

# Birmingham City Council

## City Council

12<sup>th</sup> September 2023



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**Subject:** Executive Business Report

**Report of:** Cabinet

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Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. On 10th September 2019, Full Council accepted the recommendations of the Coordinating O&S Committee review in respect of changes to the Full Council agenda.
- 1.2. Recommendation 3 of the review requested that the Executive provide an update to Full Council on its work via the provision of an Executive Business Report ('EBR'). EBRs will be provided to Full Council four times per municipal year and will include details of progress made in relation to Council strategic outcomes and priorities linked to two Cabinet Member portfolios.
- 1.3. This EBR provides an update on two Cabinet Member portfolios:

**Environment portfolio:** pages 3-22

**Transport portfolio:** pages 22-32

- 1.4. As we move into the latter part of 2023 both the Environment and Transport portfolios have successes to share as they continue to strive towards the City Council's strategic priorities.
- 1.5. Within the Environment portfolio, the Mobile Household Recycling Centre service has won two national awards during a year in which there has been a steady decrease in reported incidents of fly-tipping, whilst Parks have been attracting national attention with an array of awards, including Gold for the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Pride and passion in the local environment is also shared by Birmingham's citizens, with continued community involvement during 2023 through environment improvement initiatives such as 'Love Your Streets'.
- 1.6. The Transport portfolio has similarly seen success within the Birmingham Transport Summit, an event attracting a wide range of politicians and key stakeholders to showcase Birmingham's plan to deliver the Birmingham Transport Plan, an innovative plan to delivery sustainable and active travel across the city.

## 2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. That the report be noted.

## 3. Environment Portfolio

- 3.1. The council's Corporate Plan 2022-2026 sets a vision for A Bold Green Birmingham, which includes aims to improve street cleanliness, improve air quality, continue on the Route to Net Zero and be a City of Nature.
- 3.2. This report serves as an update on how teams and service areas linked to the Environment portfolio have responded to these challenges and made a positive contribution towards achieving these aims over the last year.

### Street Scene and Parks

#### 3.3. Parks – successes

- 3.3.1. **Gold at the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Chelsea Flower Show for 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year** (History of city parks-themed display) and **RHS Wigan Cup Award 2023** for the best RHS Local Authority exhibit in 2022 (Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games-themed display);
- 3.3.2. The council-backed Birmingham City of Nature Plan won the Judges' Award at this year's West Midlands National Park (WMNP) Awards;
- 3.3.3. The city retained its 15 **"Green Flag"** Awards.

#### 3.4. Street Scene – successes

- 3.4.1. Awards for the Mobile Household Recycling Centre (MHRC) project, which makes visits to neighbourhoods in 20 Wards per week, include:
- 3.4.2. **Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) Celebration Awards** – Best New Idea (winner);
- 3.4.3. **National Recycling Awards** – Local Government Success (winner);
- 3.4.4. **Keep Britain Tidy Awards** – Outstanding Service Delivery (finalist).

#### 3.5. Street Scene and Parks – Progress on business priorities

- 3.5.1. As well as awards and external accolades above, it has also been a year of progress against the portfolio business priorities;

- 3.5.2. **Delivering the waste disposal procurement contracts** – The procurement process is now in its final year of a three-year programme and on track to meet the January 2024 completion date. This will see the commencement of individual contracts for processing of green waste, dry mixed recyclates, paper and card, and the operation and maintenance of the Tyseley Energy Recovery Facility (ERF), three waste transfer stations and the city’s five Household Recycling Centres;
- 3.5.3. **Building new depots at Perry Barr and Tyseley** – The opening of the redeveloped Perry Barr depot is set to be completed by the end of 2023 and a new £15.5million super depot for waste management has been built at the Atlas Works site in Tyseley, consisting of office accommodation, training facilities, a vehicle maintenance building and electric vehicle charging points. This is consolidating services previously operating out of the outdated Montague Street and Redfern Road depots;
- 3.5.4. **Completion of the essential works Programme at the Tyseley ERF** – The final year of the works will complete in December 2023. These has improved the efficiency and reliability of the ERF to rival, and in some cases better, performance at other newer ERFs around the country. The investment in the plant has modernised its operations and maintains its R1 status, meaning it is classified as an efficient recovery option by the Environment Agency;
- 3.5.5. **Investigating a sustainable vehicle replacement programme** – Trials of the first all-electric Dennis Eagle eCollect bin lorry took place in the summer of 2022. A contractor has been commissioned to help explore the procurement of new electric vehicles. The waste team is also exploring the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). In partnership with the Planning and Development Team and ESB Energy, the parks service has rolled out EV charging hubs in selected city parks. The first electric charging point installed was at Cotteridge Park;
- 3.5.6. **Mobile Household Recycling Centres (MHRC) – to develop a long-term plan for this service matching need and ensuring an even distribution across the wards** – Offering residents a free and convenient option to dispose of unwanted items and to recycle waste, the allocation of visits to the city’s 69 Wards is based on a number of criteria including fly-tipping and street cleansing data. The schedule remains under regular review to ensure the balance is correct and the communities in greatest need receive the appropriate level of MHRC support. Plans are also at an advanced stage that will lead to a wider range of recyclable materials being accepted at the MHRCs;
- 3.5.7. **Improving street cleanliness through increased crews, alleyway clearance, a Keep Britain Tidy campaign** – Extra crews, neighbourhood enforcement officers, and engagement and enforcement officers have been taken on and collaborative work has also been undertaken on graffiti with partners including Kier, Network Rail and National Highways. The Street Scene service has also worked with Keep Britain Tidy to trial the use of “Grime Scenes” to highlight fly-tipping at hotspot areas by taping off dumped waste to highlight the problem and to try to change behaviours in these areas. The findings will be considered as part of a continuous review of potential innovations that can make city’s streets cleaner and safer;

- 3.5.8. Tackling environmental crime and deliver on waste enforcement through Grime Watch updates** – The service is producing “Grime Watch” videos to help identify waste offenders and seek information from the public to help in identifying those who illegally dump rubbish. The series is now four episodes old and serves wider purposes – firstly to act as a deterrent to would-be dumpers by showcasing recent prosecutions, and secondly to highlight partnership working on cleaner streets initiatives. Grime Watch has been made possible the deployment of an additional 20 CCTV cameras over the last two years for surveillance at hot spot areas. In the last financial year, 101 fixed penalty notices of £400 were issued to individuals for fly-tipping in the city. The service is also working with West Midlands Police to seize vehicles involved in incidents of fly-tipping, and recently three new Artificial Intelligence cameras were placed in Aston, North Edgbaston and Erdington Wards on a pilot basis. These units have the ability to detect when waste is suspected to have been placed on the street, minimising the amount of time officers have to spend trawling through CCTV footage. After the pilot concludes, they will be added to the pool of units that are available for use at hotspots anywhere in the city, as appropriate;
- 3.5.9. Improve communication on waste collection and improve missed collections including slab in a cab technology** – Tablets have been installed into all residual, garden and recycling vehicles and are currently being installed in trade vehicles. Since September 2022, this has enabled the removal of paper maps for rounds and the introduction of the reallocation of work in real time to crews when circumstances require;
- 3.5.10. Improving local environments through community involvement** – Local environment improvements are being made through programmes like Love Your Streets (action days working with key stakeholders and the community to improve the look and feel of city streets), Love your Environment (where council street cleansing teams come together at the same time to conduct ward-based clean ups) and local community events. This has also included work in non-residential areas such as High Streets and with Business Improvement Districts. The Dolphin Centre Project in Ward End Park is also nearing completion, a project which has included the creation of a youth hub (with a Jobcentre Plus Youth Employability Coach), the installation of a lift for disabled access, a café where local unemployed people are encouraged to work and a free wifi hotspot for local community use. Wider landscaping relating to the scheme has also seen the emergence of new heathland, enhancing the area’s biodiversity;
- 3.5.11. Improving local environments through volunteering involvement** – Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF) supported 15 new Friends of Parks groups in 22/23, whilst the Ranger Service supported volunteers doing conservation work and Love Your Street community litter picks. BOSF had 13,444 volunteers carrying out 19,520 volunteer days at a value of £1,063,818 to the Street Scene service. The Ranger Service was assisted by 2,782 volunteers who gave 4,983 volunteer days to conservation work. During the last financial year, over 6,718 bags of rubbish were collected by the community litter pickers and the volunteers provided over 1,600 hours of litter picking. Similar work, adding value to the council’s core effort, continues into 2023/24;
- 3.5.12. Working with Birmingham Tree People (BTP) to plant additional trees in our parks and open spaces and increase the canopy cover** – BTP and the council planted a 105,000th tree during the last year. Birmingham also retained its Tree City of the World status for the fourth year running;

### 3.5.13. **Supporting the Commonwealth Games Delivery and local enhancements as a legacy –**

Some examples of the projects being carried out include: a new Commonwealth Forest at Woodgate Valley Country Park, planted as part of a wider plan to create 2,022 acres of Commonwealth Forest across the region; a masterplan design being developed for Perry Park; and enhanced car park facilities at Sutton Park with event spaces and electric charging points – all made possible thanks to the park requiring infrastructure upgrades to enable it to host the Triathlon and Para Triathlon events last summer.

## 3.6. **Parks – operational updates**

3.6.1. The service is committed to the advancement of a green, sustainable city providing parks, open spaces and services that are accessible to all. With 631 parks and open spaces in the city, our natural environment is undoubtedly one of Birmingham's greatest (and often underplayed) assets. During the cost-of-living crisis, they have been an invaluable free-to-access resource to people in all parts of the city.

3.6.2. Business as usual activity by the service has therefore taken on an increased importance and has continued during the last year, including:

3.6.3. **Maintenance of over 3,625 hectares of green spaces** including parks, country parks, public open spaces, woodlands and allotments;

3.6.4. **A tree service** which manages the city council's tree stock (excluding trees on highways);

3.6.5. Provision of **a woodland management team** to maintain 1,398 hectares of woodland throughout the city;

3.6.6. The delivery of an **allotments service** which manages 7,369 plots across 113 sites. As of August 2023, a total of 90.1 per cent of Birmingham's allotments are occupied, the highest level for six years;

3.6.7. **An asset management service** managing park buildings and 50 pools and reservoirs in compliance with the Reservoirs Act;

3.6.8. **Playground services** which maintain outdoor play equipment in 253 play areas, 11 skate areas, 31 outdoor gyms and 97 multi-use games areas;

3.6.9. **The Birmingham ranger service** to protect and enhance designated nature conservation sites and country parks throughout the city, and monitor regional targets for local biodiversity for the city;

3.6.10. The in-house **Landscape Practice Group (LPG)**, which provides a full range of project development, community consultation, landscape, architectural and urban design services;

3.6.11. **Floral decoration** through three greenhouses at Cofton, Kings Heath and Colehill;

3.6.12. A team of **District Parks Managers**, who liaise with local members, over 120 Friends groups and manage all park sites;

3.6.13. A **climate and sustainability service** which leads on the implementation and development of the Green Living Spaces Plan, Liveable Cities and Biophilic Cities, and the City of Nature 25 year plan.

- 3.6.14. The natural environment inevitably faces a number of threats and risks that are continually reviewed and monitored. There are three national outbreaks being closely tracked to safeguard parks and open spaces;
- 3.6.15. **Phytophthora ramorum** – This affects oak and larch and other deciduous trees. There are affected trees in one part of the city (the Lickey Hills). Officers are monitoring along with the Forestry Commission and any affected trees are removed as quickly as possible;
- 3.6.16. **Hymenoscyphus fraxineus (Ash Dieback)** – This affects ash trees and is a serious disease that kills the tree and then spreads to surrounding ash trees. We are fortunate to not have this in the city, but are monitoring the UK spread and any impact on our own trees;
- 3.6.17. **Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)** – This virus spreads across all bird species and for the second year in a row was confirmed in Birmingham. Once it has been confirmed, a dedicated team is activated (chaired by the council’s Environment Cell lead) who then manages the outbreak response until it is no longer required.

### 3.7. Street Scene (waste collection)- operational updates

- 3.7.1. Clean streets have consistently been expressed as one of the top priorities by the people of Birmingham. This is why a focus has been placed on this service, one of the few truly universal services accessed on a weekly basis by people across all 69 wards. The sharp focus on improvement is bearing fruit, as is evidenced by key datasets relating to the service.
- 3.7.2. The service carries out 540,000 collections per week and is the largest such service in the UK. The table below shows how the numbers of reported missed bin collections have fallen since the summer of 2022:



Figure 1: Reported missed bin collections per 100,000 collections scheduled

- 3.7.3. One area where there has been a clear focus is persistent service failure. Reports have been developed to triangulate missed collections to identify common problems and find long-term solutions. This report is produced on a daily basis and the local service managers review this with the principal operations managers at a weekly tasking meeting. There are many potential failure points within the current operation which will be resolved when the in-cab technology is fully operational.
- 3.7.4. In order to develop a single version of the truth, data collection is essential. To this end, a Director of Projects has been introduced to provide dedicated focus on transformation of the collection service.
- 3.7.5. There is still further improvement to be made, but since the collation of numbers within a new reporting system began in early 2022, there has been a downward trend in complaints, linked to a fall in the number of properties that have had collections dropped – with adverse weather in March 2023 accounting for the only significant spike of the last 12 months:

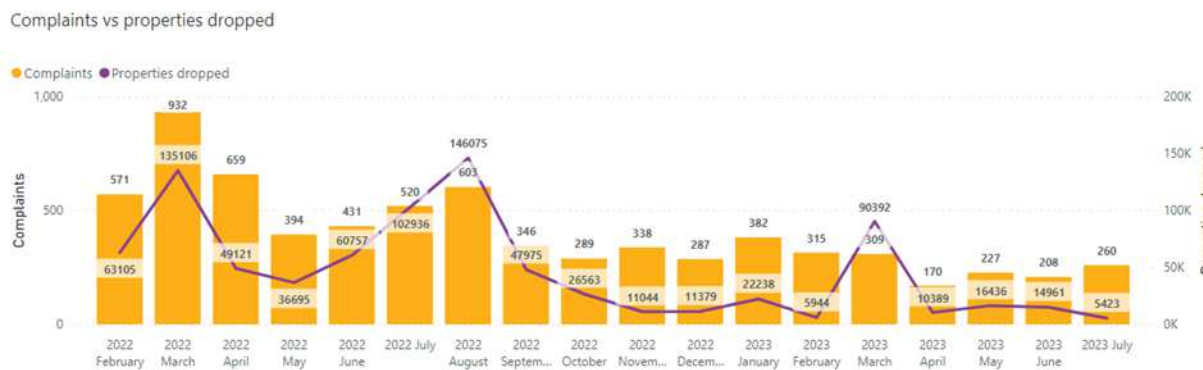


Figure 2: Trends in complaints for missed collections



### 3.8. Street Scene (recycling)- operational updates

3.8.1. The current in-year recycling rate (excluding incinerator bottom ash) is approximately 26 per cent, rising to 42 per cent (when including bottom ash), which means our performance is on target, but there is an ambition to do more. There are a number of factors that are keeping us at this relatively low rate:

- We currently have one of the highest levels of individual household waste collected in the UK;
- We do not collect food waste separately;
- There are a number of properties that do not have a recycling service such as flats and homes on sack collection (65,000 properties).

3.8.2. Work is ongoing to find solutions, including learning from partners such as Keep Britain Tidy and other authorities across the UK. A number of ideas are being worked up and will be trialled in the coming year.

3.8.3. Our waste disposal partner has also introduced a number of options for citizens to recycle more of the products which are usually thrown away at our HRCs. These include paint, mattresses, coffee pods and hard plastics.

3.8.4. This has been further strengthened by a campaign entitled “Sort it Bring it Save it” that helps residents ensure their waste goes into the right place during visits to HRCs. The recycling rates across our HRC sites has risen from 38.74 per cent in 2017/18 to 63.51 per cent in 2022/23.

3.8.5. At the Tyseley HRC site, a new reuse shop has opened, with containers provided at other HRC sites for products with a viable future reuse, which are then made available for sale at the reuse shop at very attractive prices. Working with partners on this project, a number of starter packs are also offered free of charge to tenants moving into our council homes.

### **3.9. Street scene (street cleansing)- operational updates**

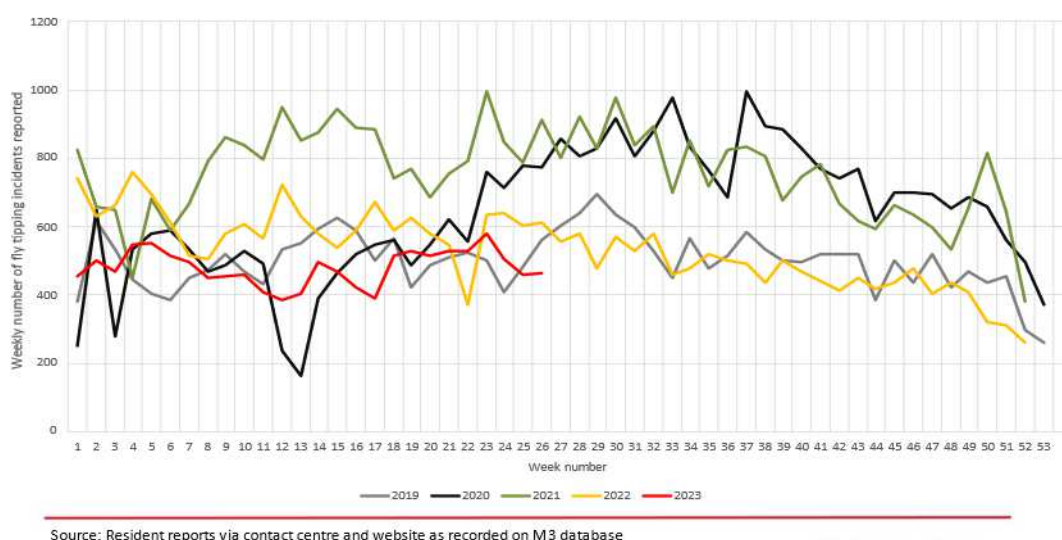
- 3.9.1. To keep the city as clean as possible, several key partnerships have been developed, including with Keep Britain Tidy, the Canal and River Trust, Network Rail and, more broadly, the residents of Birmingham.
- 3.9.2. The council provides equipment and support to individuals and groups wanting to carry out litter picks in the city. Since last September, 313 bag hoops, 2,658 litter picking claws, 1,918 pairs of gloves, 29,251 litter sacks, 1,412 adult hi-viz bibs and 391 children's hi-viz bibs have all been issued along with smaller quantities of items such as brooms, hoes and trollies.
- 3.9.3. The results of this support are encouraging. Attendance from volunteers at various events totalled 4,113. Collectively, their efforts saw them give up 2,365 hours of their personal time to improve their neighbourhoods, equivalent to 273 days of activity.
- 3.9.4. Love Your Environment is building upon the success of the Love Your Streets initiative. At the time of compiling this report, 238 events had been held since LYE's launch in October 2022, with 1,789 tonnes of waste cleared from neighbourhoods across the city. Amongst this was 40,899 bags of dumped rubbish along with 23,508 sacks of litter picked up on the days in question, in addition to the removal of 10,608 graffiti tags. To put into context the value this work adds, our regular graffiti removal teams remove approximately 500 tags weekly.
- 3.9.5. The MHRCs, which operate in the area when a Love Your Environment Day is held, have proven to be a great success. Across all of their activity during the last 12 months they have collected more than 2,500 tonnes of waste directly from residents, part of the 4,400 tonnes picked up since their introduction in the city in the summer of 2021.
- 3.9.6. We continue to offer a range of pest control services, with a free-of-charge service offered for the treatment of rats. During 2022/23, we received 14,309 requests for assistance of all types relating to pest control (which can include problems as varied as cockroaches, bedbugs, wasps, fleas, ants and mice as well as rats). Of these, 12,834 were to resolve problems associated with rats either in gardens or within domestic properties. Into this year, there continues to be a high demand for our free rat treatment service, but unfortunately we receive a large number of incorrect reports which are actually related to mice.
- 3.9.7. Pest Control has continued to liaise and promote our Property Clearance Service to internal (particularly Birmingham Property Services) and external partners. The role has grown in terms of capability, size of land and size of contracts. In addition, work enquiries for clearance work have increased. We work with Land and Property Team clearing their land and properties of rubbish and overgrowth and we also support the returning of land which has been adversely affected by unauthorised encampments and has waste and human waste on it.

### 3.10. Street Scene (fly-tipping)- operational updates

3.10.1. Since the introduction of a range of initiatives in July 2021, there has been a marked reduction in fly-tipping across the city, a position that has continued to improve in the last 12 months. The initiatives include the MHRCs, additional sack collection rounds, fly-tipping crews, 20 additional CCTV cameras, six additional enforcement officers and teams to oversee Love Your Environment activity.

3.10.2. There was a step change between the reported incidents in 2021 and 2022. So far in 2023, the numbers are still tracking below those reported in 2022.

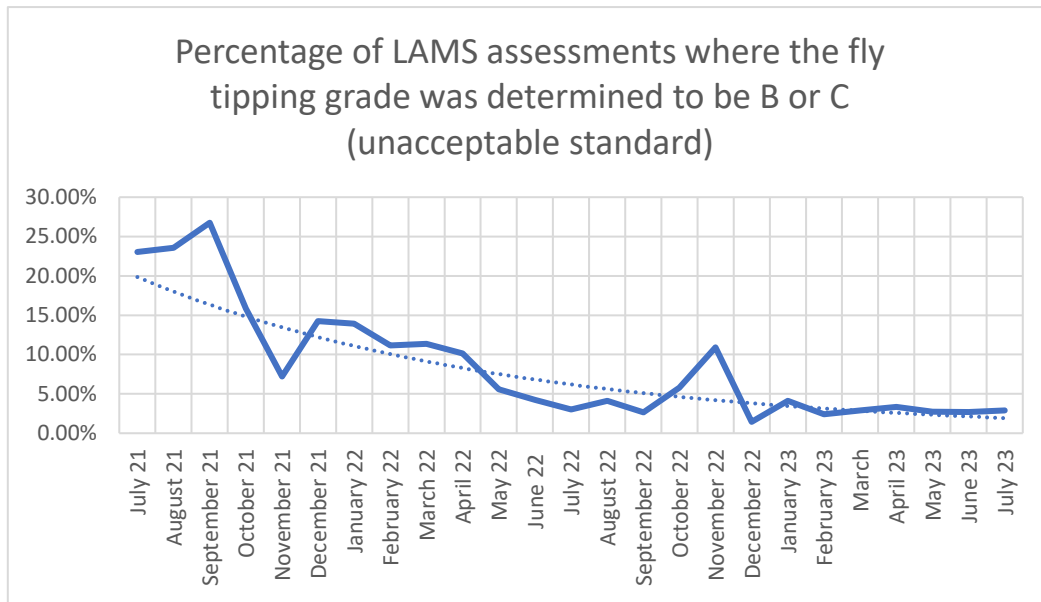
#### FLYTIPPING: NUMBER OF WEEKLY REPORTS OF FLY TIPPING (YEARLY COMPARISON)



*Figure 3: Weekly reported fly tipping yearly comparison*

3.10.3. Ultimately, the condition of our streets is assessed and evaluated by an independent team using the Land Audit Management System (LAMS), a recognised benchmarking standard across the sector nationally.

3.10.4. Over the last 12 months, performance has been consistent, with 95 per cent of inspected streets regularly achieving the recognised standard. This represents a period of sustained improvement when compared to the summer of 2021 when the figure was 75 per cent.



*Figure 4: Percentage of LAMS assessments where the fly tipping grade was determined to be B or C*

### 3.11. Route to Net Zero (R20)

- 3.11.1. As per the unanimously-passed climate emergency declaration of 2019, there is a formal commitment to take action to reduce the city's carbon emissions and limit the climate crisis. The ambition was set for the council and city to become net zero carbon by 2030, or as soon as possible thereafter as a 'just transition' allows – ensuring we reduce inequalities in the city and bring our communities with us. This is the city's 'route to zero.'
- 3.11.2. The council has been clear that its initiatives and activity will facilitate carbon emissions reduction and build climate resilience into policies and practice. The council will reduce its own carbon emissions as well as fostering existing external relations, enabling behaviour change through informative calls to action and facilitating new community and public-private sector partnerships to build investment and delivery capacity to make our city carbon neutral.
- 3.11.3. In terms of the ambition to be a City of Nature, the council has laid out a vision to create sustainable green spaces to help tackle climate change and improve biodiversity, creating attractive neighbourhoods and providing places for families, friends, and communities to come together.

#### **3.11.4. R20 and waste management**

- 3.11.4.1. The management of waste has an integral part to play in the R20 programme. Municipal waste makes up about 20 per cent of the city's waste and related processing of around 499,000 tonnes each year. A piece of work has been started to explore and identify the whole waste journey in and out of the city.
- 3.11.4.2. There is already significant work at local universities and within industry to find sustainable solutions for our waste streams. There is a collective aim to move away from the term "waste", thinking instead about finding valuable resources in material no longer wanted by the original owner.
- 3.11.4.3. Technological solutions are advancing at pace but will need time to develop and mature into mainstream industry options. The council wants to be at the forefront of this exciting work and find ways to enable a transition to new processing technologies that are suitable for the needs of the growing city as soon as possible.
- 3.11.4.4. The use of the ERF is a challenge in this context. Since 1994, it has been a reliable and trusted process to dispose of all of the waste that cannot be recycled.
- 3.11.4.5. The newly-awarded disposal contract is one that, at this moment in time, offers the best all-round solution that will carry the city through a transitional decade as new technologies and solutions emerge that offer alternatives that will support strategic aims.

### 3.11.5. R20 workstream updates- Climate Change mitigation

- 3.11.5.1.**Annual Report** – A full update on the route to net zero carbon programme was approved at City Council on 7 February 2023. The next update, utilising a refreshed format that will demonstrate progress in a more tangible way, is due to be published in January 2024.
- 3.11.5.2.**Carbon Literacy Training** – Agreement was given by a newly-created programme board to commence with the internal delivery of carbon literacy training and pursue Carbon Literate Organisation bronze certification. The city council will be utilising training and accreditation through the industry-leading Carbon Literacy Project. Programme board support was also given for training for Members and senior officers, and following approval from the Cabinet Member this offer has been extended to all Members. The rollout is now underway, with the first monthly session successfully staged in June.
- 3.11.5.3.**Climate Justice Staff Network** – Proposals for a new staff engagement network were approved in June. Resources have been prepared and a core management committee has been established to facilitate the development of this mechanism.
- 3.11.5.4.**Engagement and communications framework** – A public engagement event was delivered in May to gather consultation comments. The R20 team are working alongside the council's communications team to develop a campaign plan, including support for the 100 Brilliant Days initiative and a programme of activity around COP28.
- 3.11.5.5.**Bolder Greener Bulletin Newsletter** – Established and launched a council climate change newsletter in March, providing bi-monthly updates on council achievements and highlighting the work of others. Subscriptions started at 400 and have risen to 850, with the information published within them shared more widely by recipients and other organisations.
- 3.11.5.6.**Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS)** – The council took part in the Global Destination Sustainability Index benchmarking exercise for the first time. The GDS-Index measures and benchmarks the sustainability performance of tourism destinations, to drive innovation and regeneration of the tourism industry. Scores are expected in autumn 2023.
- 3.11.5.7.**Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)** – CDP is a not-for-profit charity that runs the global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impacts. The council will declare yearly and submitted its 2023 data in June. Scores are expected in autumn 2023.

- 3.11.5.8.**Emissions accounting** – Carbon emissions can be divided into two high level categories: council and city. These two categories can then be divided further into three scopes. Direct emissions are included in scope 1. Indirect emissions are included in scope 2 and scope 3. All council activities are currently being categorised into scope 1/2/3. Evaluation of scope 1 and 2 council emissions is now underway. This will produce an inventory of council scope 1 and 2 emissions and will be accompanied by a review of data availability/quality and recommendations to improve future data collection and reporting. This will form part of the scoping activities taking place as part of the strategy work. Expanding on the scope 1 and 2 work above, the next tranche of emissions we will look at are the council's scope 3 emissions. The council needs to consider and clarify its role and approach to tackling city-wide emissions, which will inform its 'city' decarbonisation strategy. Evaluation is underway to establish a plan of work to produce an evidence base for strategy work in-house. A paper is set to be written, outlining how this varies depending on whether the council decides to adopt financial, equity or operational control.
- 3.11.5.9.**Environment and Sustainability assessments (ESA)** – A review of the ESA process is underway. ESA assessments currently accompany council and cabinet reports, where applicable. An initial draft of a revamped ESA template has been produced and an accompanying guidance document is in the final stages of development. The template includes the evaluation of both climate mitigation and natural environment impacts. An initial trial will be run with a selection of projects within the Place, Prosperity and Sustainability directorate.
- 3.11.5.10.**Local Development Plan Review** – New ambitious net zero policies currently being drafted and will be published for public consultation in February 2024.
- 3.11.5.11.**Low Carbon Homes Retrofit Summit** - Commissioned by the R20 team, Low Carbon Homes alongside a range of internal and external stakeholders from across the city worked to organise and deliver the Birmingham Retrofit summit in December. The event brought together a wide range of speakers to discuss the challenges around retrofit and the opportunities to alleviate fuel poverty and support carbon emissions reduction. Over 150 retrofit professionals signed up to attend. By bringing together council officers, housing providers, community groups and local businesses to explore how we can better work together, the event helped demonstrate the council's commitment and leadership on retrofit.
- 3.11.5.12.**Retrofit Schemes** – Over the last year, the R20 team has supporting housing colleagues on a variety of projects including:
- **Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund** – £24.8million secured. The bid was led by The City Housing Directorate, with support provided by the R20 team to coordinate work between the 3 Cities Retrofit programme and WMCA. The funds will be spent over the next two years on various retrofit measures from whole house schemes to support for both low-rise and high-rise flats;

- **LADs (Sustainable Warmth Scheme)** – R20 team building upon success of previous scheme. LADs 3 programme in delivery. 270 homes completed, on track to deliver c.600 by September 2023;
- **Energy Company Obligation 4** – The ECO4 scheme will see the installation of energy efficiency measures to private and social homes of households receiving means-tested benefits. Properties must be at least an EPC level D to qualify. This programme is delivered by qualified installers working with the energy companies for funding. ECO Flex provides the ability for the council to identify additional households who are not on means-tested benefits but are at risk of cold homes/fuel poverty;
- **Retrofit Upskilling** - A skills partnership has been signed with Retrofit Academy to assess supply chain gaps. The council will work with education providers to develop skills courses and support local businesses to scale up to meet (and benefit from) the retrofit challenge;
- **3 Cities Whole House Retrofit** – The 3 Cities is a unique collaboration between the cities of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton, working together to make the cities great places to live, work and play. By working together, there is an aim to bring additionality, driving pace and scale in addressing complex retrofit issues and opportunities together;
- **Bromford Housing Retrofit** – The £28.2million 3 Cities Whole House Retrofit (WHR) Pilot aims to test two different approaches to improve thermal efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and improve tenants’ energy demand usage, with a view to scaling up the delivery of whole house retrofit across the council’s wider Housing Revenue Account stock. The programme is now in the Initial Solution Rollout phase. It has been estimated that homes in Bromford could save up to £1,000 per year on energy bills based on current prices;
- **Housing Stock Surveys** – An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) assessment has been requested on 1,000 Council properties to assess the accuracy of existing, older, council data due to changes in the assessment methodology. Condition surveys of the council stock is an ongoing requirement, and it is the intention of the draft asset management strategy for a rolling stock condition survey programme to be implemented. It is anticipated that the EPC assessment will be carried out to complement these surveys. Data gained as a result of funding bids such as for the SHDF (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) and delivered projects such as the sustainable warmth scheme is being focused upon for use within internal systems to build a better picture of the EPC levels of our stock and compare with existing data and inaccuracies of nationally-held data;
- **Housing Decarbonisation Plan** – Housing stock surveys will feed into this. A procurement process has been progressed and an appointment and commencement is expected in October. This work will lead to clarity and alignment



of housing decarbonisation standards and targets along with a detailed route map to delivery.

- 3.11.5.13.**Heat Network Zoning** – R20 is part of the DESNZ Heat Network Zoning pilot, supporting the development of a zoning policy due to be introduced from 2025. Legislation would mandate connection to existing heat networks, or development of new heat networks where they offer the most cost-effective route for heat decarbonisation. The council is also part of the Accelerated Heat Network Zoning programme for two priority areas: an expansion of the current city centre scheme and a new scheme in east Birmingham. There is potential for east Birmingham to create a Heat Network that produces sufficient energy for itself and feed excess renewable energy into the city centre;
- 3.11.5.14.**Decarbonisation of Birmingham District Energy Scheme** - BDEC (Birmingham District Energy Company) is a strategic asset with the potential to support city centre heat decarbonisation. The network currently supplies over 60,000 megawatt hours of heat, 47,000 megawatts of electricity and 8 megawatt hours of cooling across a 14-kilometre network route. The council secured funding from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Heat Networks Delivery Unit to identify a technical, commercial and funding route for decarbonisation of the network and inform the scale of city centre expansion potential. Stage 1 of the study is complete. Stage 2 has begun delivering an in-depth techno-economic analysis of shortlisted options against the agreed growth scenarios in order to then seek agreement for a preferred roadmap route with key stakeholders – to be completed by October 2023. A strategic vision for heat networks across the city is also in development – the BDEC network roadmap will be informed/feed into this;
- 3.11.5.15.**Fast Followers Bid** – £299,349 has been secured from the Innovate UK Fast Followers programme, which will fund employment of a Net Zero Innovation and Delivery Officer (NZIDO) for two years, providing Small & Medium Enterprises-focused net zero readiness in the east Birmingham area. The project started in July with the NZIDO role filled by a job share between two Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership officers with specialisms in net zero. The work programme has been developed and signed off with Innovate UK.

### 3.11.6. Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience

- 3.11.6.1. Climate Risks and Vulnerability Assessment** - In February 2022 the council adopted an Environmental Justice Map for Birmingham which is believed to be a UK first. Subsequently, the council's central GIS mapping team has worked with the University of Birmingham research team, to re-work the existing Environmental Justice Map by combining new GIS layers such as Urban Heat Island and Climate Zone. Introducing these missing GIS layers has created a map of Climate Change Risk and therefore an indication of vulnerability of our citizens to these risks. This step has made Birmingham the second city in the UK to have a fully compliant Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment. Through a successful European Horizon bid, £1.2million has been secured for the University of Birmingham and the City Council, in partnership with the UK Met Office, to explore the use of new satellite-derived heat imaging. This work will guide and improve the development of data-driven decision making in relation to the use of nature-based solutions over traditional methods to tackle climate risk and vulnerability;
- 3.11.6.2. Urban Nature Development Programme (UND)** – This is an 18-month continuation of the Future Parks Accelerator programme that developed the City of Nature 25 Year Plan (adopted February 2022) and is further developing and implementing practices and processes as part of delivery. This programme is externally funded through the National Heritage Lottery Fund;
- 3.11.6.3. Local Nature Recovery Network and Biodiversity Net Gain** – Under the mandate set by the Environment Act 2021, new development will need to deliver measurable increases in Biodiversity (Biodiversity Net Gain) from November 2023. Local authorities are required to have a nature recovery network defined and to have identified opportunity sites for delivery of biodiversity net gain where this cannot be delivered within the development boundary. As off-site net gain must be funded by developers for a minimum of 30 years, this offers a significant opportunity to secure investment in the council's open spaces and make them more nature rich. Through the UND programme, a Nature Recovery Network has been defined and open spaces within that identified. This consists of 156 sites within the core ecological network and 470 within the primary ecological expansion zone. Work is progressing through a commission with the Birmingham and the Black Country Wildlife Trust and Clarkson & Woods ecological consultants to undertake ecological baseline assessments of 27 sites using the national Biodiversity Net Gain metrics and habitat condition assessment to quantify the opportunities to support habitat enhancement. The data from these surveys will be available from September 2023;

- 3.11.6.4.**Future Parks Standard** – Through the UND programme, the refinement of a Future Parks Standard has continued. The Future Parks Standard is an assessment process that considers parks and open space for quality, their ability to meet the needs of local communities as well as their biodiversity value and ability to deliver climate adaptation services and be resilient to climate change. From this assessment an action plan can be derived to ensure all spaces meet a “Minimum Standard”. The intention is to assess all of Birmingham's parks and open spaces against this standard and deliver equity of provision equal to “Fair” against the Green Flag standards. Since September 2022, the Future Parks Standard has been trialled and tested against 44 green spaces in the priority Environmental Justice wards of Nechells, Gravelly Hill, Pype Hayes, Castle Vale and Balsall Heath West – with key interventions identified, in partnership with communities, for implementation;
- 3.11.6.5.**Green Infrastructure Opportunities Strategy for east Birmingham** – Funded through the UND programme and using the Environmental Justice, Climate Risk and Nature Recovery Mapping, work is underway to develop an “opportunities” map for the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth area. This mapping identifies gaps in existing network provision and creates a schedule of opportunity locations for green infrastructure interventions to meet both the shortfall in equitable provision and climate adaptation services. Twelve “opportunities” will be worked up across a 4-Tier Climate Adaptation Ambition Ladder and will include draft costings with a view to securing delivery investment;
- 3.11.6.6.**City of Nature Alliance** – The City of Nature Alliance started to aid the delivery of the City of Nature 25 Year Plan and continues to add new groups and organisations. Formed of a wide range of local delivery organisations including The Active Wellbeing Society, Birmingham Tree People, Birmingham Open Spaces Forum, and the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust, the alliance also includes national organisations such as the RSPB. These organisations are continuing to deliver within the priority Environmental Justice wards, seeking and securing funding and engaging local communities with their green spaces;
- 3.11.6.7.**Green Champions Network** – Finding and supporting residents who are passionate about their local communities, environment and taking positive action is essential to the long-term sustainability of the City of Nature Plan. Through the UND programme, the Green Champion Co-ordinator is facilitating requests and linking up opportunities for training and development with those community champions wishing to expand their knowledge around green space management and climate change. A monthly Green Champions Newsletter is circulated via email to 300 green champions and published to social media networks too;

- 3.11.6.8. Urban Forest Accelerator (UFA)** - The Urban Forest Accelerator is an externally funded programme that supports the delivery of our Urban Forest Master Plan which was adopted in November 2021 and the formation of a national “toolkit” that draws on the leading position Birmingham has in Urban Forest Management. A key output for this year is the development of a national web map of “Tree Equity Scores” for urban areas produced by the Woodland Trust, working from our own Priority Tree Planting Platform (using Canopy Cover, Urban Heat Island, Flood Risk, Air Quality and IMD data) which was co-created with Birmingham Tree People (BTP). In addition, the funding has supported the recruitment of two part-time roles within BTP, one around communications and one for community engagement. Through partnership with BTP, around £90,000 has been secured from external grants to support community tree planting in priority locations this winter;
- 3.11.6.9. Natural Rivers and Green Corridors Phase 2** – Following the successful completion of the £1.7million grant-funded phase one programme, a further £500,000 has been secured by the Environment Agency to deliver phase two. While focusing on delivering water improvements and biodiversity enhancement, the water course and habitat interventions will co-deliver improvements in flood risk resilience in the EA’s priority areas of the Upper Rea catchment in Bartley Green, Harborne, Longbridge, Northfield and Bournville;
- 3.11.6.10. Selly Park Flood Defence Scheme** – The Environment Agency, in partnership with the council, is delivering a further phase of flood defence within the Selly Park area, located on Pebble Mill Playing Fields (adjoining the River Rea). While increasing the level of protection afforded to hundreds of residents from both surface water and river flooding arising from climate change, the scheme will deliver significant ecological enhancements;
- 3.11.6.11. Bromford Flood Risk Management Scheme** – Work on this project, in conjunction with the Environment Agency, has continued. Designed to reduce the risk of river flooding to 1,589 residential properties (with 893 homes protected on the River Tame right bank and 696 homes protected on the left bank in Bromford and Castle Vale), it will also reduce the risk of river flooding to 42 non-residential properties. The works are predicted to help prevent £321million of flood damages. In February environmental enhancements including extensive tree planting and wildflower meadows were undertaken as part of the wider scheme.
- 3.11.6.12. Local Development Plan Review** – As part of the Local Development Plan Review, existing policies and the evidence base on green infrastructure are being refreshed to bring these in line with new legislation and an increasing focus on data relating to the Climate Change agenda. These revised/refreshed policies and evidence base will support the aims and objectives of the City of Nature 25 year plan and Our Future City Plan Development Framework. New and revised policy proposals include: Biodiversity Net Gain; Ecological Networks and Nature Recovery (new); Green Infrastructure; Open Space (provision of); Urban Greening Factor (new); Flood Risk Management; Water Quality and Resources; and The Green Belt.

### **3.11.7. R20 governance**

#### **3.11.7.1. Programme Board**

- A new Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero Programme Board has been set up, effective as of January 2023 and is meeting quarterly. The group is chaired by the Strategic Director of Place, Prosperity and Sustainability.
- The objective of the group is to determine and oversee the activities required to deliver the council's Climate Change and Net Zero strategy. In addition, its remit is to ensure the programme is delivered through a structured, cohesive and coordinated approach.
- To ensure the objective is delivered, the board is made up of strategic directors from across the council.

#### **3.11.7.2. Advisory Committee**

- A cross-party political membership group has also been revived to sit alongside the programme board. Re-named as the Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero Advisory Committee, it is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Environment.
- The group meets quarterly in line with the programme board timeline.
- The objective of the group is to advocate and support the strategic objectives of the Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero programme.

#### **3.11.7.3. Future portfolio considerations**

- As mentioned in passing earlier in this report, the Environment Act came into effect in 2021 and has a number of portfolio implications. During the year, an officer team has met to discuss any new developments and to shape plans to ensure consistency and compliance with the Act.
- This work has also included interaction with DEFRA, and we have representation on a sounding board led by the Department, looking at implications of the new legislation for the city. The main areas where change will be needed are:
  - The mandated consistency of waste collections;
  - The introduction of food waste collections;
  - A returns programme for some materials (but not glass);
  - Tracking waste digitally;
  - Improving regulators' effectiveness in tackling waste crime;
  - The introduction of mandatory segregation of trade waste;

- The strengthening of the duty on public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- A requirement for local nature recovery strategies;
- A mandated net gain in biodiversity through the planning system.

3.11.7.4.Birmingham stands ready to meet the requirements that come from the Act. Work on all these areas will continue in the year ahead, and the city's implementation plans will be finalised once further clarity is received from the Government on matters such as exact detail and related resourcing.

### 3.12. **Appendix A**

Route to Net Zero Annual Report 2022 - [CMIS > Meetings](#)

## 4. Transport Portfolio

- 4.1. This report presents an annual update from across Transport and Highways, focusing on a selection of key areas. A more comprehensive update of work from across the portfolio is available in appendix B.

### Key Updates from Transport

#### 4.2. Delivering the Birmingham Transport Plan

- 4.2.1. The Birmingham Transport Plan (BTP) was adopted by full Council on 12 October 2021 and sets out the vision and objectives for the city. The emerging BTP Delivery Plan identifies projects and policies which are needed to deliver this. Transport schemes within the current Transportation and Highways Capital Programme, which are being developed and delivered, are all aligned with the BTP. These will be incorporated into the Delivery Plan alongside further interventions. The Delivery Plan is a live document and will be published in autumn 2023.
- 4.2.2. Whilst responding to a range of social, economic and environmental imperatives, the scale and pace of change set out by the Delivery Plan reflects the urgent and drastic need to decarbonise transport with the over-arching aim to achieve net zero emissions by 2030. For the last two decades, transport policy has focused on promotion of sustainable modes over private car use, and this remains. Whilst softer interventions, including behavioural change measures tackling the travel choices of certain users, will continue to support the proposed physical interventions our approach will be more direct and urgent.
- 4.2.3. In striving to achieve net zero by 2030, the BTP Delivery Plan contains three key targets needed to tackle a reduction in emissions:
- **27% through business-as-usual** – As set out by the following project updates, we will continue with the current rate of growth and pace of intervention.
  - **36% through fleet decarbonisation** – Increase the proportion of Electric Vehicles (EVs), efficiency of the existing fleet through lower speed limits and deliver the rollout of 3,630 EV charging points.
  - **37% through vehicle kilometre reduction** – Reducing the distances travelled, avoiding trips, and shifting to more sustainable modes. Whilst aiming to create ‘low traffic conditions’ in one third of our wards by 2030, there will be a 100% reduction in traffic routing through the city centre.

4.2.4. Integration of land-use planning and transport planning also plays a key role in the Delivery Plan. This can successfully deliver inclusive growth connecting people to employment opportunities, releasing land for homes where car parking is no longer needed, and helping people to lead healthy and sustainable lives in a growing city centre. There is continued work with the Planning team to develop land-use strategies including Our Future City Plan and Birmingham Local Plan.

4.2.5. Delivery of the BTP aligns with and supports the key corporate priorities set out by council-wide documents including the BCC Corporate Plan 2022 – 26, Our Future City Plan, Route to Zero and East Birmingham Growth Strategy through:

- **Greater economic prosperity** – support inclusive growth and development, improving access to opportunities including jobs and education.
- **Greater inclusivity/equity** – continue to develop solutions and seek opportunities in relation to accessible transport, pursuing community-based activities and, continuing to improve opportunities for more sustainable travel to school by pupils and their parents/carers.
- **Improved safety** – working alongside regional partners such as the West Midlands Police, continue to improve road safety and reduce road traffic collisions.
- **Improving health and wellbeing** – continue to increase levels of physical activity through improving provisions for active travel and particularly for those who may not currently engage in it as much.
- **Creating a greener city** – continuing to monitor the Clean Air Zone and develop schemes to support and enhance its benefits, continue to improve access to green and blue spaces across the city and in particular as part of local centres and any new developments.



- 4.2.6. On 26 April 2023, we proudly hosted the **Birmingham Transport Summit**. This was attended by over 150 attendees including politicians, key stakeholders, private sector representatives and partners and BCC Officers from across the Authority.
- 4.2.7. The summit was used to showcase the aims, objectives, principles and targets of the BTP Delivery Plan to colleagues, stakeholders and peers. We were also delighted to welcome a number of speakers and panellists from across the UK and Europe, who shared their experiences of transforming urban areas previously blighted by vehicular traffic into attractive, accessible liveable cities.
- 4.2.8. The keynote speaker was Pascal Smet; State Secretary of the Brussels-Capital Region of Belgium with responsibility for Urbanism and Heritage. Like many similar capital cities, Brussels' cherished public spaces had become progressively degraded over time as vehicular traffic volumes increased. Mr Smet delivered a thoroughly inspirational presentation, setting out the ambitious approach taken by the Brussels City Region to gradually remove vehicular traffic from Brussels city centre, whilst investing in systemic improvements to active travel and public transport infrastructure and services. In particular, some key messages included the importance of listening to those who say nothing (the silent majority), the importance of using visual representations to help stakeholders to embrace and understand project aims and objectives, and to constantly talk about and maintain focus on objectives to give residents what they need, even if this might not necessarily be what they want!
- 4.2.9. Cllr Clyde Loakes of London Borough of Waltham Forest provided an informative presentation about their experiences of delivering a 'Mini Holland'; removing traffic from residential streets and transforming the area into a more attractive, liveable neighbourhood. Evidence from these schemes suggested that the approach has led to significant reductions in road traffic collisions, increased property values and reduced crime, not to mention greater use and enjoyment of the public realm.
- 4.2.10. Following this, Jason Gooding, Head of Parking and Transport Services and Nottingham City Council gave a presentation about the City's ground-breaking Workplace Parking Levy. This fiscal measure has been used to break car dependency in Nottingham, instead investing heavily in public transport, active travel and public realm improvements and support to deliver mass modal shift, growth and economic prosperity. The Workplace Parking Levy is now over 10 years old and continues to deliver a range of benefits to Nottingham, not least significantly improving equity of access to services and facilities for all.
- 4.2.11. It was also a pleasure to welcome Cllr Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Transport at Oxfordshire County Council. The Cabinet Member provided a candid, informative presentation about the County Council's experiences of delivering Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in Oxford, including their management of significant misinformation campaigns which reached an international audience. Cllr Enright made clear the importance of evidence-led decision making and focussed public consultation and engagement to protect schemes from being undermined by vocal minorities.

### 4.3. Road Safety – Vision Zero

4.3.1. The levels of road safety experienced by both drivers and other transport users continues to be improved across the city ranging from local neighbourhoods to the key route network. Transitioning away from a traditional approach towards road safety, we strive to align our work with Healthy Streets principles (see Figure 5) through placing the emphasis on improving the experience of our streets for all residents, as well as visitors to the city.

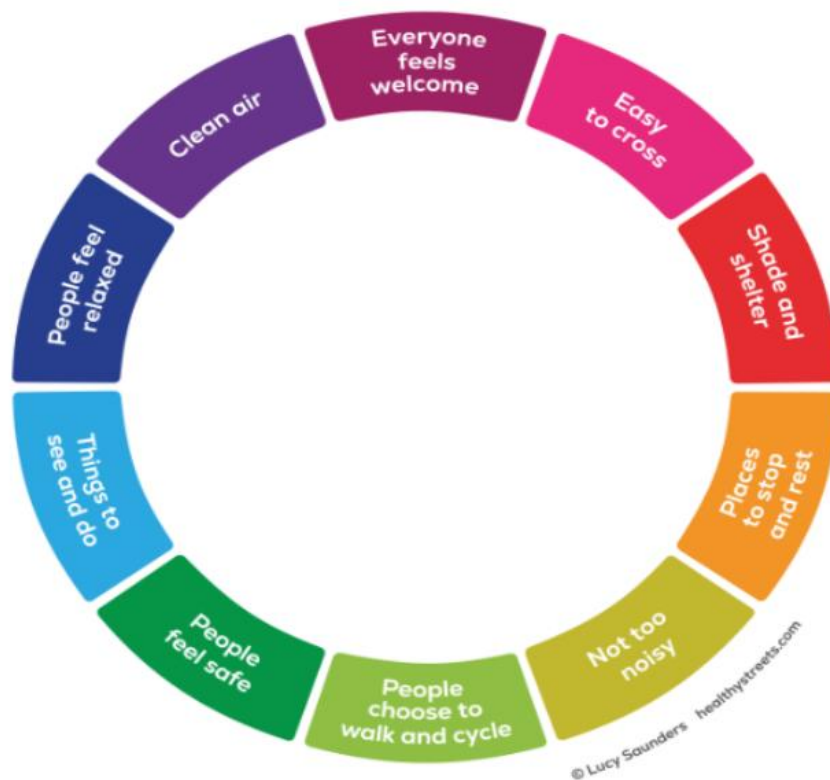


Figure 5: Healthy Streets Principles. Source <https://www.healthystreets.com/>

- 4.3.2. A refreshed Road Safety Strategy, titled **'Healthy Streets for Birmingham'** is currently in development. This will include a bold, transformational 'Vision Zero' aligned approach to improving road safety citywide. It will set out the following objectives: Creating Places for People by transforming Birmingham's neighbourhoods by applying healthy streets principles to create liveable, inclusive environments where people come first; To significantly reduce privately operated vehicular traffic using residential (non-arterial) roads, as this is a key determinant of road safety risk; and, To ensure appropriate design standards are applied to arterial routes, to ensure a safe environment is maintained for all users, regardless of ability or circumstances.
- 4.3.3. In pursuit of Vision Zero, we are continuing to push forward the introduction of new speed limits across the city. A priority scheme is currently underway to reduce all existing urban 40mph speed limit roads in Birmingham to 30mph, to standardise the speed limit on arterial routes across the city, in preparation for enhanced enforcement. Regarding progress on the introduction of a city-wide 20mph speed limit for all local roads, an Outline Business Case is currently in development to include all residential roads in 'Area B3' (North Edgbaston, Handsworth, Soho and Lozells). A Stakeholder Engagement Report has recently been completed.
- 4.3.4. Supporting the pedestrian experience, we also have an ambition to roll-out pedestrian crossing signal timing improvements across the city. Improvements have so far been delivered at five pedestrian crossings in Harborne which have resulted in a significantly shorter waiting time compared with previously. This is particularly important in achieving equity by ensuring that those who may require longer to cross a road safely, such as those with a physical disability, are able to do so.
- 4.3.5. Aligned with our strategic ambitions, in partnership with West Midlands Police, we are now working towards a zero-tolerance approach to enforcement, where inappropriately parked cars that cause an obstruction are towed away and significantly more speeding vehicles are caught, fined and prosecuted as part of a major uplift in pan-organisational enforcement capability. Following an application for powers earlier in 2023, the Designation Order necessary to enable civil enforcement of moving traffic contraventions in Birmingham came into force on 22 July 2023.
- 4.3.6. The Order designates Birmingham City Council as a civil enforcement area for moving traffic contraventions, such as making banned right turns, failing to observe no entry restrictions, driving in mandatory cycle lanes, and occupying yellow box junctions.

#### **4.4. Brum Breathes Clean Air Strategy**

4.4.1. The Brum Breathes Clean Air Strategy was launched in January 2022. The strategy builds upon the statutory obligations of the Council in terms of the monitoring and enforcement of air quality standards by setting a more ambitious vision of a clean air city where everyone who lives and works in the city can reap the benefits of improved air quality. The strategy also sets a set of strategic principles that are helping to guide priority setting and decision making relating around the two air pollutants of greatest concern – nitrogen dioxide and particulates.

#### **4.4.2. Achievements to date**

4.4.2.1. The rollout of indicative monitors to 68 schools across the city. The data from these sensors is available to the public (<https://airly.org/map/en>) and is part of a broader programme to help build awareness around the issues associated with poor air quality and its sources. As part of the offer of an air quality monitor to schools there is the offer of educational resources as well as access to other related programmes and schemes from across the Council, including Clean Air Cops, Safe School Streets, Mode Shift STARS etc. The second phase of this programme (where all schools in Birmingham will be offered an air quality monitor) is scheduled to launch in early 2024.

4.4.2.2. The launch of the Brum Breathes Fund. The Brum Breathes Fund was launched in June 2023 and is intended to support locality-based initiatives that address the sources of poor air quality and, through this work, encourage more people to adopt public transport or more active modes of travel over private vehicles, especially for shorter journeys.

#### **4.5. Clean Air Zone**

4.5.1. The Clean Air Zone was introduced in response to the public health issues caused by poor air quality. And, more specifically, to reduce the levels of the air pollutant nitrogen dioxide to within the legal limit in the shortest possible time.

4.5.2. The single biggest source of nitrogen dioxide is road traffic. The Zone enables the city to directly address this challenge by applying a daily fee to the most polluting vehicles on our roads. The aim is to encourage the owners and drivers of these vehicles to upgrade or replace these 'non-compliant' vehicles and/or change their travel behaviour by avoiding the Zone altogether or making greater use of public transport or more active forms of travel. On that basis the Zone is intended to deliver direct benefits in terms of public health and to act as an enabler of broader change in travel behaviours in line with the desired outcomes of the Birmingham Transport Plan and the Route to Zero programme.

#### 4.5.3. Achievements to date

4.5.4. As demonstrated by Figure 6 below, since the launch of the Zone in June 2021 the percentage of non-compliant vehicles entering the city centre has more than halved (from 15.2% in June 2021 to 6% in June 2023).

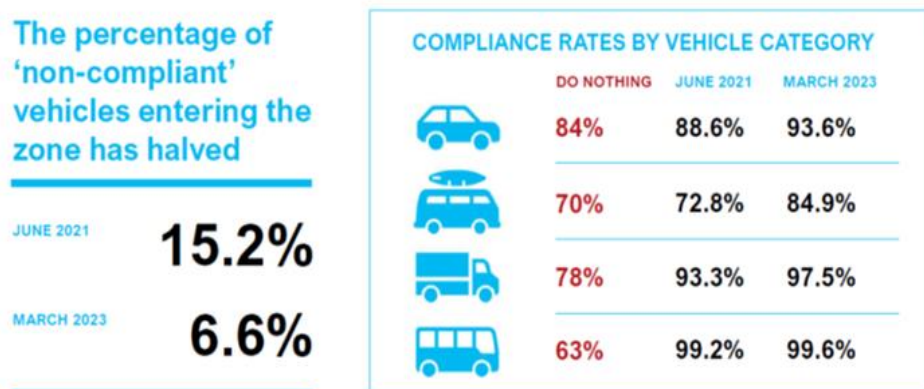


Figure 6: Clean Air Zone March 2023 vs June 2021 Statistics. Source: BCC

4.5.5. The interim impact assessment (March 2022) suggested that since the introduction of the scheme the levels of nitrogen dioxide in the city centre had reduced by an average of 13% (when compared with 2019).

4.5.6. The net surplus revenues from the scheme are being used to support longer term improvements to the transport infrastructure of the city. Up to March 2023 the scheme had generated c. £53m in net surplus revenues. These revenues have been allocated to the trial of hydrogen-fuelled buses, improvements to key rail stations, the cross-city bus scheme, pedestrianisation schemes in the city centre, expansion of the Safe School Streets programme and the expansion of the Big Birmingham Bikes programme.

4.5.7. Future net surplus revenues from the scheme will be used to support the strategic programmes that sit within the Birmingham Transport Plan.

### Key Updates from Highways

#### 4.6. Highways Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

4.6.1. Re-procurement for the long-term PFI sub-contract commenced formally in February 2022. There were two qualified bidders and final tenders were received in July 2023. The revised long-term contract is expected to start on 1 February 2024.

4.6.2. During the interim period for the re-procurement and restructuring of the PFI contract, we worked with Birmingham Highways Ltd and Kier to stabilise service performance on the network. Over £140m has been made available to deliver investment works up to summer 2023.

#### 4.7. Management & Delivery of the Investment Works

4.7.1. During the interim phase of the PFI contract, the technical team responsible for the management of the highway assets devised annual programmes of investment works. These also included schemes supporting the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

4.7.2. The works have been delivered through a close collaborative partnership between the Council, Birmingham Highways Ltd, Kier, Arcadis, Tarmac and the supply chain. The approach has led to several industry awards including innovation and carbon reduction supporting the City's climate change emergency declaration in 2019.

4.7.3. The quantity of resurfacing works over the past 12 months to July 2023 is set out in the table below. In addition, over 32,000 dangerous defects were attended by our maintenance subcontractor.

Surfacing Programmes	Carriageway Sq.m	Footway Sq.m	Total Sq.m
June 2022 to July 2023	394,326	54,044	448,370

#### 4.8. Traffic Management - New Roads & Street Works Permit Team (New Service)

4.8.1. Operating under the powers of the Traffic Management Act 2004, the Council went live as a Permitting Authority on the 1 March 2023. Becoming a Permitting Authority will allow the Council to better manage activities on our highway network, as well as minimising disruption caused on the highway by street and road works.

4.8.2. The new permitting team consists of 29 staff. (Currently two vacancies remaining)

4.8.3. Progress to date (at 28 July 2023):

- Provisional Advanced Authorisations (PAAs) Approved - 1,825
- Permits Granted - 16,441
- Permits Rejected - 1,522
- Permit Approval Rate - 91.5%
- Inspections Completed - 2,601
- Inspections Pass Rate - 84.0%

4.8.4. To date, the Permit Team have generated sufficient income from permitting and associated penalty income for poor performance by Utility providers to adequately cover the operating costs of the scheme. It is a requirement that the scheme operate on a revenue neutral basis, and we have full confidence that this will be the case on an ongoing basis.

4.8.5. We have seen an improvement in service performance together with the operation of the network by working collaboratively with Key stakeholders WMCA, National Express etc, we are also better positioned to deliver more informed communication to assist the wider public using our Highway network.

#### 4.9. Highway Specified Licences (previously known as Highway Permits)

4.9.1. Specified Licences, which operate under both Highways Act 1980 and NRSWA 1991, have seen an increase in the number of applications for licences since 2018.

4.9.2. Following feedback from applicants, we have made improvements to the application system including provision of additional guidance to assist applicants. In 2022/23, we approved 5,693 applications and during 2023/24, we have addressed 2,420 applications as shown in the table below.

Licence Applications	2022/23	2023/24 (up to July)
Cart-Over	7	6
Cranes	264	127
Property Development	191	95
Excavations	55	21
Hoarding	8	8
Scaffolding	105	34
s50 Streetworks	122	65
Temporary Deposits	42	22
Skips	4692	1991
Retrospective	69	15
Amendments	29	14
Renewal/Extension	80	20
Unlicensed Activity	29	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,693</b>	<b>2,420</b>

#### **4.10. Flood Risk Management**

- 4.10.1. Following the flood events of 11,18 June and 8 July 2023, the Flood Risk Management team sent out hundreds of flood questionnaires and attended significantly affected areas with residents, Councillors, and other risk management authorities to investigate the extent of damages. These events have highlighted a recurring issue of property and infrastructure flooding due to intense rainfall, occurring more frequently than originally predicted.
- 4.10.2. In July 2023, Phase 2 of the Perry Barr and Witton flood alleviation scheme was officially opened in Sandwell Valley Country Park. Partnership working between the Environment Agency, Birmingham City Council and Sandwell Council have ensured that 1,400 properties in Birmingham are better protected and lessens the flood risk from the River Tame. The storage areas can accommodate 1.7 million cubic metres of water with estimated financial benefits for Perry Barr and Witton of over £440 million, facilitating re-development and growth opportunities.
- 4.10.3. Works continue under the Reservoir Act 1975 on statutory works, inspections, and on-site plans to ensure the safe and continuous operation of the Council's eleven large-raised reservoirs. The team works closely with the Parks team for the long-term efficiency of the pools and to retain the historic value of these assets.
- 4.10.4. The Flood Risk Management team has a rolling 6-year programme of schemes which adapts on funding availability and the urgency of implementation. This programme allows for the development of studies and schemes which could be delivered in future years. Birmingham-led projects and works also include flood mitigation, property flood resilience and drainage improvements for other BCC teams and directorates.

#### **4.11. Appendix B – Transport Updates (September 2023)**