

Black Country Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy

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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 This strategy is designed to complement a range of existing strategies and policies in order to promote the uptake and use of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) throughout the Black Country. It seeks to provide an integrated approach to the reduction of road transport-related emissions in order firstly to improve air quality and secondly to address climate change issues. It will be progressed by an implementation plan to support delivery of key themes and serve as a platform to aid applications for related funding bids at a local, national and European level.

2. **National Policy and Strategy Background**

- 2.1 Promoting Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) is part of the broader sustainable approach to transport planning which seeks to; i) integrate land use and transport planning; ii) minimise the need for people to travel; and iii) reduce journey length by locating services and employment in locations either close to, or in combination with, residential development. Where passenger journeys are required, such an approach encourages the use of walking, cycling, public transport, taxis, car sharing and car clubs. Using this approach ULEVs are promoted for use in car clubs; bus services; taxis; and service, goods and freight vehicles as well as an alternative where private cars are still used. This holistic approach provides economic, public health, air quality, carbon reduction, social inclusion and other benefits.
- 2.2 This approach is supported by the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF March 2012). The NPPF specifically states that new developments should incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles (paragraph 35).
- 2.3 The UK government supports a reduction in carbon emissions as reflected in the Climate Change Act, 2008 and Carbon Plan, 2011 together with a strategy for ultra low emission vehicles promoted by the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) through a £500 million package of measures. This is reflected in the document 'Driving the Future Today: A strategy for ultra low emission vehicles in the UK', OLEV, September 2013. In the 2016 Autumn Statement the UK Government made electric vehicle charging infrastructure eligible for 100% relief against corporation tax.
- 2.4 In urban areas vehicles emissions are the predominant source of air pollutants. The Environment Act, 1995 introduced a requirement for local authorities in Britain to address poor and declining air quality, designed to reduce health risks and to achieve wider objectives of sustainable development in relation to air quality. From 1997 this has been achieved through the implementation of Air Quality Management Areas and the subsequent development of local Air Quality Action Plans in order to assist central government in meeting the



national objectives and EU Air Quality Limit Values. National standards and objectives for the eight main health-threatening air pollutants are contained in the UK National Air Quality Strategy 1997. The European Ambient Air Quality Directive, 2008 (2008/50/EC) sets legally binding limits for certain pollutants and was transposed into English law via the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010.

- 2.5 In December 2015 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) published the Air Quality Action Plan for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) which set out its commitment to improve the UK's air quality, reduce health impacts and fulfil its legal obligations as an EU Member State. The plan sets out an approach for meeting these goals including implementation of five mandatory Clean Air Zones (CAZs) and enabling legislation for CAZs to be adopted on a voluntary basis by other local authorities. Under this scheme by 2020 the most polluting diesel vehicles – primarily older buses, coaches, taxis and lorries - will be discouraged from entering the city centres of Birmingham, Leeds, Southampton, Nottingham and Derby. Newer vehicles that meet the latest emission standards, and private cars, will be unaffected. It is nonetheless realised that the extent of this may not be sufficient to redress poor air quality throughout all metropolitan areas.
- 2.6 As an innovative and complementary theme, the 'Smart City' concept has been designed across the West Midlands and is based around the use of digital technology and data to improve: economic performance; efficiency of the use of resources such as energy, water and materials; and quality of life. It also embraces a high quality built and natural environment, public services, health and wellbeing and transport. The 'Smart Mobility' theme of Smart Cities covers the promotion of sustainable transport including ULEVs.

3. West Midlands Policy

- 3.1 Promoting Low Emission Zones and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs), and improving both air quality and public health through increasing sustainable and active travel, are key policy objectives within the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan "Movement for Growth". This was approved by the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) in December 2015. The Plan recognises that the acceleration of the uptake of ULEVs via co-ordinated planning and delivery of ULEV charging and other infrastructure is integral to accommodating additional future demands for road capacity.
- 3.2 The West Midlands Low Emissions Towns and Cities Programme (LETCP) was established as a Defra grant-funded initiative in 2011 and involves joint working arrangements between the seven West Midlands metropolitan councils. Latterly it acts in consultation with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)/ Transport for West Midlands (TfWM). Walsall Council chairs the LETCP which has produced Best Practice Guidance on Procurement, feasibility studies on low emission zones and, most recently in October 2016, a Low Emission



Vehicle Strategy for the West Midlands which is proposed to form part of the Strategic Transport Plan. It has also produced Best Practice Air Quality Planning Guidance and the Black Country councils have recently adopted a joint Black Country Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) based upon this Guidance.

- 3.3 The ITA agreed, in January 2016, to develop a West Midlands Transport Emissions Framework building on existing work and as part of the move to a Combined Authority, which replaced the ITA on 17 June 2016. The work of this Framework includes developing and adopting metropolitan wide policies towards the accelerated uptake of ULEVs, including fleet vehicles and taxis. The Transport Emissions Framework will provide a delivery framework for the LETCP Low Emission Vehicle Strategy.
- 3.4 Prior to this Birmingham City Council, in support of its wider low carbon ambitions, published “A City Blueprint for Low Carbon Fuel Refuelling Infrastructure” in February 2015. This mapped demand and identified key priorities and opportunities for low carbon fuel infrastructure in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands.
- 3.5 In July 2016 WMCA / TfWM published a Low Emission Bus Delivery Plan with an ambitious programme to hasten the introduction of low emission buses across the metropolitan area.
- 3.6 The wider West Midlands region is a centre for research and manufacturing in the automotive industry and promotion of ULEVs has significant potential to contribute to the local economy. This in turn supports the ambitions of the Black Country Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and emerging Combined Authority’s ‘Super SEP’. This is recognised in the [Drive West Midlands](#) initiative which seeks to support the development of the West Midlands automotive industry.
- 3.7 Within each Black Country council:

Dudley declared the whole borough an Air Quality Management Area in 2007 with respect to exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide national air quality annual mean objective. The main source of nitrogen dioxide in the areas of exceedance is emissions from internal combustion engines in road vehicles. The promotion of ULEVs forms part of the Dudley Air Quality Action Plan which is supported by the Dudley Parking Standards SPD and the recently adopted Black Country Air Quality SPD (see 3.4).

Sandwell declared a borough wide Air Quality Management Area in 2005 for exceedances of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide air quality objective. Road transport emissions are considered the primary source of pollution in Sandwell. The council has developed an Air Quality Action Plan which was published in 2009 in order to work towards improving air quality and discharging its obligations under Part IV of the Environmental Act 1995. The action plan sets



out a range of measures that are currently being undertaken or are proposed for future implementation to improve air quality within areas that exceed the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective. The plan includes a total of 23 site specific actions to reduce nitrogen dioxide concentrations within the areas of exceedance and 30 borough wide actions to reduce nitrogen dioxide concentrations across the region.

Walsall declared five discrete Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in 2002 that were subsequently consolidated to a whole-borough AQMA in 2006 due to exceedances of the national mean nitrogen dioxide air quality objective. The cause of exceedances centred on vehicle emissions along main road corridors (including the Key Route Network) which remain problematic as demonstrated by a network of continuous monitoring together with detailed air quality modelling. Walsall supports the promotion of Low Emission Zones and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles in accord with the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan, core planning policies covering the Black Country and the work of the West Midlands Low Emissions Towns and Cities Programme for which Walsall takes the lead role in the Low Emissions Vehicle Strategy. These elements are to be included within a revised Walsall Air Quality Action Plan.

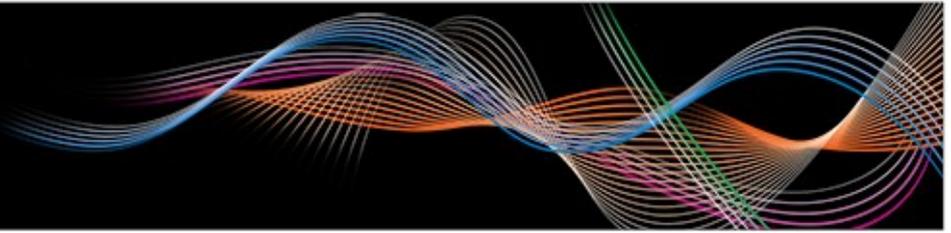
Wolverhampton declared the city an Air Quality Management area for nitrogen dioxide and fine particulates in 2005. Parts of the city centre are currently exceeding the air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide. Promotion of ULEVs links to the aims of the Corporate Plan, the Council's Sustainability Strategy and Implementation Plan and the recently launched Vision 2030 for the city, which includes commitments to deliver a network of electric vehicle charging points and ULEV public service vehicles. It is also an element of the City Centre Parking Strategy, currently under development.

4. Promotion of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles in the West Midlands

4.1 The West Midlands has undertaken a range of specific initiatives in addition to those which are listed above. These have been led by individual councils as well as the Integrated Transport Authority (ITA)/ Centro and the new West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)/ Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).

These initiatives include:

- Coventry and Birmingham Low Emission Demonstrator (CABLED) which, in 2009, introduced 210 electric vehicles and 113 publically available charging points to Coventry and Birmingham. As part of the initiative Centro and Coventry City Council also trialled the UK's first pure electric buses working with a local operator.
- Plugged in Midlands, supporting 775 electric vehicles and 83 vans sold between 2010 and 2014 and a network of 1,000 card holders, funded by OLEV.



- The most progressed multi-mode payments systems outside London, with the Swift Card being developed to provide a full 'eMobility account'.
- In February 2015 the West Midlands ITA and metropolitan councils, in partnership with Warwickshire, submitted a proposal to OLEV for funding under the Go Ultra Low (GUL) City Scheme but unfortunately the proposal was not shortlisted to prepare a final submission. This did, however, demonstrate the capacity and appetite for joint working between the ITA and councils.
- In December 2016, Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton councils submitted funding bids under the OLEV Taxi Scheme.
- In January 2016, Centro and National Express West Midlands were awarded £0.5 million under the DfT's Clean Bus Technology Fund to install equipment to reduce bus emissions, to be matched by additional funding from National Express. This followed from previous funding awards to improve vehicle emissions.
- Birmingham and Wolverhampton City Councils have carried out Fleet Reviews, in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust, and are exploring ways to increase the number of ULEVs in their fleet.
- Wolverhampton has applied unsuccessfully in 2015 for funding from OLEV for its fleet under the ULEV Readiness Project.
- In July 2016 grants were announced under the low emission bus scheme of circa £3 million to National Express West Midlands for electric hybrid buses and of circa £3.8 million jointly to Birmingham City Council and Transport for London to trial hydrogen fuel cell technology.

4.2 Within each Black Country council:

Dudley Council, through a successful OLEV bid, have introduced Electric Vehicle Rapid Charging Units in three of the main town centres in the borough; Dudley, Brierley Hill and Halesowen. The charging units are installed on council owned public car parks and are available for use by the general public at all times. Furthermore, as part of the council's Car Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) there is a planning requirement for new development to provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure for residential, commercial and industrial developments. There are in excess of 40 publicly available charging points at commercial properties in Dudley. Dudley Council was awarded £158,000 through the Clean Vehicle Technology Fund (CVTF) to retrofit emission reduction technology to ten coaches operated by



Prospect Coaches of Lye. The coaches operate short journeys throughout the day in Dudley Borough, often through areas of poor air quality.

Sandwell Council has not directly installed any charging infrastructure either on-street or within local authority car parks. There are however two Asda supermarkets, Great Bridge and Oldbury, where electric chargers have been installed. Local authority staff have been encouraged to try-out electric cars and vans on a number of occasions and, although there is no specific policy to increase the use of such vehicles, it is possible for council departments to purchase electric vehicles for use as pool vehicles.

Walsall Council has not directly installed any charging infrastructure although Walsall Housing Group, Midcounties Co-Operative, Asda Supermarkets, IKEA, University of Wolverhampton Walsall Campus, and Fairlawns Hotel have all done so across the borough.

Wolverhampton council has not directly installed any charging infrastructure although Wolverhampton Homes, the University of Wolverhampton, the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Hospital Trust, Asda Supermarkets, Carillion and several car dealers have all done so in the city. With encouragement from the council, charging infrastructure has also been installed by a number of businesses at i54, just north of the city boundary.

5. **An Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy for the Black Country**

- 5.1 The Black Country intends to work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and other councils to make the West Midlands the leading UK region both in the promotion and adoption of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) and in their development and manufacture, as well as to improve air quality across the region. The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan, Low Emissions Towns and Cities Programme, the emerging Transport Emissions Framework, local Air Quality Action Plans and Air Quality Supplementary Planning Documents for the Black Country councils provide a robust policy and strategic framework for the promotion and development of ULEVs. This Strategy seeks where practicable to draw together existing work streams and provide a supporting implementation plan for the Black Country.
- 5.2 It uses as a benchmark the [2011 Local Authority CO₂ data](#) and the Black Country's target for CO₂ emissions as set out in its Performance Management Framework which is monitored annually through the [Black Country Annual Economic Review](#). The Black Country's target is to reduce emissions of CO₂ per capita by 44% between 2005 and 2033. By 2014 emissions had reduced by 32.44%, from the 2005 base of 6.75 tonnes per capita to 4.56 tonnes; the Black Country therefore needs to reduce emissions by a further 0.78 tonnes per capita to meet its target of a 44% reduction to 3.78 tonnes per capita by 2033.



- 5.3 The Black Country is seeking to build on this strategic approach and to develop a Black Country Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Implementation Plan which will form part of a wider Black Country Transport Strategy. This Implementation Plan will help deliver a step change in the number of ULEVs in the sub-region by meeting existing demand and through stimulating further demand by providing vehicle owners and operators with the confidence to invest in ULEVs. The Implementation Plan will form the basis of councils' own capital and revenue programmes and inform funding bids to the Local Growth Fund, Combined Authority, Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF), Horizon 2020 and other appropriate funds. It will also support the wider promotion of ULEVs to the public and businesses as well as to other public sector organisations.
- 5.4 The following measures are identified in the emerging West Midlands Transport Emissions Framework:
1. Developing and adopting agreed metropolitan wide policies and targets on the accelerated uptake and adoption of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles and associated infrastructure, including hydrogen and gas refuelling opportunities, in co-ordination with the West Midlands Transport Emissions Framework, Low Emission Towns and Cities Partnership, individual boroughs' Air Quality Action Plans and other relevant initiatives.
 2. Developing and adopting agreed metropolitan wide policies and actions for Low Emission Zones or Clean Air Zones - in specific and suitable locations;
 3. Accelerated timescales to clean up West Midlands buses, through the ITA Bus Alliance and the West Midlands Low Emissions Bus Delivery Plan;
 4. Making traffic management and regulation smarter through a West Midlands Key Route Network (KRN);
 5. Developing and adopting metropolitan policies and targets for the cleaning of public and commercial fleets;
 6. Developing and adopting specific policies to encourage the wider roll out of Car Clubs and active travel measures;
 7. Further development of the Metropolitan Strategic Cycle Network - linked to the ITA Cycle Charter;
 8. Developing targeted policies toward zero emissions taxi and private hire fleets;
 9. Exploring the development of Low Emission Neighbourhoods and Green Travel Districts (GTD); and



10. Developing an agreed funding, development and delivery framework.

5.5 Drawing on the Transport Emissions Framework, the ULEV Strategy's Implementation Plan will focus on those priority areas which relate directly to ULEVs and are of relevance to the Black Country authorities. These are identified below in two sections; those requiring joint working across the West Midlands and those where action can be taken at Black Country level.

5.6 The Black Country councils will work co-operatively with the West Midlands Combined Authority, other councils, Highways England, OLEV and other partners to:

1. Plan and implement a regional network of electric vehicle charging points which allow a rapid charge, to support longer journeys within and across the West Midlands.
2. Ensure all new electric vehicle charging infrastructure and management systems in the West Midlands metropolitan area are built in line with common standards to provide an integrated network and allow interoperability with other charging networks.
3. Develop and adopt specific policies to encourage the wider roll out of Car Clubs (including electric vehicle car clubs).
4. Seek to link the charging infrastructure network and car clubs to the availability of Mobility as a Service (MaaS) through systems such as the West Midlands 'Swift' card.
5. Further research the existing and potential demand for refuelling infrastructure for gas (including methane, bio-methane, Compressed Natural Gas and Liquefied Natural Gas), hydrogen and other alternative fuel vehicles and support its provision, where feasible, at strategic locations.

5.7 Within the Black Country, the councils will work individually and in partnership with each other to:

6. Provide a network of publicly available electric vehicle charging infrastructure at health, leisure and retail facilities, public car parks, on-street and at other high profile public places.
7. Adopt a package of incentives to encourage ULEV take up by the public, such as free or discounted parking and/or charging for ULEVs and priority parking.



8. Implement the Black Country Supplementary Planning Document on Air Quality which requires the provision of charging infrastructure in new developments.
9. Adopt a package of measures to support the introduction of low emission buses, in particular in main urban centres, through Statutory Quality Bus Partnerships or other measures, including Clean Air Zones.
10. Adopt a package of measures to promote ULEV taxis, both Hackney and Private Hire, including infrastructure, grants and other take-up incentives.
11. Promote Fleet Reviews within councils covering both operational and grey fleets, with a view to taking a lead in adopting ULEVs in public fleets, providing a lead to other organisations and helping to increase the market for ULEV vehicles and associated infrastructure.
12. Provide vehicle demonstrations and advice to other private and public sector organisations, including businesses, to encourage the introduction of ULEVs.
13. Publicise fleet initiatives (including any undertaken by councils and partners), the support infrastructure available and the benefits of ULEVs in order to increase public acceptance and understanding of ULEVs as part of the 'normalisation' process.
14. Include provision for ULEVs within other related policies, strategies and projects across the Black Country councils such as parking strategies, the Black Country Core Strategy and corporate plans.



Black Country Consortium

The Deckhouse, Waterfront West,
Dudley Road, Brierley Hill DY5 1LW

Tel 08458 151515

Fax 01384 471177

Web www.the-blackcountry.com/consortium