



1.0 Introduction

This note outlines discussions had at the first West Midlands Greener Together Forum on the 31st of March 2022, where the topic discussed was regional tree planting and Forum logistics.

Please see current Forum Terms of Reference [here](#).

2.0 Forum Logistics

2.1 Future potential topics to be discussed at the Forum;

- Retrofitting homes
- Transport
- Waste disposal
- Local energy initiatives
- Brownfield land

Through a small agenda setting group with Forum members, Retrofit has been chosen as the second Forum topic for the 28th of June 2022 meeting.

2.2 Commitment to rotating the Forum around each Local Authority in the West Midlands Combined Authority and meetings should be hybrid.

- The Forum is committed to moving around the region to ensure it remains accessible to all. The second Forum meeting shall be hosted in an accessible venue in Birmingham City Centre – The Warehouse Friends of the Earth Building (B5 5TH). The Forum shall be hosted in-person and online via Microsoft Teams.

2.3 The Forum should start later in the evening 7-9pm and be more than four times a year

- This was suggested in one of the breakout rooms and we will continue to raise the logistics of the meetings to ensure everyone is happy with how the Forum operates and they remain accessible for all to join and interact with.
- Due to limited capacity, the WMCA are unable to organise more than four sessions per year. However, we are committed to ensuring the meetings are informative and useful for all involved. The Terms of Reference shall be reviewed twice a year and updated when needed.
- Members wanted networking opportunities and to be able to share good practice. We have ensured that each in-person meeting shall have networking time included before the hybrid meeting begins. We are unable to keep an open list of people who have attended due to GDPR however, those attending online can share contact details with each other and if you would like to make a connection, please email wmgreenertogether@wmca.org.uk and we will send your contact details onto the person for them to contact you.

2.4 Thought needs to go into how the Forum discussions feed into the WMCA Environment and Energy Board meetings

- The Environment and Energy Board meetings are held every quarter and are chaired by Councillor Ian Courts, Leader of Solihull Council who is the Portfolio Holder for Energy and Environment. Councillors from Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Wolverhampton City Council, Sandwell Council, Walsall Council, Birmingham City Council and Coventry City Council, who are portfolio holders for Energy and Environment within their councils also attend. [Please see here](#) current members and past papers. The board provide strategic oversight for the WMCA's work and briefing notes from each Forum shall be presented to the board for discussion.

2.5 A newsletter or bulletin needs to be shared with updates, funding opportunities and project updates

- We have created a monthly Energy and Environment newsletters to share our work. You can register to receive these newsletters [via this link](#).

3.0 **Regional tree planting**

- 3.1 Difficulty surrounding land, access, and regulations – scope for a programme to bring organisations together to submit planting programme.
- WMCA Environment Team have submitted a bid into the Woodland Trusts' Emergency Tree Fund to create a West Midlands Forest Partnership. The Partnership would aim to create a regional focus to tree and hedge planting and to complete an i-tree assessment of current tree stock, similar to the assessment in the Black Country. We should know the outcome soon and would look to increase team capacity to lead on this work.
- 3.2 Tools libraries for the community to borrow tools to plant trees
- The WMCA Environment Team will have a conversation with the Active Wellbeing Society who have several '[Share Shacks](#)' in Birmingham and North Solihull. The WMCA will look into including community reuse hub as part of our circular economy work, more information on our circular economy route map can be found [here](#).
- 3.3 Issue with tree nurseries keeping up with supply and need to set up local tree nurseries to be more self sufficient
- In the WMCA Natural Environment Plan we have committed to creating a West Midlands tree nursery and will work with partners to progress this. More information on our Natural Environment Plan can be found on our website [here](#).
- 3.4 How can we work with bigger landowners, who can make a bigger difference than any small group could?
- In the WMCA Natural Environment Plan we have committed to hosting a regional landowner's summit to promote collaboration and bring forward land for trees and other biodiversity projects.
- 3.5 To share mapping of greenspaces for community groups to use information in funding applications
- The **WMCA Community Green Grant** is detailed here ([Community Green Grants \(wmca.org.uk\)](#)) and support can be given by the grant administrator (CommunityGreenGrants@wmca.org.uk), we would suggest contact be made prior to submitting an application to ensure the best chance of success.
 - Map data to identify the **Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)** for an area is here [IMD 2019 Maps \(mysociety.org\)](#)
 - **Information on Green Infrastructure** and accessible greenspace provision is here, this also includes detail on Accessible Natural Greenspace standards - [Map \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)
 - The **West Midlands Virtual Forest** is a mapping platform to log trees and hedges you plant to build a picture of how we are all helping to create a fairer, greener and happier West Midlands. You can see previous trees planted, and log you own planted since January 2020 on the website <https://www.wmvirtualforest.co.uk/>
- 3.6 Biodiversity considerations are built into big infrastructure projects
- Major projects will always be subject to planning approval and compliance with local authority policies which include provision for Biodiversity. For developments after November 2023, it will be mandatory for all new development to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain. At the WMCA we are working on an internal corporate Environment Plan where we propose to set out a clear commitment to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain on all new projects prior to this becoming a mandatory required.
- 3.7 Share information sources on maintaining trees and hedges and biodiversity support
- WMCA launched the Right Tree Right Place campaign in February 2022 to provided support on planting the right sizes tree in smaller spaces, such as gardens. The guidance can be [found here](#) and this was shared along with the 400 trees given away to events in Coventry, Birmingham and Wolverhampton.
 - WMCA launched a biodiversity webinar series in 2022 to support potential applicants to the Community Green Grants. The webinars are open to anyone to learn about biodiversity and the schedule can be found [here](#).
 - A 'top tips for increasing biodiversity' has also been created and can be downloaded [here](#).