
Report to: Green Economy Panel

Date: 7 July 2020

Subject: **Devolution and Green Infrastructure Standards Trial**

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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update the Green Economy Panel (Panel) on the emerging plans for a Green Infrastructure Standards Pilot (GISP) and wider Spatial Planning work to tackling the Climate Emergency.

2 Information

Background

- 2.1 On 12 March 2020 West Yorkshire Leaders and Government signed a “minded-to” Devolution Deal which was announced as part of the Budget on 11 March. The deal offers the opportunity for the region to receive additional functions and funding in return for adopting the model of a directly elected Mayor by May 2021. The Deal has the potential to benefit the region by unlocking central government funding and powers to allow more local and accountable decision making.
- 2.2 The Combined Authority is preparing for the transition to a Mayoral Combined Authority. As reported to the last meeting there are multiple workstreams across the organisation and partnership. One of the workstreams is Spatial Planning and Tackling the Climate Emergency.

Workstream 17 Spatial Planning and the Climate Emergency

- 2.3 Workstream 17 aims to advance the following inter-related priorities as a sequential programme of activity:
- Green Infrastructure Standards Pilot (GISP) (as below)
 - Develop a Zero Emission Investment Framework (ZEIF) to provide direction for infrastructure investment priorities and policies.

- Prepare for the requirement to produce a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) to ensure that the WYCA can demonstrate good progress to Government and to support any future negotiations on devolution and funding.

- 2.4 The GISP is the first activity within a wider programme of activity. As the Panel heard at the previous meeting, The Combined Authority will take part in an innovative Green Infrastructure Standards Pilot (GISP). Paragraph 120 of the Devolution Deal refers to the GI Standards Pilot: *120) The West Yorkshire Combined Authority will work with the Government to explore the potential for an innovative Green Infrastructure Standards pilot. This is in line with the Combined Authority's ambitions regarding Green and Blue Infrastructure and the importance of delivering green infrastructure to provide a range of benefits such as improved health, wellbeing, climate change adaptation and mitigation and nature conservation and enhancement. The pilot will use the emerging green infrastructure benchmarks, mapping and design guidance being developed by Defra and Natural England, to help West Yorkshire to become an exemplar of good green infrastructure delivery, benefitting the economy, people and the environment of the city region, and helping to deliver biodiversity net gain and net zero carbon.*
- 2.5 Exact deliverables on the Pilot are to be developed and confirmed with Natural England but the work aims to pilot new national Green Infrastructure Standards and associated processes. The activities being considered as part of the West Yorkshire pilot include support for how GI standards are embedded into forthcoming local nature recovery plans and net biodiversity gain requirements (including GI baselining, mapping and gap analysis) and pipeline development work. We will be one of 15 areas participating in the trail. The outputs of the Pilot work including any policy recommendations will be incorporated into the ZEIF. A full verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

Zero Emission Investment Framework (ZEIF)

- 2.6 The Devolution Deal includes reference to a ZEIF. *Paragraphs 118 and 119 refer to a Zero Emission Investment Framework: 118) The region's success in becoming a net zero carbon economy by 2038 will depend on reducing emissions from transport, buildings, industry, power generation and land. West Yorkshire Combined Authority will develop a Zero Emission Strategic Infrastructure Investment Framework for the region, with support from Government, where appropriate, to provide feedback as the concept develops. 119) This framework will provide direction for infrastructure investment priorities and policies and provide long-term confidence to those wishing to invest in the region. It will provide an evidence base, upon which the region can prioritise and shape investment in infrastructure. It will support the creation of high-quality green and blue infrastructure, high-quality low carbon developments, zero emissions transport infrastructure, and decarbonisation of energy.*
- 2.7 In the context of challenging commitments to be net zero carbon by 2038 with significant progress by 2030 this framework will draw together the infrastructure requirements and related policy position to support work towards these targets for: natural capital including green and blue infrastructure, transport, energy,

digital, flood mitigation, building retrofit, waste and minerals. The aim of the ZEIF is to strengthen our strategic policy position where there are known gaps or inconsistencies and to provide evidence in support of future funding asks and to attract private sector investment. The framework will consider the spatial implications of the infrastructure requirements including opportunity areas or targeting. The work is at early scoping stage and there are dependencies on the outputs of both the Emissions Pathway work and the Connectivity Strategy.

Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)

- 2.8 The Deal also includes reference to the development of a SDS including powers relating to spatial planning. Paragraph 19 of the deal text refers to new functions of the directly elected Mayor for the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, these include: *‘Statutory spatial planning powers to produce a spatial development strategy; exercisable with the unanimous consent of the constituent authorities’*
- 2.9 Paragraph 104 and 105 provide further detail: *104) The Mayor will receive strategic planning powers. This will give the Mayor the power to create a statutory Spatial Development Strategy for West Yorkshire. This will coordinate strategic land-use planning with strategic transport planning and provide an ambitious framework to achieve a strategic level change in environmental planning policy to reduce carbon emissions and tackle the climate emergency. The scope and preferred approach to a Spatial Development Strategy is a matter for local agreement, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. This Spatial Development Strategy will need to be approved by a unanimous vote of the five members of the Combined Authority individually appointed by the constituent authorities. This, along with local plans, will act as the framework for managing planning across West Yorkshire.*
- 2.10 The Spatial Development Strategy will set a common strategic vision and provide strategic policies to tackle pressing issues including strategic coordination on energy policy, regeneration, renewal and retrofitting, modal shift, utilising broadband infrastructure, strategic waste management, flood risk management, developing and enhancing blue and green infrastructure and ensuring policies deliver biodiversity net gains. Ambitions on these priorities will be more effectively achieved when planned for at the cross-boundary level.

Preparatory work

- 2.11 Early preparatory work is now underway. It is recommended that this Panel provides strategic and advisory role in the development of these vital GI and spatial planning documents and receive updates on this work as part of the major projects updates going forward. It is proposed that the GEP act as the LEPs lead advisory Panel in the delivery of the GISP. It is also recommended that the Place Panel lead the LEP’s advisory role for the development of the ZEIF and SDS.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no implications associated with this paper.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no implications associated with this paper.

5. Staffing Implications

5.1 There are no implications associated with this paper.

6. External Consultees

6.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

7. Recommendations

7.1 The Panel note this newly emerging work that will support spatial planning tackling the Climate Emergency

7.2 Approve the Panel taking the lead advisory role for the GISP, and receiving regular updates on the ZEIF and SDS.

8. Background Documents

None.

9. Appendices

None