

Report to:

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Relevant Officer:

Scott Butterfield, Strategy Policy and Research Manager

Date of Meeting:

5 July, 2023

CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an overview of the Council's activity and position on Climate and Sustainability since the Climate Emergency Declaration in 2019.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 The Committee notes the report.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 For the Committee to consider progress to date when establishing its work programme.

- 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.

5.0 Background Information:

- 5.1 At its meeting of 26th June 2019, the Council passed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency (Appendix 8(a)). The Declaration notes the impacts of climate breakdown around the world, and highlights the Authority has a duty to take action to address these issues, both for the health of the planet and given that the reductions of emissions are also associated with positive health, wellbeing and economic benefits. The primary commitments made are to make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030, to achieve 100% clean energy across the Council's full range of functions by the same date, ensure that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions are in line with a shift to zero carbon by 2030, and to support and work with all other relevant agencies towards making the entire area zero carbon within the same timescale.

- 5.2 Conventionally, the source of emissions are categorised into scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions as follows, with scope 1 referring to burning of fuel sources in the course of service delivery, scope 2 around

emissions which are incurred from our purchase of electricity, and scope 3 being the emissions incurred when companies or employees undertake activity on our behalf:

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

- 5.3 The Council commissioned a report from the Carbon Trust on its baseline emissions covering the last year before the full impact of the Pandemic, which was finalised in June 2022 (Appendix 8(b)). As an overview, Scope 1 emissions include some areas where decarbonising heat is a challenge (Appendix 8(b), page 21) such as the Sandcastle Complex and the Winter Gardens, but will also reduce following the introduction of Electric Buses by Blackpool Transport. Scope 2 emissions are reducing as part of the decarbonisation of power supplied to the national electricity grid, and via investments into renewable power sources directly connected to Council facilities. Further work needs to be undertaken to fully quantify scope 3 emissions, in particular those arising from the procurement of services and products from third parties, and the Council's vehicle fleet, with this area being one of the two key priorities for the team in 2023.
- 5.4 As part of the original declaration, the council commissioned a Climate Assembly, made up of a representative cross-section of local people selected following a randomised invitation process. With participants spending around 12 hours in the process, the Assembly heard evidence from expert witnesses before deliberating on potential actions. The final report (Appendix 8(c)) included a range of potential interventions which were then considered by Cabinet (Appendix 8(d)), with the majority of the actions subsequently being incorporated into the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan (Appendix 8(e)). An update on progress against the action plan was issued to the final meeting of the former Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee in February 2023 (Appendix 8(f)). Prior to the establishment of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny

Committee, a further progress update was planned for the Autumn.

- 5.5 The Action Plan also considered a variety of other sources of evidence. Primary amongst these were four reports jointly commissioned with Lancashire County Council and Blackburn with Darwen Councils. These covered a potential pathway to Net Zero, which highlighted the key sources of emissions across the county and the balance of these in each borough; a review of the County's previous Environmental Action Plan; an overview of the potential capacity to generate renewable energy in Lancashire; and a report on Climate Resilience in Lancashire. These reports are available via [Lancashire County Council's Climate Change webpages](#).
- 5.6 The Council has been clear that tackling the climate emergency across Blackpool within the timeframe established by our action plan would require investment that is significantly beyond our means. Internally, a Climate Action Fund has been established to deliver key activity and fund supporting work. Some external funding is available from the government and private sector, and work to prepare suitable projects aligned to the requirements of the funders continues. Following the conclusion of the ERDF-funded project on Grange Park to support the decarbonisation of @thegrange and the construction of low carbon homes, significant investment is being sought or planned to be sought via the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Green Heat Networks Fund, and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund. Blackpool is also leading across Lancashire on the delivery of the Home Upgrade Grant, with aims to deliver around 2000 air source heat pumps to households at high risk of fuel poverty across the County via the Cosy Homes In Lancashire scheme. The government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) is also being used to invest in the creation of an Eco Hub at Palatine Library, the town-wide extension of the successful Eco Coaches project run by Groundwork on Grange Park, and a community flood risk reduction scheme to distribute water butts, reducing the impact on areas from heavy rainfall events. Further SPF funding will be used to reduce emissions from the scheme to provide new office space for emerging businesses in the centre of Blackpool ("The Edge") and support packages for local businesses to decarbonise their operation. In addition, most other external funding increasingly comes with a requirement to engage sustainability issues, with the most prominent response to this being the Multiversity project. Funded through Town Deal and Levelling Up Funding, the scheme is being designed to be carbon neutral in operation.
- 5.7 The Declaration also committed the Council to a role as a leader and influencer in this field. Primarily this has been undertaken at a sub-regional and county level. The Strategy and Climate Lead has established and chairs the Lancashire Climate Officers' group, and participates in the high-level Lancashire Decarbonisation group working on the Environment theme of the forthcoming [Lancashire 2050](#) Strategic Framework, using the reports highlighted in section 5.5. More locally, we have worked to establish Green Growth as a new priority for the Blackpool Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board, and are planning a workshop for this summer to further explore the potential to undertake joint projects across the Fylde Coast.
- 5.8 Whilst the action plan primarily concentrates on actions to address climate *mitigation* – i.e. reducing carbon-based emissions - the second major priority for the team this year is to establish a robust approach across the Council to climate *adaptation*. With the 1.5 degree Celsius target for peak global warming set by the Paris Agreement in 2015 increasingly at high risk of being breached, and the consequent increase in the frequency of extreme weather events, we need to focus on short, medium and long-term actions to fundamentally shift how we plan and build our town. As a result,

we are developing Blackpool's first detailed Climate Adaptation Action Plan, which will seek to minimise our vulnerability.

- 5.9 Governance arrangements have been updated in line with the establishment of this committee, and are outlined at Appendix 8(g). The Director of Community and Environmental Services convening the Climate Emergency Steering Group quarterly to discuss key projects, strategies and topics and to progress the climate action plan. The Strategic Group consisting of directors named in the action plan also meet with the portfolio holder for climate change quarterly. The Blackpool Climate Action Partnership met for a second time in December 2022, with some partners expressing a wish to continue discussions on specific projects outside formal meetings. The development of the partnership is an additional priority for the Climate Team later in 2023.
- 5.10 Internal Audit reviewed the Climate Emergency Action Plan and reported in March 2022 (Appendix 8(h)), assessing the controls in place as "adequate", with some risks identified and assessed and several changes suggested. The bulk of the recommendations from this report have now been delivered. Of the actions outstanding, the recommendations on performance/emissions data are covered earlier in this report, and whilst significant work is progressing to implement carbon emission reduction initiatives, work on a cohesive roadmap to addressing carbon emissions remains outstanding. A review of the Action Plan suggested in the recommendations is due to be commissioned this summer.
- 5.11 Other than funding, the primary internal challenge in delivering the agenda is staffing levels, recruitment and retention, and the capacity of other Directorates. After several attempts to recruit specialists with experience in the field proved unsuccessful, the approach shifted to recruit recent graduates and provide wrap-around career development experience and internal opportunities for progression. This has proved successful in attracting candidates, but demand in the sector has created highly-paid and flexible opportunities elsewhere which are a constant drain on our talent, with significant amounts of working time lost as a result. The imminent departure of the Low Carbon and Sustainability Officer, who came into the Council in a more junior position two years ago, and is now leaving to take up a senior-level position leading the Climate agenda at another Local Authority, is illustrative of the challenge. Further recruitment is underway to a mix of internally-funded and externally-funded posts.
- 5.12 The rollout of training to staff to develop knowledge of climate change and climate action has been delayed due to staffing availability, and feedback from Carbon Literacy training which highlighted the need to develop an alternative course suitable for most staff. 77 members of staff have attended full Carbon Literacy training or a half-day session highlighting the most relevant issues. In addition to this, we have piloted a new climate iPool module and drafted a "toolbox talk" for frontline staff without email access.
- 5.13 Similarly, work following on from the Climate Assembly with wider community engagement has been relatively limited, in part as the remaining Graduate Climate Action officer has commenced a substantial piece of work on the Circular Economy in Blackpool. A Climate Engagement Officer, funded by the Headstart programme, has been working with schools since February 2023 to encourage takeup of the Ecoschools programme. The return of the Council's Engagement and Partnerships Manager, and their transfer to the Strategy and Climate Team, will ensure that wider public engagement will be delivered in line with the aims of the Community Engagement Strategy

adopted by the Council in October 2022.

5.14 The establishment of this Committee is crucial to ensuring buy-in and delivery of measures to support this agenda across the Council. As such, a key part of its workplan will be to offer challenge and support to services seeking to decarbonise their activity. A Sustainability Impact Assessment tool (Appendix 8(i)) has been shared with Directorates to help them assess climate implications as part of the preparation of the “Sustainability, Climate Change and Ethical Considerations” sections of all Council and Committee reports. This light-touch process will be augmented by a more rigorous approach to considering service climate activity in the future, with this Committee considering progress.

5.15 Our efforts so far on this agenda were recognised in July 2022 through a ‘Highly Commended’ award for ‘Climate Response’ in the Local Government Chronicle annual awards, with the judges noting, amongst other comments:

“The judges were impressed at the range of measures and initiatives, and felt there were many strong examples of pragmatic leadership. They liked that the measures were clearly tailored to address local circumstances, with affordability and approaches such as Eco Coaching being great examples. They admired that the team truly seemed to be responding to the climate change emergency like it is an emergency, and acting with urgency. But recognise that the strategy needs to catch up. The judges appreciated the reflective nature of the presentation, where the team were very honest about learning on the job in some respects, and really admired the can-do spirit of the plucky underdog”.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

6.0 List of Appendices:

6.1 Appendix 8(a): Climate Emergency Declaration Text, June 2019
Appendix 8(b): Carbon Trust Baseline Emissions Report 2019-20, June 2022
Appendix 8(c): Blackpool Climate Assembly Final report, 2021
Appendix 8(d): Blackpool Council response to Climate Assembly report, 2021
Appendix 8(e): Climate Emergency Action Plan, November 2021
Appendix 8(f): Climate Emergency Action Plan Tracker, February 2023
Appendix 8(g): Climate Governance Diagram, July 2023
Appendix 8(h): Internal Audit Review of Climate Emergency Action Plan, March 2022
Appendix 8(i): Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken as part of work around the Assembly and Plan. Ongoing work will seek to ensure that the Council’s processes meet the relevant legislative requirements around equalities.

9.0 Financial considerations:

- 9.1 Impacts were considered in the development of the original actions, with project finance being considered on a case-by-case basis.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

- 10.1 No direct impact from this report, although risk management around both mitigation and adaptation activity is a crucial dimension to the Council's response to a changing climate.

11.0 Sustainability, climate change and ethical considerations:

- 11.1 As detailed throughout the report and Appendices.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

- 12.1 As detailed in the Appendices.

13.0 Background papers:

- 13.1 None.