

## Briefing paper for Scrutiny

### 1.0 Introduction to the Green Commission

The Green Commission was established in 2012. The Commission's Vision Statement outlines our overall aim, which

'...is to create a leading green city for a better life and make Birmingham more prosperous, healthier, fairer, resource-efficient and better for business. In doing this we will enhance the quality of life and well-being for all of our citizens'

The vision also reiterates the city's target of a 60% carbon reduction by 2027 (about 42% of this will be comprised of national government activity, e.g. around decarbonising the energy grid). Following the publication of the vision, the Carbon Roadmap was produced to indicate some of the early projects that we would need to initiate or accelerate in order to move towards that target. The Vision and the Roadmap are both available on the Green Commission's website ([www.makingbirminghamgreener.com](http://www.makingbirminghamgreener.com)).

### 2.0 Membership

The Green Commission has members drawn from across sectors: business, public sector, third sector and academia are all represented. The carbon reduction target will rely on input from partners across the whole city working in collaboration. In 2014 the decision was made to also include partners from the GBS LEP; these are included in the table below. Current membership is as follows:

Name	Organisation	Role in Green Commission
Cllr Lisa Trickett	Birmingham City Council	Chair
Michael Addison	Northfield Ecocentre	Board Member
Prof Bjorn Birgisson	Aston University	Board Member
Phil Beardmore	BVSC Environment Network Champion	Board Member
John Box	Chair of Birmingham & Black Country Local Nature Partnership	Board member Co-chair of the Natural Capital and Adaptation Roundtable
Peter Braithwaite	Sustainability West Midlands	Board Member
Councillor Ian Courts	Solihull MBC	Board Member
Paul Faulkner	Birmingham Chamber of Commerce	Board Member
Prof Martin Freer	University of Birmingham	Board member Chair of Energy and Resources Group
Jackie Homan	Birmingham City Council	
Pat Laughlin	Midlands Environmental Business Company (MEBC)	Board member Chair of the Green Growth Group
Peter Laybourn	International Synergies	Board Member
Martin Orrill	British Gas	Board Member
Mike Parker	LEP representative from North Worcestershire, Director of	Board Member

	Economic Prosperity & Place, Wyre Forest District Council	
Neil Ross	West Midlands ITA Policy & Strategy Team	Board Member
Anne Shaw	Birmingham City Council	Board Member Transport and Mobility lead
Georgia Stokes	Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust	Board member Co-chair of the Natural Capital and Adaptation Roundtable
Karen Strandoo	Energy Saving Trust	Board member Chair of the Buildings and Efficiency Roundtable
Paul Woods	Engie (formerly Cofely)	Board Member

### **3.0 Key areas of work**

The Carbon Roadmap identified 5 key areas of influence for the Green Commission; roundtables have been set up to support each of these and to bring in other people that want to work with us to support the low carbon agenda in Birmingham. The themes of the roundtables are as follows:

#### **3.1 Energy and Resources**

The Commission and its stakeholders have a key role through the Energy and Resources theme to collaborate as a multi-disciplinary group to:

- assess and develop energy and resource (including water) infrastructure investment opportunities;
- deliver interdisciplinary projects and leading research into energy and resources;
- create the conditions for industrial symbiosis and better resource management; and
- influence policy and investment decisions.

#### **3.2 Natural Capital and Adaptation**

The Green Commission's Natural Capital Roundtable will lead on capturing the value of nature and protecting and improving natural assets within GBSLEP. Areas for activity include:

- Making the case for a natural capital approach
- Demonstrating leadership
- Growing a green economy
- Practical action to protect and improve the natural environment
- Strengthening the connections between people and nature
- Monitoring and reporting

#### **3.3 Green Growth and Behaviour Change**

Through the Green Growth theme, the Green Commission will aim to:

- Communicate the benefits of building the 'green economy' for existing businesses and inward investment
- Ensure business growth is directly linked to green growth
- Create opportunities for business growth/jobs and through the LCGS sector but also the wider economy

#### **3.4 Buildings and Efficiency**

The Commission and its stakeholders have a key role through the Buildings and Efficiency theme to collaborate as a multi-disciplinary group to:

- improve the take-up of energy efficiency measures across the city's building stock;

- deliver Interdisciplinary projects and leading research into buildings and efficiency; and
- influence policy and investment decisions

### **3.5     *Transport and Mobility***

This does not run as a roundtable in its own right as there are other groups with an overlapping responsibility. This work is currently being delivered through the ITA's Connected Communities group.

#### 4.0 Achievements, challenges and priorities (selected highlights)

Theme	Achievements	Challenges	Forthcoming priorities
Energy and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masterplanning complete for district heating using Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU) funding – Birmingham and GBS LEP</li> <li>• Energy plan near completion for GBS LEP</li> <li>• Detailed feasibility study for heat networks taking place at Tyseley and imminently at Selly Oak</li> <li>• Decentralised energy study near completion for delivery model in Birmingham</li> <li>• Commissioned and delivered a technology foresighting study to inform the procurement of the waste contract</li> <li>• Secured funding for Interreg industrial symbiosis project.</li> <li>• Energy Research Accelerator and Energy Systems Catapult located in Birmingham offer significant partner opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating new connections to district energy scheme</li> <li>• How to use planning and procurement to maximum effect (with changing national legislation)</li> <li>• BCC capacity to cover opportunities sufficiently</li> <li>• Ensuring that energy and resources infrastructure investment is holistic and coordinated – e.g. coordination of waste with energy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing a dedicated delivery unit</li> <li>• Securing capital investment</li> <li>• Data and spatial analysis for priority infrastructure investment</li> </ul>
Natural Capital and Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural capital planning tool to support inclusion of green infrastructure in new developments</li> <li>• Natural capital accounting – quantifying the benefits of natural capital</li> <li>• Rockefeller bid submitted to support resilience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCC capacity to cover opportunities sufficiently</li> <li>• Securing funding for service delivery</li> <li>• Embedding with other relevant areas of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the biodiversity SPD</li> <li>• Rollout of natural capital planning tool</li> </ul>
Green Growth and Behaviour Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently involved in two public procurement of innovation projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constraints with changes to national legislation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction and resource use</li> <li>• Links with developers (building</li> </ul>

	<p>looking at energy efficiency measures in procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero Emissions Cities project – supported by World Business Council for Sustainable Development</li> <li>• Sustainable Schools Programme accredited by the Global Learning Programme</li> <li>• Publications for awareness raising in schools (SKIPS books) – waste, energy and green travel completed to date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links across other service areas</li> </ul>	<p>on UKGBC event)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising event ('Green Week')</li> </ul>
Buildings and Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK Green Building Council (UKGBC) event – 150 delegates and potential new private sector partnership.</li> <li>• Procurement projects (above) are building-related and working with SMEs to deliver innovative solutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the follow-on from BES?</li> <li>• Where is the capacity to deliver?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realising the potential of devolution – what resources can be devolved to support city-scale retrofit?</li> <li>• Need for secondary legislation?</li> </ul>
Transport and Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blueprint for low carbon infrastructure produced</li> <li>• LPG taxi project</li> <li>• Tyseley Energy Park – compressed natural gas refuelling station</li> <li>• Working with bus companies to support cleaner fuels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to realise the extent of the opportunities</li> <li>• Funding to support the activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued work to rollout blueprint</li> <li>• Links with decentralised energy and waste infrastructure</li> <li>• Maximising ERDF potential</li> <li>• Supporting delivery of Clean Air Zone opportunities</li> </ul>

## **5.0 Partnership working**

The Commission itself is a partnership organisation, with organisations and members bringing potential collaborative opportunities. The thematic roundtables (described above) bring an additional 100 organisations to the discussions on sustainability. For example:

- We have developed work with the University of Birmingham's Energy Research Accelerator and we are involved in their Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council project exploring the future potential of energy storage in Birmingham.
- MEBC brought the Zero Emissions Cities project to Birmingham (we are the only other European city participating along with Amsterdam).
- The TRIS project, that will enable further understanding of the contribution of industrial symbiosis to waste reduction in Birmingham, was introduced to the Green Commission by international Synergies (a Kings Norton-based company).

Further, the events and networking events that we hold bring further potential of external expertise and partnership working. The UKGBC, in a recent press release following their City Summit on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Feb said:

*It was abundantly clear over our two day summit that there is a huge appetite for collaboration from our industry-wide membership, who are brimming with innovative ideas needed to turn this ambition into reality.*

The Green Commission will maximise this opportunity to work with additional partners to deliver on priorities.

## **6.0 Cross regional working particular reference to LEP area**

The GBS LEP is involved in a number of ways:

- The Green Commission was opened up to membership from the GBS LEP. Three members initially attended, although East Staffordshire's representative was not re-elected and they have not sent a replacement.
- The roundtables are open to all members from the GBS LEP authority areas. In reality it is Solihull that are the most engaged with the work that we are doing.
- There is a GBS LEP Low Carbon Officers Group that has input into the spending of the European Regional Development Funds for low carbon.
- Some tangible studies have been carried out in low carbon activity across the GBS LEP – these are the heat network masterplanning study, the GBS LEP Energy Plan and the GBS LEP Low Carbon Transport Plan. The latter two studies are required in order to access ERDF funds, but still indicate where there is potential for collaboration.
- The Blueprint for Low Carbon Refuelling, and subsequent work to identify potential sites for investment has resulted in collaboration with other parts of the GBS LEP.
- Pat Laughlin (MEBC and Green Commission member) is the Low Carbon Goods and Services link for the GBS LEP.
- We need greater support for low carbon activity from the GBS LEP; it needs to be seen as something bound up with economic growth, not separate to it.

We are also supporting work that Sustainability West Midlands are doing to understand the potential of the Combined Authority.

## **7.0 How the Scrutiny Committee can feed in and support the work**

The generic challenges in terms of sustainability are:

- The availability of data – up-to-date use and analysis of data to identify opportunities and for measuring and monitoring.

- Financial limitations – need for funding to support activity and investment will be required for roll-out of larger initiatives
- Policy challenges – national government policy support for sustainability is diminishing at a time when international calls for more action (e.g. through the COP21 in Paris last December) are increasing.
- Civil engagement – behaviour change is critical for realising carbon reduction and wider sustainability ambitions.
- Internal BCC engagement – sustainability needs to become an holistic part of our activity in order to provide improved social (e.g. reduced fuel poverty and more energy efficient homes); economic (e.g. energy security); and environmental (e.g. clean air and improved green infrastructure) outcomes. This is in keeping with the Council's move to a more flexible and streamlined authority.
- Planning – in the absence of clear national policy, local planning mechanisms need establishing to ensure alignment with the city's sustainability ambitions.

In terms of the role of Scrutiny, we would value that plans, programmes and projects are reviewed for their contribution to the city's sustainability ambitions in order to make it a key part of the city's activity, not a separate 'add on'.