

Report to:	TOURISM ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Scott Butterfield, Strategy Policy and Research Manager
Date of Meeting:	9 September, 2020

CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION RESPONSE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update the Committee on activity undertaken to address issues raised in the Climate Emergency Declaration.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the report and requests a further update in six months.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 For the Committee to consider the response to date and provide input into the process.

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 The work supports both of the Council's priorities, particularly priority 2: resilient communities.

5.0 Background Information:

5.1 At its meeting of 26th June 2019, the Council passed a motion proposed by the Council Leader to declare a Climate Emergency, noting the impacts of climate breakdown around the world and that the Authority had a duty to take action to address these issues, with the reductions of emissions also being associated with positive health, wellbeing and economic benefits.

5.2 The primary commitments made 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. The declaration particularly covers a reduction in emissions of the Council and across the town generally, engagement with the public and stakeholders, effecting a culture change across our organisation, wholly-owned companies, staff and partners, and taking a role to exert wider influence beyond Blackpool on this issue.

5.3 An action plan has been developed (Appendix 8(a)), with significant actions delivered so far (see Appendix 8(b)) including:

- Switching to a 100% renewable and non-nuclear electricity supply across all Council companies except Blackpool Transport (who have their own supply arrangements in place) from 1st April 2020;
- Undertaking fleet data analysis and an option appraisal for introducing electric vehicles (note that the recommendations are not being considered until the long term effects of the pandemic on staff travel is clear);
- Establishing a Climate Emergency Steering Group;
- Introducing a new emissions-based staff travel hierarchy, encouraging the selection of meeting options incurring the lowest possible emissions; and
- Introducing a Sustainability Impact Assessment process to assess any potential adverse impacts on the environment arising from decisions (see Appendix 8(c))

5.4 Progress has been constrained by the lack of an identified budget and staffing resource. This has particularly affected two of the foundational aspects of the Declaration, both of which require external support, and without which progress on developing and implementing actions has been impeded:

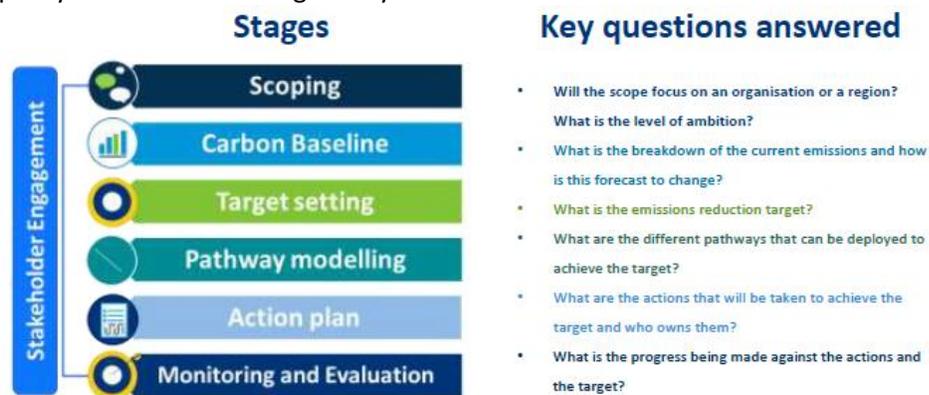
- *Request that the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Change convene a Citizens' Assembly before the end of the calendar year, in order to involve the wider population in this process. This group would help develop its own role, identify how the Council's activities might be made net-zero carbon by 2030, consider the latest climate science and expert advice on solutions and to consider systematically the climate change impact of each area of the Council's activities;*
- *Ensure that all Council led leadership teams embed this work in all areas and take responsibility for reducing, as rapidly as possible, the carbon emissions resulting from the Council's activities, ensuring that any recommendations are fully costed and that the Executive and Scrutiny functions review council activities taking account of production and consumption emissions and produce an action plan within 12 months, together with budget actions and a measured baseline.*

5.5 At its meeting on 25th August, Council Leadership Team agreed in principle to fund delivery of a Citizens Assembly or equivalent exercise, an emissions reduction study, and staffing arrangements to progress the delivery of the declaration.

5.6 *Citizens Assemblies* are one of a number of different types of deliberative engagement, with alternatives including Citizens Juries and other types of exercise which involve the development of knowledge by the public and consideration of the issues in order to make recommendations. Citizens Assemblies involve a random cross-section of at least 50 people randomly selected to be fully representative of the town by age, ward, physical disability and ethnicity. Typically 20 hours long, and split over multiple sessions to ensure sufficient time for knowledge transfer, reflection, and interactive sessions, they develop participants' understanding of the issues with a view to them shaping an action plan on a consensual basis. Increasingly delivered online due to the pandemic, they are run by an independent

agency to avoid accusations of favouritism or bias. To ensure that participation also engages those who are distant from climate emergency issues, and recognise the significant time contribution of participants, an incentive is paid, generally after the final session.

- 5.7 A brief has been prepared to seek an external partner to deliver the work, thereby ensuring its independence. The intention is to deliver the Assembly via an online method in the Autumn.
- 5.8 In addition to this, the Council’s in-house research team Infusion Research, working with the Public Health team, will establish additional processes to gather the views of residents who are interested in engaging, but who are not participating in the Assembly. This will include a survey to be undertaken (with the co-operation of Fylde and Wyre Councils) across the Fylde Coast. Views will be sought from the wider public throughout the process, and considered alongside evidence from the expert witnesses as part of the production of the final recommendations of the Assembly. Assembly sessions may also be webcasted or live blogged for further transparency.
- 5.9 *Emissions Reduction* The Council has various initiatives underway to reduce its impact on climate breakdown as outlined in our Sustainability, Energy and Water Strategy 2018-2024. However, these are insufficient to deliver on the challenging goal now adopted, and the strategy solely focuses on the Council’s emissions. The strategy urgently needs to be reviewed, particularly in light of the declaration calling for the Council to “support and work with all other relevant agencies towards making the entire area [net] zero carbon within the same timescale”.
- 5.10 In order to understand the current picture and deliver a roadmap to make Blackpool net zero carbon, the Council needs to commission an experienced provider capable of delivering a comprehensive methodology which considers activity needed across the whole town. This would typically include the following activity:



- 5.11 This piece of work goes hand-in-hand with the Assembly, providing an assessment of the level of effort and type of activity needed to achieve our targets. As such, it will be a key piece of evidence considered by the Assembly when deliberating on its final action plan, and the two pieces of work will need sequencing to reflect this. The Council has reviewed and considered other ambitious climate action plans (such as those of Cornwall and Nottingham) and identified potential actions for Blackpool, but we will be led by the views of the Assembly in deciding how to prioritise these.

5.12 *Staffing Resource* At present, the Climate Emergency does not have a dedicated staffing resource. Work to date has been led by the Strategy, Policy and Research Manager with the Service Manager responsible for energy and utilities, with ad hoc support from across relevant service areas. Both posts have substantial core responsibilities to which the climate emergency work has been added. In addition, moves to source European funding for a dedicated member of staff have been rebuffed.

5.12 To address this situation, the Director of Community and Environmental Services has assumed the role of chair of the Climate Emergency Steering Group, which met for the first time on September 2nd, enabling further resources across the Council to be marshalled in line with the action plan. CLT has now agreed in principle to funding for a lead officer post working within the Corporate Strategy and Delivery Team to progress the requirements of the declaration, again subject to the Chief Finance Officer identifying funding. A job description will now be developed and evaluated.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

6.0 List Of Appendices

Appendix 8(a) – CEWG Action Plan – April Update
Appendix 8(b) – CEWG Action Plan – Completed List
Appendix 8(c) – SIA Tool

7.0 Legal considerations:

7.1 None

8.0 Human Resources considerations:

8.1 None

9.0 Equalities considerations:

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

10.0 Financial considerations:

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

11.0 Risk management considerations:

11.1 None

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and ethical considerations:

12.1 This work is essential to delivering our climate change declaration. The Ethical Principles will be reviewed to incorporate consideration of the environmental impact of initiatives, linking to the Sustainability Impact Assessment process. Report authors will be reminded of the need to include content on this basis.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 As detailed in the report.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.