

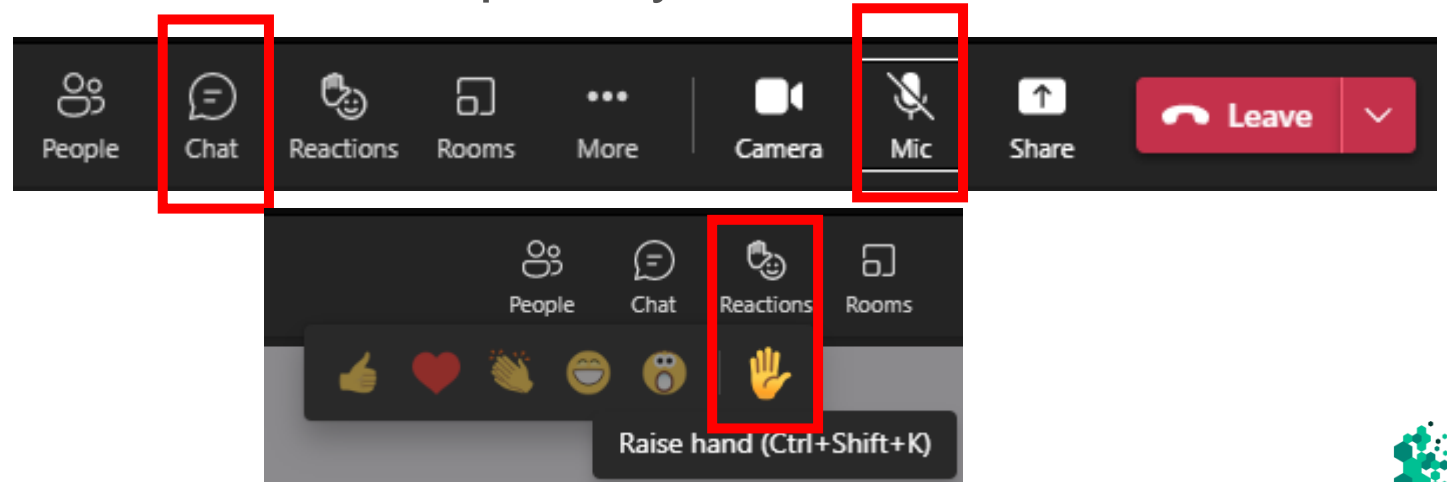
West Midlands Greener Together Forum

21st November 2022



Housekeeping

- If joining online, please stay on mute when in the main room
- Please respect all opinions and allow opportunity for all to speak when in the breakout rooms and to ask questions. This is our first hybrid meeting and want to ensure all those joining online, and those in-person, feel part of the meeting
- To ask questions online, please write in the chat box or raise your hand to ask the question. If in person, please raise your hands
- No scheduled breaks but please feel free to step away when needed



Forum logistics reminder

Purpose

Bring together representatives of the WMCA, with all those across the region who are committed to cutting carbon emissions and enhancing the natural environment to discuss, collaborate and debate different initiatives.

Space for EVERYONE to update one another about their activities to achieve net zero.

Membership

Open to everyone, with no limit to the number of members. Ensure that voices within the Forum are balanced and **everyone gets the opportunity to raise their ideas and concerns**.

Format

- Meetings held **four times a year** for 2 hours between 6-8pm
- Hybrid meeting approach with in-person and online joining options
- Meeting will move around the WMCA area
- WMCA will provide administrative support, with the **agenda open for anyone to bring relevant items to the meeting**

Roles and Responsibilities

- **All to contribute** information, specialist knowledge, expertise, ideas and learning to drive forward discussion and decision-making; members are there to collaborate rather than represent the interests of their own organisation
- Other specific roles and responsibilities to be discussed as the Forum evolves e.g. co-convenor roles
- To **contribute to the agenda setting** for each meeting

Principles and Ground rules

- Participants will adopt a partnership ethos that stresses **inclusivity, openness, and transparency** in its deliberations, and which drives positive action and improvement as a result of its decisions.
- Every meeting will be engaging, strategic, positive, and focussed on achieving clear outcomes.
- If conflicts of interest occur, participants will be open and honest in order to resolve any issues.
- Agendas will be circulated a week in advance of the meeting with action points showing the individuals/organisations responsible will be circulated within a week of the meeting.

Agenda

6:30 - 6:35pm: Opening remarks from chair Jackie Homan, Head of Environment at the WMCA

6:40 - 6:50pm: Matthew Eccles, Affordable Warmth Delivery Manager, WMCA Energy Capital team

6:50 - 7:00pm: Helen Langley, Senior Agency Support & Development Officer at Dudley Council

7:00 - 7:10pm: Bret Willers, Head of Sustainability at Coventry City Council

7:10 - 7:35pm: Breakout rooms

7:35 - 8:10pm: Plenary session with speakers

8:10 - 8:20pm: Update on Forum logistics for 2023

8:20 - 8:30pm: Community updates and closing remarks

Updates from previous meeting 28th June

Raised in last meeting	Actions taken
What support and schemes are available to target the very lowest households for retrofitting?	<p>Sustainable Warmth Competition – launched in Elmdon, Solihull, and Foleshill in Coventry, following the award of £2.86m from funding secured by WMCA from central government. The WMCA, local authorities, Act on Energy and other partners have been engaging with residents in the two areas to take up the offer of support to retrofit their homes with a range of environmental solutions – from installing insulation to solar PV to low carbon heat pumps.</p> <p>Act on Energy support vulnerable households with energy advice and guide them through the retrofit process.</p> <p>WMCA has created the “Is your home fit for a heat pumps” with FAQs and what questions to ask installers to ensure householders and making informed decisions. Are also creating videos to show the benefits of retrofitting your home. Harriet and Chris Martins video is available to watch.</p>
How can we encourage a more collective approach to retrofit by a street-by-street approach rather than single homes?	<p>Net Zero Neighbourhood – aims to demonstrate that a street-by-street approach to retrofit and neighbourhood regeneration to support communities to transition to a sustainable lifestyle. WMCA will co-invest £2.1 million in retrofit, low carbon heating measures and other low carbon infrastructure. The first demonstrator project will be in Dudley. The aim is to secure more funding to build a series on these demonstrators across the region.</p> <p>Trailblazer Devolution Deal – WMCA currently developing a Trailblazer Devolution ask to negotiate with government, which will redefine the powers of the WMCA across the region. Net Zero is a key part of the ask, and funding for retrofit work will be part of the devolution deal to fund whole neighbourhood projects rather than through single measures. There are also asks to work towards creating an organisation that can support end-to-end customer journey support through retrofitting.</p>
There needs to be a zero-carbon mandate for all new builds	<p>WMCAs Zero Carbon Homes Charter is aimed at developers, housebuilders and other stakeholders involved in delivering housing within the region. The Routemap is an action plan setting out how we will achieve the principles set within the Charter. However more work is needed to create a mandate.</p>
How do we address the skills gap within retrofit technology and installation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University College Birmingham have a retrofit and low carbon modules being built into their construction courses - Low Carbon Homes hosting the Birmingham Retrofit Summit. 6th December – 8th December. Register to attend now. - The Retrofit Academy is working together with the WMCA to offer fully-funded training and qualifications for those unemployed, employed and self-employed in the West Midlands.

Follow up information

All slides and notes from Forum meetings shall be shared on the [West Midlands Greener Together webpage](#) on the WMCA website.

A briefing note has been developed with answers to questions as well sharing information and links requested in the previous meeting. This shall be shared via email after today's session and will be available to download from the website.

1.0 Introduction

This note outlines discussions had at the first West Midlands Greener Together Forum on the 28th of June 2022, where the topic discussed was regional retrofit projects. The Forum brought together speakers involved in tackling retrofit from different perspectives, but all with the goal of improving energy efficiency in the region's homes. The WM2041 Five Year Plan has outlined the scale of this challenge: 292,000 homes need to be retrofitted by 2026 to stay on course for achieving net zero by 2041. The speakers were:

George Simms, SMART Hub Lead, Energy Capital – leads on establishing a cross directorate Hub to support the development of a Sustainable Market for Affordable Retrofit Technologies (SMART) across the West Midlands and delivering domestic retrofit solutions.

Phil Beardmore, Environmental Leader, Energy Confidence – Phil supports organisations and householders with energy advice and support to decarbonise businesses. Phil offers whole-house energy advise packages and supports Faith centres to decarbonise their places of worship.

Rachel Jones, Chief Executive, Act on Energy – encourage energy conservation by providing free and impartial advice for householders and small businesses across the West Midlands. They have been addressing Fuel Poverty and Climate Change for over 20 years supporting households through their energy journey.

Immy Kaur, Co-founder and Director, Civic Square - work closely with neighborhoods to experiment and test building resilient, regenerative neighbourhoods. They co-design and co-build spaces at the heart of communities for them to meet, connect and work together to address issues, such as retrofitting their homes.

The following notes reflect the discussions had within the plenary session and questions which followed each speakers' presentations. The presentations can be found on the [website here](#).

Regional retrofit projects

2.0 WMCA Energy Capital retrofit update

- The SMART Hub (Sustainable Market for Affordable Retrofit Technologies) has been set up by the WMCA in 2021, as part of its investment to deliver its net zero targets. The team has already led the region in attracting more than £10m of funding for retrofit projects and has supported partners in additional bids of more than £14m.
- The WMCA's Energy Capital team, as part of a consortium including Sandwell Council, Solihull Community Housing, City of Wolverhampton Council, Community Housing Group, Midland Heart, Orbit Housing Group, and Wrekin Housing Group, had successfully secured £7.5m from the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. This will be used to retrofit 600 social homes across the region, including the installation of low carbon heating systems and solar panels.
- The Sustainable Warmth Competition programme has also now launched in Elmdon, Solihull, and Foleshill in Coventry, following the award of £2.86m from funding secured by WMCA from central government. The WMCA, local authorities, Act on Energy and other partners have been engaging with residents in the two areas to take up the offer of support to retrofit their homes with a range of environmental solutions – from installing insulation to solar PV to low carbon heat pumps.

Presentations



West Midlands
Combined Authority



WEST MIDLANDS
Greener Together

Tackling Systemic Fuel Poverty in the West Midlands

Matthew Eccles

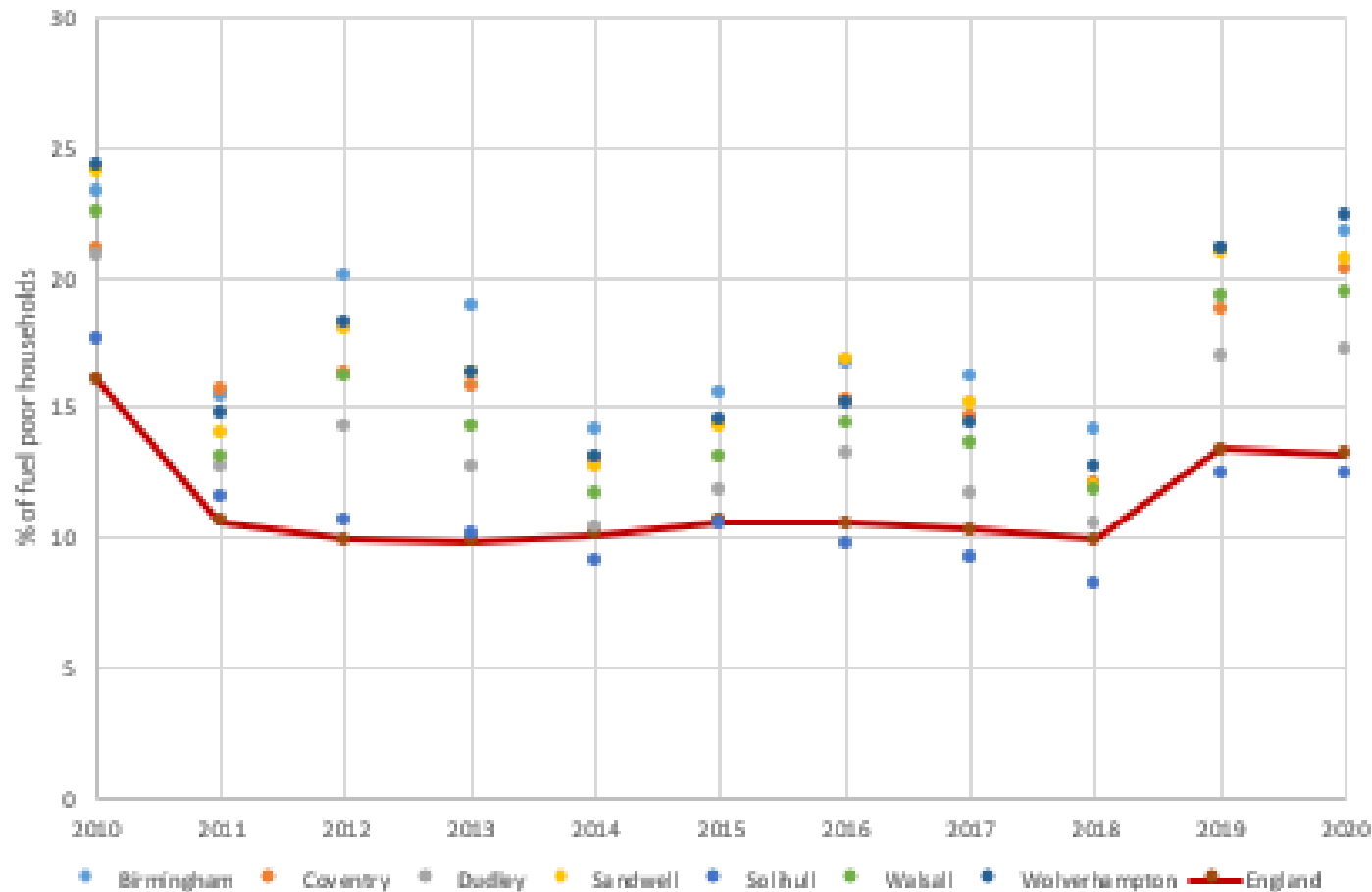
Affordable Warmth Delivery Manager

WMCA

Contents

- Fuel poverty in the West Midlands
- Government policy and funding
- WMCA work on fuel poverty
- Future WMCA plans

Fuel Poverty in the West Midlands



- The WMCA area scores worst for fuel poverty amongst all counties and regions in England - 20.1% against the English average of 13.2%
- It has the second highest percentage of properties in the lower EPC bands (58.9% of properties according to the latest English Housing Survey)
- By LSOA area the West Midlands has 24 of the 50 areas with highest fuel poverty rates, and 5 of the 10 LSOA areas with the highest Fuel Poverty rates are in the West Midlands

Government Policy and Funding

Short term direct income support	Longer Term direction income support	Energy Efficiency Measure Funding
£150 Council Tax rebate for around 80% of households in England, £144 million in discretionary funding for local authorities	Winter Fuel Payment, Warm Homes Discount, and Cold Weather payments	SHDF Wave 1 – to June 2023, SWC to March 2023, HUG Phase 1 – to March 2023
'Energy Price Guarantee' will mean a typical UK household will now pay up to an average of £2,500 a year on energy bills until March 2023.	Energy Company Obligation (ECO), which requires energy suppliers to install energy efficiency measures in fuel poor, vulnerable or low income homes	HUG 2 – March 2025
		BUS – 2022 - 2025
£400 off energy bills for households in Great Britain from this October – March 2023		ECO 4 and ECO 4 Flex 2022 - 2026
£650 one-off Cost of Living Payment for those on means tested benefits		SHDF Wave 2 Consortium Bid – 2 year programme

Government Policy & Funding – Challenges

Some of the difficulties with the current approach include:

- The entire focus of expenditure is on capital funding of one-off interventions meeting targets rather than identifying the needs of the most vulnerable households.
- Very little attention is paid to maintenance, leading to early failures in improvements.
- The effectiveness of most current interventions (in England) results in an insignificant change in the numbers of fuel-poor homes, despite a spend of around £1 billion annually on fuel poverty interventions.
- The stop-start, short-term approach to programmes leads to a weak and disengaged supply chain.
- Fuel poverty is treated as an 'energy' problem with limited strategic connections to other complementary programmes, such as health, air quality, infrastructure investment and economic growth.
- The lack of a whole house design misses opportunities for low cost improvements and householder behaviour change.
- Householders, as customers, are lost in the journey of improving their homes, identifying vulnerabilities and saving money.

Government Policy & Funding – Challenges

- These are still the issues we face today – 3 years after paper was published.
- Current funding landscape is all we can do at the moment and is totally inadequate.
- Most important programme in this area is Net Zero Neighbourhood that is looking at funding, intervention, social impact in the round.

WMCA Work on Fuel Poverty – Our Role

- The WMCA role is about filling gaps in capacity and delivery and increasing impact through demonstration of alternative solutions
- Relatively restricted by funding availability
- Remit is limited; aim to build a regional delivery model (WHSL)
- What we want to do isn't what government wants to fund

WMCA Work on Fuel Poverty

- SHDF Wave 1
- SWC – Elmdon and Foleshill
- Net Zero Neighbourhood Demonstrator – Dudley
- Housing Stock Analysis Tool (Parity Projects)

Future WMCA plans

- Our Vision for the future:
 - Coordinated, people-centred programme
 - Improving advice provision
 - Seeking more sustainable sources of funding
 - Building up capacity in team



West Midlands Combined Authority



WEST MIDLANDS
Greener Together



Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Helen Langley
Dudley Energy Advice Line - DEAL



...the historic capital of the Black Country



Energy Efficiency Measures – Local authority Stock

Almost 47,000 measures from 2011 to 2022

Energy Measures Undertaken – LA

- Cavity Wall Insulation – virtually all cavities that can be are filled
- Loft insulation (85% - 200mm +).
- Double Glazing completed (first generation)
- 182 homes with solar PV
- 4,000 External Wall Insulation
- 1,292 Switchee smart thermostats installs to date



Dudley Energy Advice Line (DEAL)

Energy Advice (DEAL) & Winter Warmth Service

Cross Tenure Service with 9 officers in dual roles
Referrals from Health and Social Care

Supporting residents

Billing issues

Offering debt and budgeting advice

Applying for grants for insulation and replacement heating

Providing crisis measures – vouchers, heated throws

Advising on the causes of condensation and how to alleviate it

Providing energy efficiency tips on a room-by-room basis

Cost of appliance leaflet

Carbon Reduction behaviour change challenge

Full Needs Assessment – health, mobility, wellbeing, finances,

2021/22 outcomes :

Assisted over 3,000 households with energy advice, 20% increase on the previous year



Carbon Reduction Behavioural Changes

Barriers

Too complex
Unsure what steps
to take
Too costly
Important
suggestions:
achievable,
affordable, and
maintainable

Carbon Challenge

Driving less
Less dairy and meat
Ethical and
sustainable clothing
Energy aware
5 Rs: refuse, reuse,
reduce, recycle and
rot



***The Great
High Rise Switch Off
Competition***

**Local
Authority
Flexible
Eligibility
Scheme**

(LA Flex)

Measures Installed 2017 - 2022

Dudley	3,169
Walsall	2,112
Sandwell	1,738
Birmingham	1,490
Wolverhampton	639
Solihull	160
Coventry	68

Greener Homes Greener Lives

- £1.5m LAD2 Government Grant – plus third match funding from LA
- £5,000 per property
- 298 home target – LA stock
- EWI – 35 homes
- Electric Storage Heaters - 207
- Solar PV – 53

Challenges

- Delivery timescales
- PAS 2035 – accreditation standard
- Design specification
- Planning – brick effect
- Engagement

Evaluation

Switchee smart thermostat



Feedback & Awards

"I noticed almost Immediately that I could turn my thermostat down."

"You could tell it made a difference from the moment you woke up."

"The neighbours have commented about how smart it looks"

Finalist for Inside Housing Award

Finalist for Inspire Award

National Energy Efficiency Award 3rd in UK – Local Authority of the Year



Warmer Homes

West Midlands

DELIVERED BY ACT ON ENERGY



Warmer Homes West Midlands provided this video to show the impact the project has had on tackling fuel poverty. They have supported more than 10,000 vulnerable households across the region.

The programme has recently received an [additional £1 million in funding](#) by the Energy Savings Trust through Ofgem's Energy Redress Scheme.



One Coventry response to supporting our communities with the Cost of Living Crisis



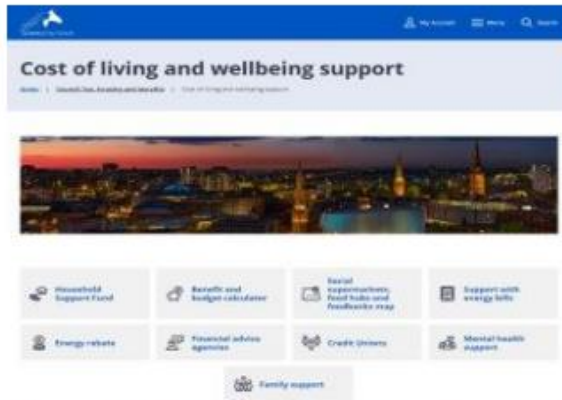
West Midlands Greener Together

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Cost of Living support available

Significant range of support already in place (created through the work that we do with our partners and communities)



<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/cost-living-wellbeing-support>

Current CCC support

- Energy Rebate
- Council Tax Support
- Discretionary Housing Payment
- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Community Support Grant
- Household Support Fund
- Digital Inclusion
- Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) campaigns
- Money Helper

Support commissioned or provided in partnership



External support



Cost of Living Forum – 3rd October 2022

**35 organisations
attended
(circa 85 people)**

**Focused
discussions
on areas for
action
determined
by the group**

- Equipping people to provide immediate help or advice
- Maximising income
- Integrated/holistic support
- Food distribution/ procurement & other food support
- Shared community and warm spaces

**Pledges from
organisations
to action and
opportunities
for
collaboration
identified**

Emerging themes:

- Energy
- Food
- Skills/ Education
- Awareness/ Messaging
- Collective use of resources
- Partnership/ Community located
- Funding opportunities
- Inclusion
- Data Sharing

**Outputs
shared with
attending
organisations
with request
to...**

- Progress with their pledges
- Inform prioritisation of activity
- Identify which actions they/or their forums will lead on e.g. Poverty Alliance/Food Network

Addressing Inequalities



Food Growing projects



Access to green spaces in deprived neighbourhoods



Increase uptake in retrofit programs



More pedestrian and cyclist networks



Alternatives to private car, CVLR, Electric buses, Transport on demand

Promoting behavioural change



Uptake of retrofit – 3 Cities approach



Creating warm places



Increase take up of public transport



Increase support for active travel – a 15 minute city



Support for local gardens and projects



Liveable neighbourhoods, modelling pedestrian flows and urban design

The Green Legacy - Use of the arts to stimulate behaviour change

