

Report to:	TOURISM ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officers:	Scott Butterfield, Strategy, Policy and Research Manager; Andrew Duckett, Service Manager
Date of Meeting:	5 February 2020

CLIMATE EMERGENCY UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update the Committee on the approach taken as a result of the Council’s Climate Emergency declaration.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To comment on the work undertaken to date;

2.2 To consider how the Committee could best support work addressing the Climate Emergency and sustainability issues in the future.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The Council passed a motion proposed by the Council Leader to declare a Climate Emergency at its meeting of 26 June 2019. Work responding to the declaration is underway.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None

4.0 Council Priorities:

4.1 Addressing the Climate Emergency cuts across both of the Council’s priorities, establishing a new policy context within which all activity should be reviewed and considered.

5.0 Background Information:

5.1 The motion to Council on the Climate Emergency noted the impacts of climate breakdown around the world, stating that the Authority has a duty to take action to address these issues. It also noted that the reductions of emissions are associated with positive health, wellbeing and economic

benefits beyond the primary questions of environmental sustainability and diversity. The principle commitments in the declaration are to make the Council’s activities net-zero carbon by 2030, and achieve 100% clean energy across the Council’s full range of functions by the same date.

5.2 Since Bristol Council became the first UK Local Authority to declare a climate emergency in November 2018, over 200 Councils across the country have now passed similar motions, with varying targets and commitments. Blackpool Council’s deadline for carbon neutrality is amongst the more ambitious in the country, and the Council’s declaration wide-ranging in scope across four major themes:

- **Emissions reduction:** Actions the council must take in order to reduce Blackpool Council’s emissions and those in the town generally;
- **Town engagement:** How the council should engage with the residents of town and work with partners to make a change;
- **Culture change:** Steps the council should take to encourage its employees and partners to reduce their carbon footprint;
- **Wider Influence:** The Council’s role communicating beyond Blackpool to act as a leader on this agenda.

Cutting across these four categories are wider environmental and sustainability issues. Promoting biodiversity and reducing the use of finite resources is integral to addressing the climate emergency effectively.

5.3 On such a crucial and large agenda, there is a need to clarify the activity proposed in order to judge the likely impact the Council can have. The scope in Blackpool includes all of the assets and infrastructure over which the Council and its wholly-owned companies can exert control and influence over, and measure performance against.

5.4 This approach will ensure the Council addresses aspects of emissions in scope categories 1, 2, and 3 (upstream), as shown in the overview below. Scope 1 includes emissions which the Council can most directly affect, and scope 3 (downstream) the least:

Scope	Emissions Category
Scope 1	Direct emissions from the organisation
Scope 2	Emissions relating to purchased electricity, steam, heat, cooling
Scope 3 Upstream	1: Purchased goods and services
	2: Capital goods
	3: Fuel and energy related activities
	4: Upstream transportation and distribution
	5: Waste generated in operations
	6: Business travel
	7: Employee commuting
	8: Upstream leased assets
Scope 3 Downstream	9: Downstream transportation and distribution
	10: Processing of sold products
	11: Use of sold products
	12: End-of-life treatment of sold products
	13: Downstream leased assets
	14: Franchises
	15: Investments

- 5.5 Discussions with other councils suggest that there are two major approaches to the issue. The first, undertaken by Bristol amongst others, takes an emergency planning-type approach, with the intention being to create an urgent response to mobilise activity. The second, undertaken by Lancaster, uses a strategic planning process to embed consideration of climate change across all services and activity.
- 5.6 Given the extent of work required, the Council intends to use a hybrid approach as advocated by Plymouth Council. This primarily uses a strategic planning process to ensure deep integration of the activity into existing processes, but which leaves scope to deliver short term and rapid response activity when required. This also ensures that activity conceived prior to the declaration, but which will positively influence the achievement of the overall emissions target, will be linked into the agenda.
- 5.7 Given the scope of the declaration, and the tight financial and human resource constraints that the Council continues to operate within, careful prioritisation is essential to making progress. To do this, the Council has selected aspects of the declaration as an initial focus for activity, seeking to understand the issues before building a groundswell of support for the agenda across the Council and the town. The rest of this report uses the themes identified in 5.2 to give more detail on the process to date.

5.8 Emissions Reduction

5.8.1 The Council has various initiatives underway to reduce its impact on climate breakdown as outlined in the Council's Sustainability, Energy and Water Strategy 2018-2024 (see Appendix). Alongside wider activity such as reducing water demand and ensuring the efficient use of energy, the Strategy calls for the Council to take "all practical steps to reduce the Council's carbon emissions", and to "maximise the Council's use of renewable energy" as part of meeting the national target of an 80% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050. It also calls for the embedding of sustainability into policy and procedure. The Strategy sets a target of a 50% reduction in service emissions by 2030, but needs to be re-considered in the light of the more challenging target set by the declaration.

5.8.2 Building on the Council's Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy, the emerging Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies document will also recognise the need to address climate change in the following policies:

- Policy DM1: Design Requirements for New Build Housing Developments
- Policy DM21: Landscaping
- Policy DM31: Surface Water Management
- Policy DM35: Biodiversity

The Planning team will be undertaking public consultation on these policies in Spring 2020.

5.8.3 Key Projects to reduce the Council's emissions include:

- Progressing the development of a project to generate nearly half of the Council's energy from a renewable source, reducing emissions by around 35% compared to 2018/19 levels;

- Deployment of LED street lighting, reducing energy use by around 70%-75%, with further work to introduce LED lighting in Council buildings (such as Stanley Park Sports Centre) also underway;
- Ad hoc work including the rationalisation of building assets, deployment of advanced metering and management systems, boiler replacements, and other technical interventions;
- Assessing the current level of work across the Council seeking to positively impact on carbon reduction;
- Development of an internal communications campaign promoting ways in which staff can reduce their environmental impact at work and at home.

5.8.4 Key work across the town includes:

- Reviewing evidence on air quality as part of the development of a new Air Quality Strategy;
- Developing a pilot project concerning emissions around schools and young people. Poor air quality is proven to have a detrimental impact on brain development, and the project would seek to engage pupils and parents in the issues around this;
- Implementing the Green and Blue Infrastructure strategy, which would both support the adaptation of the town to warmer weather by increasing tree canopy cover, and also by taking measures which support carbon sequestration (the natural capture and storage of carbon and related emissions) through natural-based solutions.

5.8.5 Examples of current activity undertaken by the Council's wholly-owned companies includes Blackpool Coastal Housing working with Carbon Trust to set a baseline and subsequently to develop an action plan to get towards the 2030 "carbon zero" target; My Blackpool Home are looking to work with officers to reduce carbon emissions within their housing stock and associated activities; Blackpool Transport continue to upgrade their fleet to buses to models with lower emissions; the Sandcastle has introduced more energy efficient boilers, reduced energy use at off peak times, is working towards the "Green Key" environmental accreditation standard, and has established a worker committee to develop ideas on delivering further positive impact; whilst the Winter Gardens is rolling out LED lighting over 2020, and fitting thermostats to gas heaters amongst other initiatives. Beyond this, the Council intends to encourage, support and educate private businesses in the borough to adapt to this agenda.

5.8.6 The Council is also participating in a project across the County to better understand the measures required to achieve "net zero" by 2030, which will include: an assessment of the available data intelligence and evidence available on Lancashire's environment, including use of the SCATTER emissions tool when launched next month; the production of a baseline Greenhouse Gas inventory; an assessment of the capability of existing and proposed measures to achieve carbon savings; and a Climate Summit to seek firm commitment on actions.

5.9 **Town Engagement**

5.9.1 Our intention is to ensure the Council has a robust understanding of current activity before undertaking widespread engagement, to ensure that the engagement can be focussed on the issues which matter. In the 2019 Make Your Mark campaign, a national information gathering survey administered locally by Blackpool Youth Council, 'Protect the Environment' was identified as

the top priority by 43% of young people, receiving 2666 out of 6213 total votes. As such Blackpool Youth Council have expressed a desire to run a youth climate summit to gather the opinions of young people in Blackpool. This would run in a similar way to a Citizens Assembly with guest speakers, discussions, workshops with feedback gathered helping to encourage behaviour change and activity. The current suggestion is this could take place from May onwards. Suggestions generated by this summit would be a key part of this evidence base.

5.9.2 In terms of funding, there is increased opportunity to explore trusts and grants in relations to climate emergency and/or carbon footprints. The majority of funders expect a partnership bid with a Voluntary, Community or Faith (VCFS) lead, and the Council is considering a tender-type process to seek interested partner organisations. This would ensure that the Council is in a strong position to influence town wide activity, provide an opportunity to gather wider activity data, upskill organisations with poor applications and be in a stronger position to successfully apply for funding when available.

5.9.3 Work on seeking funding to date includes a project with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) which would support research into local perceptions of public transport. A modal shift in transport is an essential component in reducing car numbers and air pollution. This work would inform further initiatives to encourage and increase the use of public transport, and reduce reliance on car and taxi usage.

5.9.4 UCLAN is also working in partnership with the Junior Park Ranger programme and Head Start to engage local young people to understand further what sustainability means to them using photography and storytelling as a mechanism for this.

5.9.5 Following a successful pre-application enquiry to the European Regional Development Fund, Blackpool Council have been invited to submit a full application to undertake a place-based approach to climate reduction within the Grange Park area. The £2million project will include increased energy efficiency measures for existing properties and 60 new homes, a ground source heat pump for @TheGrange, behaviour change Eco leaders, and a programme of tree planting - all of which will either reduce carbon used, offset emissions or increase climate change resilience.

5.10 **Culture Change**

5.10.1 The Climate Emergency prompts consideration of how “business as usual” can be made more environmentally friendly, and the need to challenge existing processes and procedures to understand what level of impact could be made by considering the environmental implications of planned activity. CLT and the Executive will have a role ensuring that reports adequately demonstrate that the issues have been considered. In the short term, it is suggested that those developing new strategies are prompted to think about how they could contribute positively to the agenda; that business plans are reviewed to consider the impact services have; and that the Council’s Ethical Principles are reviewed to add principles relating to environmental issues. The Council’s Suppliers Charter already includes a “Green and Sustainable” section which suppliers are asked to sign.

5.10.2 To achieve full culture change across the authority, consideration will have to be given to the implementation of other initiatives. To support this, a Working Group reporting to the Corporate

Energy and Utilities meeting has been established and an action plan is being drafted, with an aim to ensure the Council is actively seeking to reduce the environmental footprint across all of its services and projects, and to promote more sustainable activity. Other actions undertaken or identified so far include:

- Use of the Friends of the Earth checklist of organisational activity to contribute to the development of an action plan;
- Assessing the current level of work across the Council seeking to positively impact on carbon reduction;
- Development of an internal communications campaign promoting ways in which staff can reduce their environmental impact at work and at home

5.11 Wider Influence

5.11.1 Within Blackpool, the role of the Climate Action Partnership will be crucial in exerting influence across the town. Once in place, their action plan will incorporate activity which seeks to push this agenda forward.

5.11.2 The motion to Council also calls for the government to make resources available to deliver this agenda. To influence on this stage, the Council will need to develop appropriate relationships and networks across the country, with more detailed activity being planned once an action plan has been formed. Meanwhile, the Council worked in partnership with UCLan to host “Cumbria and Lancashire: Climate Emergency - Towards Net Zero - A Learning Event”, which invited local authorities, NHS and universities across Cumbria and Lancashire to come together and discuss approaches to addressing the climate emergency both organisationally and individually. The two main outcomes of this event will be the development of a virtual network to facilitate collaboration, and a call to action for organisations to work collaboratively to prepare and respond to funding opportunities.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 9(a) - Blackpool Council Sustainability, Energy and Water Strategy 2018-2024

Appendix 9(b) – Declaration of a Climate Emergency – 26 June 2019 Council Minute

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 None.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 The work will seek to ensure that the Council's processes meet the relevant legislative requirements around equalities.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 Impacts detailed in the report. The action plan will develop actions which deliver financial benefits over the long term wherever possible.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 The Council's strategic risk register is currently being reviewed by the Risk Champions for 2020/21, with the impact of climate change and mitigating actions being considered for incorporation.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 The Ethical Principles will be reviewed with a view to including the environmental impact of initiatives as a key consideration.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 As detailed in the report, with public engagement to take place as part of implementing the action plan.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.