of engagement – in sixteen wards across the West Midlands which have been selected based on criteria including their Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) scores and existing activity happening in the area. The world cafes are scheduled to be delivered between May-September 2025 and will be facilitated by community researchers recruited from the selected wards.

Findings from these workshops will be made available in due course. Following the workshops, a second phase of engagement will be held in 2026 focusing on four wards across the region (selected from the initial sixteen). These will focus on developing an innovative approach to neighbourhood adaptation planning.

Get involved in the West Midlands Regional Adaptation Network (RAN)

The purpose of the [West Midlands RAN](#) is to connect and build the skills and knowledge of people who have a role in preparing the region for climate change.

The first RAN meeting was convened by the WMCA and the University of Birmingham on the 30th of April 2025 and 46 partners from across 18 sectors attended. The meeting included presentations on severe weather impacts from Dudley Council, Transport for West Midlands and the West Midlands Fire Service.

The RAN meets quarterly, with the next meeting scheduled for June 2025. [Click here to register your interest](#) and find out more about joining the Regional Adaptation Network.

Mayor visits Brockmoor Net Zero Neighbourhood

Mayor of the West Midlands Richard Parker took a tour around the region's pioneering Net Zero Neighbourhood in Brockmoor, Dudley. The Mayor met residents to hear how the 'green' improvements being made to local homes – many of which are over 70 years old, and the local environment, are helping residents to live healthier lives.

Brockmoor has received more than £2.3m investment as part of the Net Zero Neighbourhood programme. Homes, the primary school and even the local pub are getting solar panels, while improvements are also being made to local infrastructure to encourage people out of their cars to walk short journeys. Six more pilot neighbourhoods in each of the other WMCA local authority areas are receiving a share of £3.2m as part of Energy Capital's [Local Net Zero Accelerator](#), aiming to demonstrate the value of area-based programmes.



Mayor Richard Parker with residents at Brockmoor.

Retrofit Networking Drinks

Energy Capital hosted the first in a series of Retrofit Networking Drinks after work at Primitivo Bar, Birmingham, sponsored by Ideal Heating. The event saw stakeholders come together to celebrate the launch of the £167m Devolved Buildings Retrofit Pilot, which will enable the West Midlands to accelerate its retrofit delivery programmes and hear more about the services businesses in the sector have to offer. If you would like to attend future events, please register your interest [using this form](#).



Rob Johnson, Head of Retrofit Delivery thanking Ideal Heating, sponsors of the first Regional Retrofit Drinks at Primitivo Bar.

WM Futures: seeking your views on our vision for the region

The WMCA has launched a consultation on the West Midlands Futures Green Paper to support a conversation across the West Midlands about the region's long-term strategic priorities as we embark on a ten-year programme of regional transformation to unlock inclusive growth and increase our residents' living standards. The consultation closes on 8th June.

To find out more about WM Futures and to input to the consultation, please visit the [website](#).

News from Partners

Solar Together West Midlands - buying solar panels and battery storage made easy

Recognising the negative impacts posed by climate change, four Councils; Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell and Solihull, are aiming to achieve net zero carbon emissions and support residents to transition to sustainable ways of living. As part of these efforts, the Councils are collaborating with Solar Together to boost solar energy adoption, reduce bills, and decrease carbon emissions.

The Councils have partnered with iChoosr Ltd, who are independent experts in groupbuying, to bring Solar Together to homeowners, community groups and businesses.

Solar Together is an innovative new scheme offering high-quality solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage. It is a group-buying scheme, which brings residents together to get high-quality solar panels at a competitive price, helping households through the process and keeping them informed at every stage.

For more information: <https://solartogether.co.uk/landing> and select the relevant Council.

Climate ambassadors: Seeking volunteers

Are you or your organisation interested in volunteering to support education settings with your expertise? Led by the University of Reading and EAUC, the Climate Ambassador scheme has been granted £2 million in funding from the Department for Education, to bolster support for education settings with free access to a skilled network of hundreds of trained volunteers from across relevant private, public, charity and education sectors to provide tailored guidance and support to progress their Climate Action Plans, that settings wouldn't otherwise have access to.

The Climate Ambassador scheme is mobilising a diverse network of trained volunteers from across England to support nurseries, schools, and colleges to take action on climate change and biodiversity loss, while inspiring the next generation about green careers and sustainability. It will help all education settings in England develop a climate action plan by the end of 2025.

The scheme is calling on individuals and employers, particularly those in the sustainability and environmental sector, from across England to support the scheme through the opportunity to volunteer. Education settings need people with a huge range of skills to help them effectively plan and deliver climate action.

If you are interested in finding out more on behalf of your organisation or as an individual volunteer, either visit the get involved [page](#), or email the West Midlands Hub Manager: climate-ambassadors-wm@keele.ac.uk

Aston University: £35.5 million for campus decarbonisation

Aston University have secured a £35.5m grant to accelerate decarbonisation of the campus energy supply. The grant awarded by the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) will fund the development of a 10MW Zero Carbon Energy Centre, reducing the university's dependence on fossil fuels and reducing carbon emissions by more than 90% compared to a 2005/06 baseline.



Future rounds of PSDS funding will be delivered via the West Midlands' Devolved Buildings Retrofit Pilot. [Click here](#) to find out more about the scheme.

170 more zero-emission electric buses in the West Midlands

National Express has rolled out a further 170 electric buses on the West Midlands network as part of a £95 million investment by the company to modernise its fleet. The latest addition to the fleet brings the total number of electric buses in operation to 329, meaning nearly a quarter of National Express West Midlands' bus fleet is now zero-emission.

In addition to the new vehicles, National Express West Midlands has completed a major infrastructure upgrade of its Yardley Wood depot. Originally built in 1938, the depot has been modernised with the installation of advanced charging infrastructure as

part of ongoing efforts to future-proof its operations and ensure long-term sustainability in its services. The bus operator's Perry Barr depot is also undergoing an electrification upgrade which is due to complete in the coming weeks.



Events

Join us at the West Midlands Clean Air Day Reception on 18th June 6pm - 8pm at the Midlands Metropolitan University Hospital. This special event marks the evening before [Clean Air Day 2025](#); the UK's largest air pollution awareness campaign. Join us for an engaging evening of speakers and networking, highlighting the importance of clean air for a healthier, more sustainable West Midlands. [Click here to register via Eventbrite](#).

Other regional events include:

- Closing the skills gap in the low carbon economy: LCEGS report insights, 4th June. Register [here](#).
- Circular Economy Club (Birmingham & West Midlands): Early Summer catch up, 5th June. Register [here](#).
- West Midlands Air Quality Conference, 5th June. Register [here](#).
- Sustainability West Midlands: Weathering the Storm- Climate Resilient Business, 10th June. Register [here](#).
- EcoBirmingham: Clean Air Day Celebration, 15th June. Register [here](#).
- WM-Net Zero Annual Event: connecting transport, clean air, climate action and health in the West Midlands, 19th June. Register [here](#).

Thank you for reading this latest edition of the Environment & Energy Insights bulletin. If you would like to hear more about our work, get involved or have any stories or news you would like to share in a future edition, please get in touch at environment@wmca.org.uk

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