

# West Midlands Greener Together

**Citizens' Panel**  
2022-2024



West Midlands  
Combined Authority



Greener  
Together

# Why a citizens' panel?

In June 2019, the WMCA declared a climate emergency and set a target for the West Midlands to have 'net zero' carbon emissions each year by 2041.



5 key areas of work were established to achieve this target;

- Nature
- Buildings
- Energy
- Transport
- Circular and Green Economy

Air quality, Behaviour Change and Climate Adaptation have recently been added as priorities to help us achieve net zero and a greener, fairer and healthier West Midlands.

In 2022, the WMCA recognised we needed participatory and deliberative processes to allow citizens to influence this area as the decisions made will affect the region for years to come.

We sent out 9,000 letters asking people to register their interest in being part of this Panel, and 30 of you were chosen to reflect the diversity of the West Midlands population.



# How have you influenced our work?

## Air Quality

**In June 2023, we met to discuss regional air quality, a new area of work for the WMCA. You helped to shape how we deliver air quality interventions by developing 13 guiding principles, which will be used to guide future air quality work. These have been included and mentioned throughout the West Midlands Combined Authority Air Quality Framework and its subsequent Implementation Plan.**

### Greener Together Citizens' Panel

The Greener Together Citizens' Panel has also developed several guiding principles for our air quality project implementation, and we are committed to working with these and the Panel hereon in. These are:

Cost and Responsibility: Air quality measures should be ...

- Brave and bold.
- Clear and transparent in their purpose and, where they generate income, how this will be spent.

- Placing the burden of change on the broadest shoulders, ensuring that specific groups are not disadvantaged by
- Higher costs and protecting the most vulnerable.
- Good value for money for councils so that council tax bills don't increase as a result.
- Putting public benefit before corporate interests and avoid monopolies being created.

### Engagement, education and awareness: Air quality measures should be...

- Done with, not to, people; involving a range of citizens and areas in the design process.
- Explained clearly to the public, including why they are necessary and what impacts they are designed to have.
- Making people aware of changes taking place and with due consideration for accessibility, alternative provision and any support that may be needed.

### Implementation: Air quality measures should be...

- Putting new services in place before removing old ones.
- Achievable, sustainable, measurable and long-term.
- Taking into account how impacts will be felt by neighbouring areas.
- Data-driven and evidence-based, learning where possible from other countries and other parts of the UK.
- Using incentivisation rather than punishment where possible and enable people to change their behaviour in positive ways.



# Retrofit

In September 2023, we focused on energy efficiency measures and funding for retrofitting homes. You heard from our Energy Capital team on their projects and your involvement influenced the following;

**Net Zero Neighbourhood (NZN) Project aims to help citizens live in healthier, more sustainable homes and communities. By considering which approaches you would like retrofit projects to take you helped to;**

- Cement thinking that **Local Authorities need to be project leads** and community organisations can support delivery.
- Investigate different ways of delivering NZN as **we were surprised community-led retrofit was not favoured.**
- Shape Sandwell's NZN citizen engagement as this is being led by a local community organisation and they are training volunteers to champion the project, but this is still being led by the Council.
- Help shape a new project investigating link between existing community retrofit groups and devolved funding opportunities.



# Devolution of funding

The Panel has helped to provide useful evidence to support retrofit interventions we would like to take; in particular;

- You fed back that you would value a strong local authority role in bringing forward projects. **We are now seeking to give LA's greater flexibility to do this** and promoting a place-based approach (as opposed to individual households)
- Clear that availability of reliable advice (or lack of) was a barrier to taking action, and we are looking at how we can build advice capacity across the region through devolved funding from government.





# Climate Adaptation

We spent four meetings in 2024 discussing climate adaptation in depth, to support our growing work in this area. The outputs from these sessions have been used for the following;

We had a meeting with the Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and they found our engagement with the Panel to be impressive as they are keen to support adaptation action in communities;

- Reflections were shared to demonstrate the need for coordinated and resourced adaptation that **involves and engages** communities but does not leave the *burden of cost and maintenance* to them to shoulder.
- WMCA were able to use comments to evidence the need for government bodies and arm's length bodies to lead the way – to not put the onus on individuals who might have limited power over their local areas and properties.



- Your project pitches on what adaptation measures you would like to see in your community, will be used in ongoing engagement with community groups looking for funding from the WMCA for adaptation.
- Your comments around communicating climate risks **is informing our mapping work** and a new adaptation literacy e-learning module being developed for local authorities.
- Your transport funding review has helped the transport team on **how we prioritise and invest in transport**, to shape conversations with the Mayor over the next few years. Also helps to make the case that we need to change the way we do things to make sure **climate adaptation is embedded from the start**.



# Transport

## Bus Franchising

In September 2024, you were introduced to a bus franchising model that could potentially be adopted in the region. Your work in this area has helped to shape;

- Our consultation to the public on bus franchising. You have helped the engagement team to understand what the main messages need to be and what methods of communication need to be taken, to engage citizens with the consultation.
- You have helped the engagement team to justify the need for engaging materials, such as pictures and animations to communicate the messaging in a clear and easy way.



## Local Transport Plan

In November 2024, the Local Transport Plan was the area of focus as the WMCA prepares to update the Plan which sets out policies to promote safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport within our region. Your involvement will help to;

- Shape our thinking on what behaviours people are willing to change to avoid, shift and improve transport options.
- An understanding of what measures people would be willing to make and if enforcing a shift in travel behaviours is or isn't acceptable.





# Staying engaged

There are many ways for you to continue to be engaged with the WMCA and to be involved more locally.

## WMCA Online Research Community

You can register to become part of this community, who receive online surveys from the WMCA to help shape and provide evidence for our work.

Sign up to the community here;

<https://mytfwmcommunity.co.uk/#signup>



# Engage with your Local Authority

## Birmingham City Council

### Be Heard

For all consultations and to sign up for updates  
[www.birminghambeheard.org.uk](http://www.birminghambeheard.org.uk)

### People for Public Service Forum

Open to members of the public to take part in events with council officers who are seeking to make more informed decisions. Search for this online to get involved.

### Climate Change Newsletter

Sign up to receive the newsletter for council-related climate change news and updates  
[www.birmingham.gov.uk/newsletter-signup](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/newsletter-signup)

## Wolverhampton City Council

### Citizens Space

Take part in consultations that interest you and sign up for email notifications via their consultation website.  
<https://consultation.wolverhampton.gov.uk/>

## 2041 Net Zero Strategy

Open for consultation until the 14th December 2024. Have your say on what a Net Zero Wolverhampton should look like.  
<https://consultation.wolverhampton.gov.uk/green-cities/our-net-zero-city/>

## Walsall Council

### Consultations

Respond to local consultations that interest you via their website.  
<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/your-council/consultations>

### Walsall Says

An online platform for the Council to receive feedback from the public on new and active projects.  
<https://walsallsays.commonplace.is/>

## Sandwell Council

### Climate Change website

Keep engaged with the council's climate change work through their website. They will be refreshing their Climate Change Strategy in 2025, and the consultation will be live for you to comment on.  
[www.sandwell.gov.uk/climate-change-1/climate-change](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/climate-change-1/climate-change)

### Consultation Hub

For you to take part in consultations, surveys and conversations.  
<https://consultationhub.sandwell.gov.uk/>

## Dudley Council

### Dudley Climate Action ebulletin

Sign up to receive updates on Dudley's climate change work via their website.  
<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDUDLEYMBC/signup/38718>

### Dudley's Local Plan

Comment on Dudley's Local Plan consultation due to close on Friday 29th November.

## Community Forums

Get Involved in Dudley's Community Forums and community engagement activities.  
[www.dudley.gov.uk/community/consultations/](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/community/consultations/)

## Solihull Council

### Your Voice Solihull

Is an online platform designed for you to engage with the council.  
<https://yourvoicesolihull.uk.engagementhq.com/>

### Your Future Solihull

Is the Council's climate change and sustainability campaign. Sign up to newsletters and read about their work on their website.  
<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/your-future-solihull>

## Coventry City Council

### Climate Change Pathway

Sign up to newsletters and read about the Council's climate change work on their website.  
[www.coventry.gov.uk/climate-change](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/climate-change)

### Let's Talk Coventry

Is an online platform for you to engage with Coventry City Council.  
<https://letstalk.coventry.gov.uk/>



# Local Community Projects

These local community projects have been funded through the WMCA and are available for you to be involved with.

## Dudley

**Aspire4u CIC** have reclaimed an abandoned garden near to the centre of Dudley by establishing a gardening group.

**Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust** are creating new walking routes and improving wildlife habitats through the Black Country Geo Park.

**EKHO CIC** have created a wheelchair accessible wellbeing garden and a community sharing facility offering access to gardening, crafting and sustainability resources.

## Solihull

**Castle Bromwich Hall and Gardens Trust** deliver a range of activities to include repair cafes, home food growing drop-in days, and foraging and cooking sessions.

## Birmingham

**The Active Wellbeing Society** have Share Shacks for local people to borrow equipment and to fix their own broken items such as electrical equipment and clothing.

**Birmingham Settlement** have developed a 3-acre site at Edgbaston Reservoir into a natural, safe, and welcoming community green therapeutic space.

**Norton Hall Children and Family** in Ward End Park are creating a new allotment site.

## Sandwell

**Make Good Arts** provide sewing machines and other resources in community venues to help local people to repair, share and remake clothing.

**Smethwick Community Garden** is a community garden space created to offer regular activities to the community.

## Wolverhampton

**Wildside Activity Centre** run hands-on activities in its unique natural learning environment to teach school-age children about the natural world.

**The Reuse Hub** is the region's first reuse hub to take surplus materials from construction sites and others to sell them on to the community at substantially discounted cost, diverting it away from landfill.

**All Saints' Action Network** have opened a Repair Cafe at its community hub for all to visit.

## Walsall

**Canal and River Trust** are improving the natural environment with communities around sections of waterway in Birmingham, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

**Caldmore Environmental Education Centre** are hosting gardening, conservation, climate change, and environmental sustainability workshops, events and other activities.

## Coventry

**Severn Rivers Trust** Coventry Rivers Citizen Science is training volunteers and engaging 1000 people through events in a citizen science project focusing on river health along the River Sowe.

**Carriers of Hope** support people experiencing poverty, with essential items, reusing unwanted items that would otherwise be destined for landfill.

**Holyhead Road Allotments** are running climate adaptation workshops for local gardeners



# Thank you

We thank all of you for taking part in the Greener Together Citizens' Panel. Your continued enthusiasm, commitment and contributions within each Panel meeting has been invaluable to shaping our learning and thinking when undertaking climate related work.





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