

Blackpool Climate Assembly

Final report



futuregov/

Summary of recommendations

The Blackpool Climate Assembly has made recommendations against 8 issues as part of the town's push to reach NetZero Carbon Emissions by 2030. The Assembly believes that Blackpool should be bold and ambitious in its response to the climate emergency, and that the Council should act as an example for other Councils who face similar problems. The Council should also look to form partnerships with other Councils to reach shared climate goals.

Primary issues

On **Generating and Buying Clean Energy**, the Assembly recommends establishing an Energy Task Force and writing a Local Energy Plan.

On **Transport**, the Assembly recommends making public transport and walking the primary ways to get around the town centre, innovative approaches to fares, a low emissions zone, expansion of low carbon infrastructure and more electric vehicles.

On **Homes**, the Assembly recommends Blackpool should commit to exceeding current energy efficiency standards, introduce an Energy MOT for existing buildings, and introduce a "Climate Contact Point" scheme to promote energy efficiency support.

On **Reducing Waste Across the System**, the Assembly recommends increasing opportunities to recycle in Blackpool, including food waste.

Supporting issues

On **Education and Awareness** the Assembly recommends support for schools to plan and implement carbon reduction plans and more adult education on the climate.

On **Community Action** the Assembly recommends local action groups around climate change issues, supported by local hubs and a network of community champions.

On **Networking and Influencing National Government** the Assembly recommends supporting and promoting green business, a Climate Business Forum, and more vocal public support for achieving Net Zero from political leaders in Blackpool.

On **Biodiversity**, the Assembly recommends a revolution in the use of space in the town, and environmental impact given more attention by business.

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Introduction

As of March 2021, 300 Councils - 71% of District, County, Unitary & Metropolitan Councils across the country - have declared a Climate Emergency. Blackpool Council put people at the heart of the process, by inviting residents to participate in a citizen's Climate Assembly. In January 2021, a group of 40 Blackpool residents were randomly selected to represent their community. Using online meetings, they came together every week to hear from experts, discuss issues and write recommendations. Over the course of four sessions and with the help of the facilitation team, they created a list of principles to guide the work, a set of eight priority issues, and recommendations to help Blackpool achieve net zero emissions by 2030.

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Moderator's letter

When we posted 8,000 letters to Blackpool in late 2020 inviting residents to participate in a Climate Assembly online in the midst of a pandemic, we were unsure what the response would be. In any standard Citizens' Assembly, a 2-4% response rate is expected, but this request was different. Joining a group of randomly selected individuals to discuss the climate emergency is one thing, but letting them into your home virtually is another.

We were fortunate to have hundreds of volunteers and randomly selected a group of 40 residents, of whom 36 attended all four sessions. They were passionate about the process and what they could do to address the climate emergency in their own community.

Week after week, Assembly members gathered to learn about the climate, share their own priorities and aims, and consider the greater good for the community they live in, based on their neighbours and networks. It is no small feat that there was zero attrition throughout this entire Assembly, and that many members wished to remain involved in the Council's efforts towards Net Zero after the Assembly concluded.

Thank you to the team at Blackpool Council for putting residents at the heart of their decision-making processes, our facilitators, and to the subject matter experts who supported the Assembly through their deliberations.

*Eva O'Brien, FutureGov,
Moderator, Blackpool Climate Assembly*

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Assembly curriculum

The Blackpool Climate Assembly took place over four virtual sessions in January and February 2021. These sessions involved a mix of education and deliberation, with the first and second sessions focused primarily on providing context around the climate emergency for Assembly members. Sessions three and four contained discussion in small groups led by a team of facilitators. Sessions were chaired by a moderator who introduced concepts, guest speakers, and hosted plenary discussions. The Assembly was executed using Zoom.

To develop the Assembly curriculum, the FutureGov team ran a design sprint with colleagues from Blackpool Council to identify what elements of the climate emergency should be introduced to Assembly members, and by whom to ensure a local context and perspective. Out of this design sprint, a long-list of prospective subject matter experts was developed, as was a broad plan for the four sessions.

The facilitation team took an agile approach to designing, developing and executing the Assembly. Week over week, the facilitation team would assess what elements of the Assembly were successful and what did not work. Taking an agile approach allowed the team to respond to Assembly members' needs in a dynamic and responsive manner.

00 Process

Below is a summary of each session we delivered as part of the Assembly

Session 1

Activities: introductions, getting participants comfortable with the Assembly format, introducing members to the idea of a climate emergency, hearing about solutions, and creating a longlist of principles to guide the Assembly's recommendations

Session 2

Activities: recap on the presentations from session 1, review the draft principles, understand how local government, businesses, and residents can take action to combat climate change, and develop a long-list of issues that participants think the Assembly should focus on

Session 3

Activities: recap on the presentations and discussions from session two, review the compiled list of issues participants said the Assembly should focus on, agree on the issues the Assembly wants to prioritise, and start identifying problems and formulating recommendations

Session 4

Activities: give participants the opportunity to finalise the Assembly's recommendations, communicate the report writing process, thank the participants for taking part, and letting them know how they can stay in touch on Blackpool Council's climate action following the Assembly. Assembly members were then given the opportunity to comment on this report after the final session.

More detailed session outlines follow on the next pages

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Session 1

Session 1 was focused on introductions, getting participants comfortable with the Assembly format, introducing members to the idea of a climate emergency, hearing about solutions, and creating a longlist of principles to guide the Assembly's recommendations.

The session began with an introduction and welcome from Councillor Jim Hobson (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change for Blackpool Council) who explained why Blackpool Council had declared a climate emergency and commissioned an assembly. We then heard from Eva, the moderator, who went through ground rules. John Blackledge, the Director of Community and Environmental Services talked about existing plans in place to reduce emissions in Blackpool. Two young people from Junior Park Rangers, Rosa and Julianne, then gave a young person's perspective. They are members of the Blackpool Youth Climate Assembly, a related process for young people aged 11-18, and they shared hopes for the assemblies and future action.

Participants were then split into 9 small groups, each hosted by a facilitator. Participants introduced themselves, and explained the reasons they'd volunteered to take part in the Assembly. The participants heard from five speakers who explained the areas of focus that will have the biggest impact on reducing emissions in Blackpool. The speakers were:

- Polly Billington from UK 100, who shared examples of what councils and local places can do to tackle climate change
- Rob Hatcher from the Carbon Trust, who outlined the key areas of emissions in Blackpool
- Jonathan Atkinson from Carbon Co-op, who spoke about different ways of improving homes
- Xavier Brice from Sustrans, who spoke about the transport issues, and ways of tackling it
- Samia Robbins from Arup, who shared examples of low carbon energy projects

Finally, participants joined small group discussions where the facilitators supported them through a discussion on principles.

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Session 2

The aim of session 2 was to recap on the presentations from session 1, review the draft principles, understand how local government, businesses, and residents can take action to combat climate change, and develop a long-list of issues that participants think the Assembly should focus on.

In the previous session, groups had discussed principles to help guide the recommendations the Assembly will make. Each group reviewed the principles and discussed if they agreed with them, which ones were most important to them, and why they matter.

Following this, the participants heard from two guest speakers. First was Peter Lefort, who is the Carbon Neutral Cornwall Partnerships Manager at Cornwall Council, who spoke about decision-making tools used by Cornwall Council. The Assembly then heard from Beverly Rich, a member of the Camden Climate Assembly, who spoke about her experience and her continued involvement in climate action.

Then, each group heard from four different guest speakers where they had time to learn about what businesses and organisations in Blackpool are doing to address the climate emergency. Participants heard from:

- Rob Gomm, from the Upside Down Cafe - a Vegan cafe embedding sustainable practice across their business
- John Butler, from Premier Cabs, which has a fully electric cab fleet
- James Carney, from Blackpool Transport, a local public transport provider
- John Child, from Sandcastle Water Park, the biggest of its kind in the UK

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Session 2

- Debbs Lancelott & Emma Threlfall of Houndshill Shopping Centre, who have invested in green infrastructure
- Jonathan Hutchinson, of Grange Community Farm, who run a number of green and biodiversity projects
- Rebecca Trevalyan, from the Library of Things, a community upcycling and sharing hub in South London.

Finally, in small groups the participants discussed the issues they would like the Assembly to address through their recommendations. These issues were collated into a long list, which will be used to create recommendations from in sessions 3 and 4.

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Session 3

The aim of this session was to recap on the presentations and discussions from session two, review the compiled list of issues participants said the Assembly should focus on, agree on the issues the Assembly wants to prioritise, and start identifying problems and formulating recommendations.

The Assembly kicked off with the moderator welcoming participants, going through the ground rules again, and explaining the aim and objectives of the session. The moderator then did a brief recap of the content from the presentations and discussion groups from session two.

Following this, participants went into their breakout groups. The facilitator shared the list of issues the participants had said the Assembly should focus on in session two. Groups were given time to identify any gaps, and then had a discussion about what the gaps were. Facilitators fed back the gaps back to the wider group.

Each break out group then reviewed the updated list of issues, and were given time to think about the five or six priorities they would like the Assembly to focus on, and make their decisions in line with the assemblies principles. Each participant voted on their priorities, with the facilitators reporting their groups overall results to the wider group.

The project team reviewed priorities and gave each breakout group one or two issues to focus on. The group discussed and agreed on the problems related to the issues, causes of the problems, what has been done to combat them already, and began generating ideas for solutions. Finally, each facilitator reported back on their groups ideas to the wider group.

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Session 4

The aim of this session was to give participants the opportunity to finalise the Assembly's recommendations, communicate the report writing process, thank the participants for taking part, and letting them know how they can stay in touch on Blackpool Council's climate action following the Assembly.

The Assembly firstly heard from two young people, who took part in the Blackpool Youth Assembly and presented their recommendations.

The participants then went into their original breakout groups, and discussed what they felt about the young people's presentations and how their views and opinions should influence this Assembly's recommendations.

Louise Marix Evans, an expert on climate action and policy, was on hand to provide independent external input on developing recommendations.

Following this the participants reviewed the list and descriptions of the issues the Assembly was focusing on, and made any necessary adjustments. Participants were then given the opportunity to contribute to 3 other issues that they were passionate about..

Participants then went back into their original groups, and refined the recommendations they wished to make, by agreeing with the group which one to take forwards, and then refining them to state who the recommendation was for and a timeline for how long it should take to implement.

Finally, the Assembly came back together, and a representative from each group was given the opportunity to feed back their group's recommendations. The moderator explained the next steps for writing the report, and to finish off, Councillor Jim Hobson, Blackpool Council Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, thanked participants for taking part.

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Some context for this report

Assembly participants formed recommendations on issues that mattered to them. They received clear evidence on the biggest issues faced by Blackpool, and developed recommendations to tackle those issues directly and push Blackpool to achieve its Net Zero target.

Participants also wanted to encourage their fellow residents to act, and instruct the council and local organisations around other issues that they felt needed attention. In some cases, these issues do not directly impact on Blackpool's Net Zero target, but they should be noted by the council, supported, and where appropriate influence the council strategic approach to the climate and the environment.

In this report, to make sure that all the Assembly's wishes are captured and treated appropriately, we separate issues out into 2 groups - **Primary Issues**, and **Supporting Issues**. Primary Issues have a greater number of impactful climate-oriented recommendations, whilst Supporting Issues describe what matters to residents in a broader sense.

00

Some context for this report

It is important for this report to reflect the Assembly's views with accuracy. The Assembly delivery balanced the need for thorough education on issues, deliberation, and maintaining interest from residents online and across 4 sessions, ensuring they had a good general overview of the issues. Nevertheless, with such a complex topic, and a relatively limited amount of time, the recommendations are necessarily a mix of general and specific points.

Residents spoke with great clarity on their wish to see more collaboration across organisations, greater community engagement, more focus on education and awareness raising, and a significant local push on biodiversity. Particularly on the issue of community action, the enthusiasm and commitment amongst Assembly members was palpable. It is for the council and local organisations to hear this enthusiasm and help fill the capability or experience gap, giving careful consideration to the points raised and responding in an imaginative and ambitious way.

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How we prioritised recommen dations

The facilitation team has prioritised some of the Assembly's recommendations based on the following requirements:

- If recommendations were targeted at a specific group or organisation who could act (such as individuals, the Council, and local businesses/organisations)
- If the recommendations will contribute to Blackpool becoming Net Zero by 2030 by tackling the three key areas of Blackpool's carbon emissions: transport, commercial buildings and industry, and homes
- If the recommendations are achievable
- Where possible, if the recommendations have a timeframe attached to them
- Where the actions have the potential to mobilise or galvanise efforts to make a positive environmental impact.

These prioritised recommendations are included as 'The Assembly's Net Zero Recommendations'. Other thoughts or ideas are included as the Assembly's 'Further Reflections' for each issue.

00 Principles

What are the principles

A key output of the Assembly was a set of principles to guide deliberation and help the Assembly take decisions. These principles can be used going forward for the council to help guide its decisions, embedding the residents voice in its future climate action.

00 Principles

Recommendations from the Assembly should:

1. Act now for future generations
2. Be realistic, fair, and affordable
3. Be locally-focused
4. Be community-driven
5. Be transparent and accountable
6. Be bold and ambitious

00 Principles

Act now for future generations

We must act now to ensure that future generations can succeed. We recognise that substantial, long-term changes take time to happen however we must make changes now. Education for both young people and older generations is crucial. Young people should learn about climate change so they can take better decisions than their predecessors. Older people should also have the opportunity to learn, as they likely have less access to education.

Be realistic, fair, and affordable

Solutions and recommendations to combat climate change should be available to as many Blackpool residents as possible. In particular, individuals looking to make changes in their homes and transport should be able to, and not have cost be a barrier to access.

00 Principles

Be locally-focused

Blackpool is a unique community. Assembly recommendations should be both possible and appropriate for the community, and make use of the resources within the community. Blackpool Council has a responsibility to be both accountable to residents and to hold other organisations to account.

Be community-driven

Residents need to be at the heart of change. While not everyone in Blackpool will care about climate change, there are lots of people that will. It is important to help residents understand what impact climate change will have at a local level, and what individuals can do themselves rather than all changes being top-down and dictated by Blackpool Council.

00 Principles

Be transparent and accountable

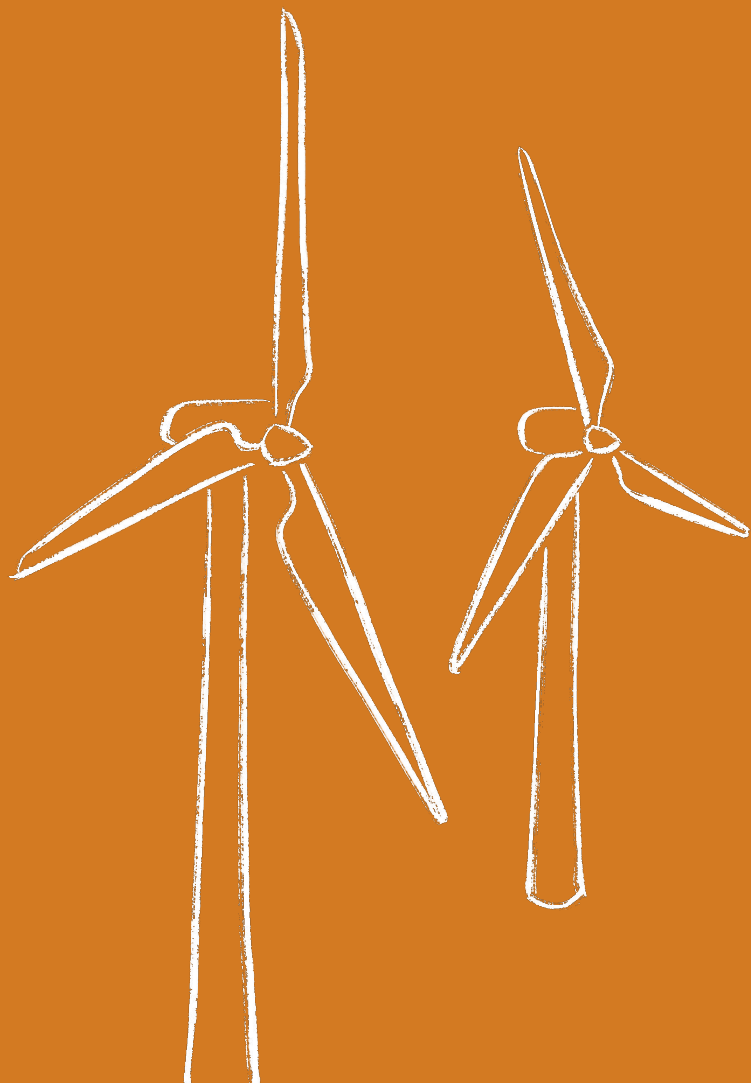
Climate change awareness should be grown in Blackpool as many people do not know enough about the issue to engage effectively with it. Awareness will help people understand what changes are happening, what they can do as an individual, and how they can support larger changes. Thought should be given to how information is communicated, when it is communicated, and to whom. Blackpool should be realistic about when changes will occur and how, but the Assembly wants to ensure that changes are actually taking place and residents should be aware of these changes.

Be bold and ambitious

Although recommendations should be focused on making changes now, some substantial changes will take time. Blackpool should be bold and ambitious in its response to the climate emergency, and the Council should act as an example for other Councils who face similar problems. The Council should also look to form partnerships with other Councils to reach shared climate goals.

01

Generating & buying clean energy



01

Generating & buying clean energy

Issues

Blackpool is uniquely positioned as a coastal town to make use of clean energy available through the wind, sea and sun.

Blackpool does not harness all of the available natural energy resources in the surrounding area, and the council, businesses, and the community needs to work together to find solutions. Blackpool is part of a wider community in Lancashire and along the coast, with different places all needing to tackle the climate emergency and thinking about buying and generating clean energy.

The potential expense of buying and installing clean energy solutions intimidates Blackpool residents from exploring it as an option or making those changes to their homes.

There is a lack of awareness in the community about where to find information about what grants and support are available and when the information is found, it's complicated to understand for those who want to buy clean energy.

01

Generating & buying clean energy

Net zero
recommendations

The Assembly believes that

... the Council should convene a task force with relevant stakeholders, that identifies good practice about generating and using energy from Blackpool's natural resources locally. This should be completed in 1 year.

The Task Force should then create a local energy plan, that identifies the energy demands locally, where that energy can be sourced from (prioritising clean sources), and who is best placed to produce it. This should be created within 18 months and implemented within 5 years.

01

Generating & buying clean energy

Further reflection

The Assembly saw additional barriers for individuals and families implementing new energy generation technology in their community. Developing a central point where residents can get information, advice and guidance on options available to them. Consideration needs to be given on how it reaches all people within Blackpool (see also section 03 Homes).

02

Transport



02

Transport

Issues

Blackpool is a car-centric community that does not typically rely heavily on public transport, nor do the many tourists who travel to Blackpool by car. Some people are interested in using electric vehicles but are concerned about the cost of these vehicles, and the convenience of charging them in and around the city centre.

More affordable and carbon neutral transport methods like walking and cycling are not well-served by Blackpool's infrastructure. Although some people are keen to make more use of public transport and alternative low carbon transport, they are put off by what they see as infrequent services, high costs, cheaper alternatives like driving and parking, and a lack of infrastructure.

02

Transport

Net zero
recommendations

The Assembly believes that

... the Council should commit to public transport becoming the primary choice for getting around and into the town by 2022, by making it more accessible, frequent and less expensive.

To do this, costs across the system need to adjust to make public transport desirable. Innovative approaches like distance-based fares, free fares, or time-based transfers are all worth exploring.

By 2023, Blackpool needs to become a pedestrian and cycling friendly town, with decent and accessible walking lanes that feel safe and cycle lanes that are clearly marked with good infrastructure that cannot be taken over by cars or parking.

Blackpool should implement an ultra low emissions zone in the town centre by 2027, charging cars that are not electric to enter the busiest area. An increase in the use of electric vehicles across the system should be encouraged. Businesses need to increase the charging points they provide to their staff and customers to make it as easy as possible for people to use an electric vehicle themselves.

There should be reduced parking charge for electric vehicles in the town centre, and a fully electric bus fleet. Taxi companies should be supported and rewarded to switch to an electric fleet in the long term.

02

Transport

Further reflections

The Assembly wanted to be bold on transport, with clear targets and a vision for a town that prioritises electric public transport, cycling and walking. They also had ideas to improve how people visited Blackpool in a more carbon neutral way, recognising that huge numbers arrive by car from elsewhere. This included Park and Ride outside the town, and campaigning for more frequent, faster electric train services to the bigger towns.

They also wanted to make the electronic systems around public transport more reliable and transparent, including proper investment in digital infrastructure around bus timetables and routes across the city.

Other ideas included greater use of car sharing schemes and public transport vouchers or season ticket loans via employers.

03

Homes



03

Homes

Issues

Heating and powering homes creates the most carbon emissions in Blackpool.

Different types of housing face their own challenges:

- private homeowners do not know how to retrofit their homes and often cannot afford to make changes
- renters do not have the permission to retrofit their homes and private landlords are not incentivised, supported or encouraged to do so
- social housing stock was built across many decades, and is not always updated
- new homes are not required to be built in an energy-efficient way

Private homeowners and landlords are able to access some grants and schemes to retrofit their homes, but they are often not aware of these funding options.

National policy also gets in the way of councils demanding the highest environmental standards.

03

Homes

Net zero
recommendations

The Assembly believes that

... Blackpool as a whole place should commit to exceeding current building energy efficiency standards (as set out in building regulations) by 20% across all new build and existing homes, by 2025. This will require developing or signposting services that promote the financial and technical delivery (and wider social and environmental value) of building energy efficiency.

The Council should lead by example in its own buildings, and make sure energy efficiency standards are being met and enforce those standards where appropriate through an 'Energy MOT' for homes, even on older buildings, by 2024. They must work with contractors, developers and colleges to attain new standards, supporting local young people to upskill.

People in Blackpool should be supported to make improvements to their home via existing grants and schemes. A scheme like the "Make Every Contact Count" NHS initiative should be implemented across Blackpool by 2022 - so any interaction with a public service includes questions and advice about energy efficiency in the home and the support available. It could be called "Climate Contact Point".

03

Homes

Further reflections

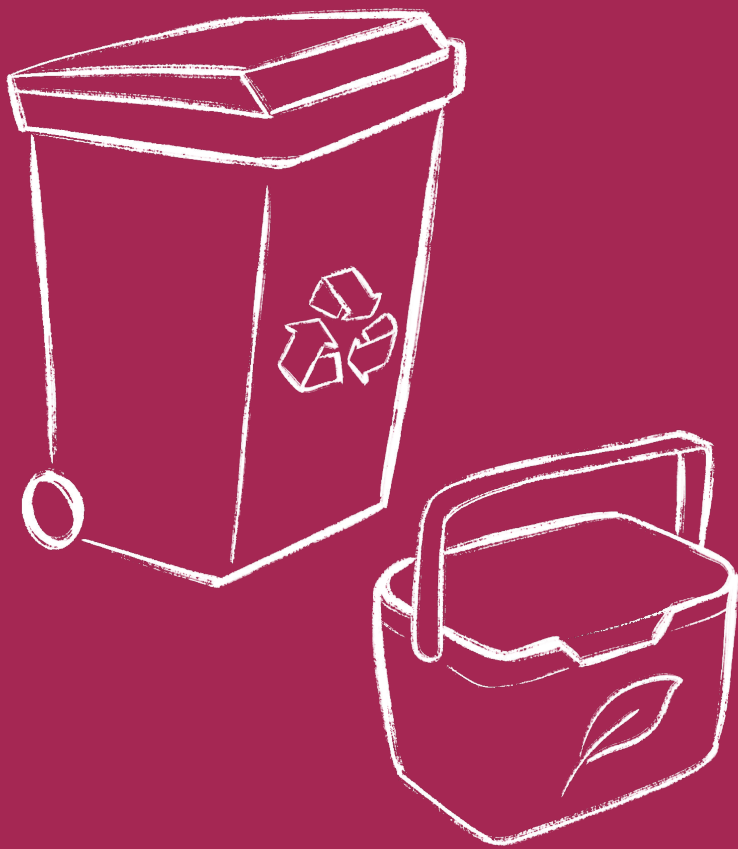
The Assembly recognised the importance of energy efficiency in driving down the town's emissions, but were keen to emphasise the diversity of both housing stock, and people's ability to pay for their own improvements.

The Assembly was interested in a variety of different solutions presented to them - including heat pumps and community energy generation - and supported their roll-out where possible. They recognised, however, that organisations in Blackpool should be supporting individuals and communities to take advantage of existing schemes and funding, perhaps through a centralised resource or educational campaign.

They were also interested in greater promotion and celebration of good energy efficient developments, using examples like 'My Blackpool Home' as an exemplar.

04

Reducing waste across the system



04

Reducing waste across the system

Issues

Blackpool produced 64,294.03 tonnes of household waste and 5,306.42 tonnes of commercial waste in 2019-2020, according to Blackpool Council's Waste Management team. That is the same weight as 27 Blackpool Towers. The Assembly members believe that a lack of awareness around the climate emergency is evident in the haphazard recycling and sorting practices of residents. Additional costs such as the green bin charge disincentivizes individuals from making climate-conscious decisions in their personal lives.

Waste is also generated by the many tourists that visit Blackpool, and by organisations within the community. Waste is not used enough as an asset in Blackpool, and food waste is not recycled.

04

Reducing waste across the system

Net zero
recommendations

The Assembly believes that

... the Council and its partners should provide residents with many more opportunities to sort waste at the point of disposal to drive recycling and support energy generation. This means providing more bins for different types of waste in public spaces, in homes and businesses, including food/composting bins and their liners by 2023. Residents should be given clear guidance on how to segregate waste and explain how to treat waste in ways that are visible for all, potentially by putting stickers on recycling bins.

04

Reducing waste across the system

Further reflections

The Assembly discussed the value of a greener approach to waste in two ways: to help achieve Net Zero, and to make Blackpool a cleaner and healthier place to live. They were interested in the incentives available to businesses, residents and tourists to reduce waste, and exploring fines for excess waste or flytipping. The Assembly were interested in more sustainable practices around shopping, such as recommending that shops in Blackpool sell loose food without excess packaging and encourage or reward customers who use re-use containers or packing when they shop. They also believed that supermarkets and local business should work with universities to develop more sustainable packaging alternatives

The Assembly wanted to promote the community voice in these issues and spread ideas across neighborhoods. For example, to encourage the rest of the community to compost by transforming green bins into garden composters or buying composters, donate garden areas, plants and tools for communities to garden in (as some local hotels already do).

The Assembly also agreed with the Youth Assembly's idea to incentivise people to participate in beach or public space cleaning by offering free entry to attractions, or encouraging companies to let staff take a paid day off to do a beach or public space clean-up.

05

Education & Awareness



05

Education & awareness

Issues

There is a lack of awareness of the climate emergency among a large proportion of both young people and adults in Blackpool. Climate change is a vast issue and can be intimidating for people to know where to begin, or where to find trustworthy information. Some awareness exists in Blackpool through local organisations and their efforts to educate people, but this is not wide-reaching. Blackpool residents need help to understand how to address the climate emergency in their own lives before they can push for change amongst local organisations and businesses.

In particular, Assembly members, and members of the Blackpool Youth Assembly, do not believe that there is a consistent approach to educating school-aged children on the issue of climate change and what impacts it has on their own communities.

There is also a lack of digestible information available for adults and older people to use when trying to understand climate change, or clarity on what impact individuals can have.

05

Education & awareness

Net zero
recommendations

The Assembly believes that

... schools in Blackpool should be provided with information and support on how to reduce their carbon footprint, expanding the existing eco-schools programme.

An environmental lead in each school should co-create a carbon reduction plan with young people, parents and teachers. Schools should come together each year as part of a competition to reward and celebrate their contribution and progress towards Blackpool's achieving Net Zero by 2030.

Adult education should lead drop-in sessions for adults who wish to learn more about climate change, and also receive advice and guidance on changes they can make in their own home.

05

Education & awareness

Further reflections

In all discussions, education and awareness was a key priority for the Assembly.

They believe that all people in Blackpool - at all ages - should have better access to the facts around climate change, so they can take better decisions in their own lives, join together for action, and hold others to account. The council should take the lead in collating and sharing that information.

Assembly members said that having the chance to learn from experts was one of the most enjoyable and useful aspects of taking part in the Blackpool Climate Assembly, and that they would like this experience to be shared with the wider community. Sharing information on activities via residents magazines, opening up community venues to host guest speakers on climate, and advocating for climate issues to be taught in schools, were all recommended by the Assembly.

The Assembly believes that climate science and learning about climate solutions should be prioritised in the classroom. Understanding that influencing the curriculum at a local level can be challenging, they believe that local businesses should partner with schools and colleges to raise awareness of climate action and environmental activities in Blackpool.

06

Community action



06

Community action

Issues

Many residents of Blackpool are eager and willing to get involved in fighting climate change, but they do not know where to go to learn more or get involved. If the community does not take action against climate change, the impacts of climate change will be readily felt by Blackpool residents young and old. Different Blackpool residents have different needs and abilities to address climate change, and as a result those needs must be addressed by different kinds of community action.

06

Community action

Net zero
recommendations

The Assembly believes that

... the community should set up action groups to respond to particular issues related to the climate emergency. This could follow adult education programmes delivered by the college system and supported by the Council. Local education organisations collectively should set up and manage a single website that provides information about climate change, what is going on in the local area to tackle it and how residents can get involved.

A hub of activity made up of Community Champions from around Blackpool can then take projects forward, tapping into the existing volunteer base and the enthusiasm in the community.

06

Community action

Further reflections

The Assembly felt that social media needed to play a part to bring people together across Blackpool, channelling the message about what we can do as individuals, as groups and as an area.

Assembly members also suggested using established groups such as PACT meetings (forum/police monthly meetings) to build awareness.

07

Network building & influencing national government



07

Network building & influencing national government

Issues

Individual Blackpool residents, businesses, and organisations are interested in combating climate change, but are unaware of others who are doing similar work in the community. The Council can support networks and help to connect those who want to band together, and look more widely at other councils in the area who have similar priorities. Blackpool Council is also best positioned to lobby and impact national government.

The Council also controls many policies that could impact climate change in the community. Planning policies, some waste and recycling regulation, and Blackpool's transport fleet are all within the control of the Council and should be considered as levers to impact climate change on a local level.

07

Network building & influencing national government

Net zero
recommendations

The Assembly believes that

... the Council should actively support and promote green companies and give them priority in the decisions the council takes. This could be driven by a Green Business pledge that all companies who do business with the council have to sign up to.

Businesses themselves should take the lead on creating a uniform approach towards the climate emergency. They should establish a Blackpool Climate Emergency business forum that meets monthly to share ideas in a transparent way and report on progress.

Elected representatives should consistently be more public and vocal in their support of the Net Zero agenda and take responsibility for a Net Zero Blackpool.

07

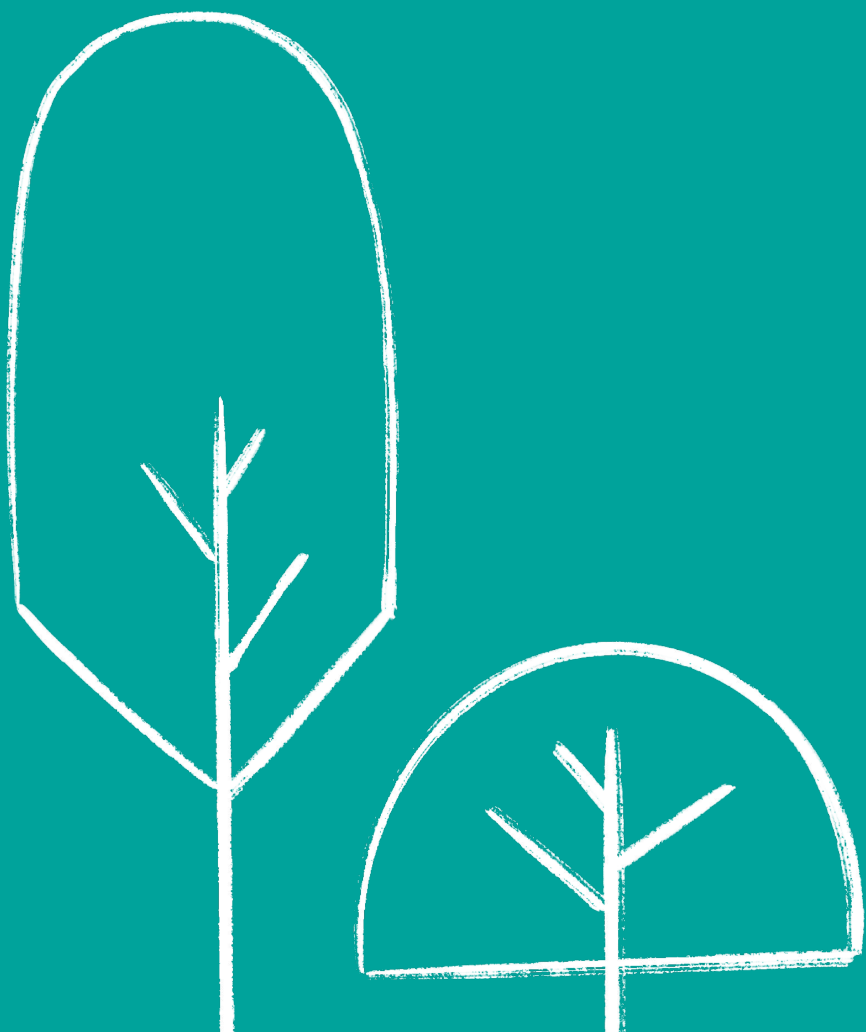
Network building & influencing national government

Further reflections

On the whole, the Assembly didn't realise how much the Council did and how much they were restricted by other issues and national policies. The Assembly believes that the Council should lead from the front and start a culture change. In other areas, the Assembly wants to see the town challenge national policy and commit to going further (see section 03 Homes). At the same time, the Council shouldn't be the only ones to make the decisions and they should encourage and empower businesses, organisations, and the community to make decisions and act.

08

Biodiversity



08

Biodiversity

Issues

An important part of climate change and controlling carbon emissions is protecting and growing the green space and biodiversity of the region. As a seaside community, Blackpool has many natural assets on land and in the water that should be protected and bolstered as the community grows. Increasing biodiversity and green space in Blackpool should be a greater priority when new homes and buildings are constructed.

08

Biodiversity

Net zero
recommendations

The Assembly believes that

... businesses should be encouraged to conduct their own carbon and environmental assessments as a baseline, to make plans and work towards reducing their carbon footprints and their increasing their contribution to improving the environment. This information should be made available to the public so that they can make informed choices about where they take their business.

There should be a revolution in how spare space is used in Blackpool. The council should designate all vacant land as 'green land', and businesses wishing to develop on it must make a convincing case as to why the proposed use of land would be more beneficial to the community than green space. Green spaces and the 'town' should not be seen as separate - unused flat space from roofs to roadsides are opportunities to cultivate green spaces and plant trees.

The Assembly wants communities to do their part in looking after trees planted locally, which begins by getting people involved in the planning and planting of trees so that they have more ownership over them. The Assembly wants as many people as possible involved across Blackpool.

08

Biodiversity

Further reflections

The Assembly was keen to see much more community action around the environment and biodiversity, including support to help people to 'grow their own' at home in their own yards/gardens, or sharing space for those who rent. Community groups could bring in speakers and experts to provide garden advice sessions for individuals and organisations, care homes, etc., to get them started.

Other ideas included encouraging people to grow wildflower gardens for bees, and a Window Box initiative where grow bags and are pots more available for communities' use, taking ownership of making their streets look good, and vouchers to plant trees and plants in gardens.

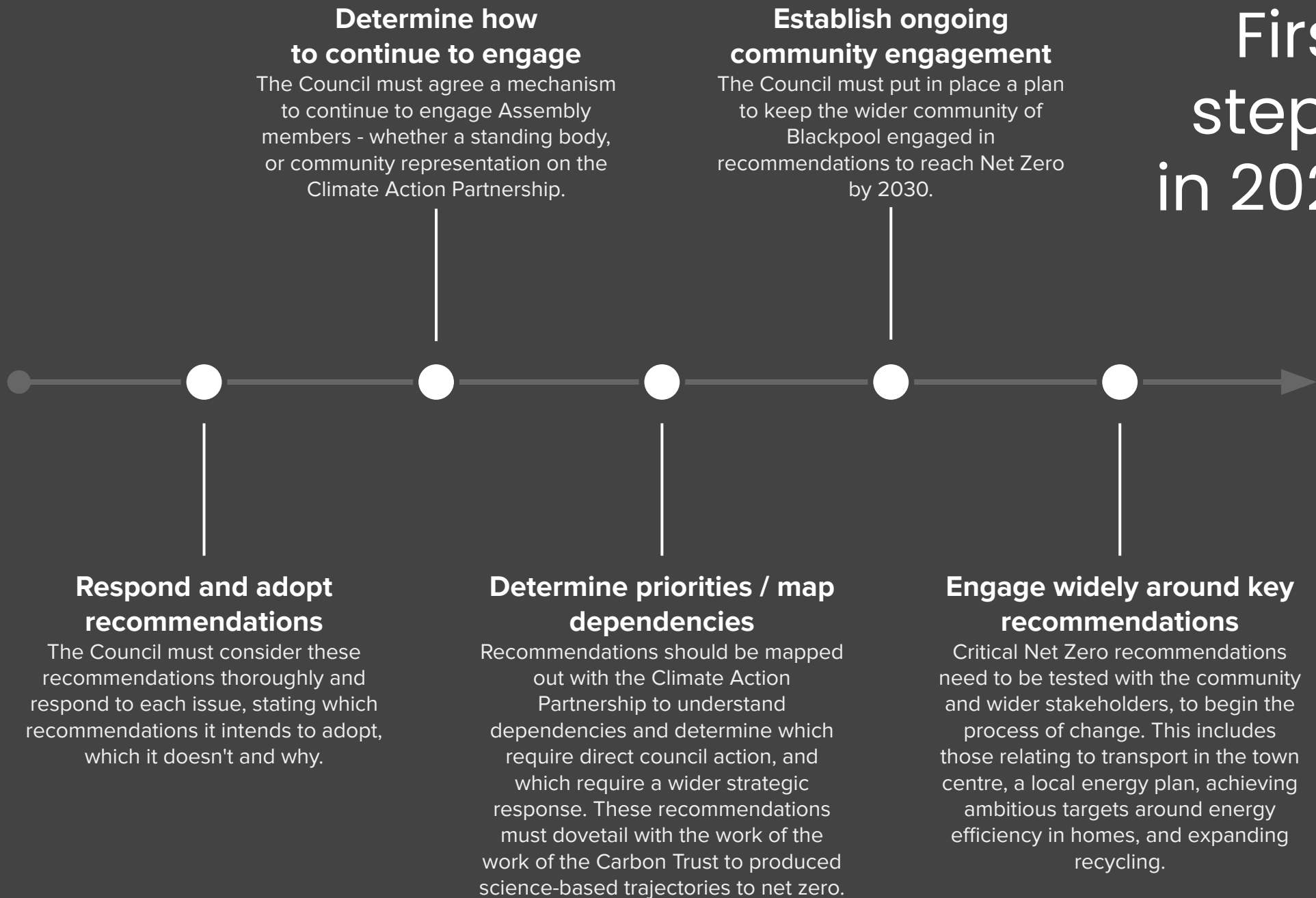
The Assembly wanted to see the council leading discussions about how to regenerate natural habitat for wildlife, working with the community to designate areas for protection and developing a grant process.

The Assembly was also keen that the council explore, by 2022, the feasibility of planting a 'Blackpool Forest' to offset the carbon emissions from the town, and begin discussions about where this could happen. Implementation should begin in 2023.

09

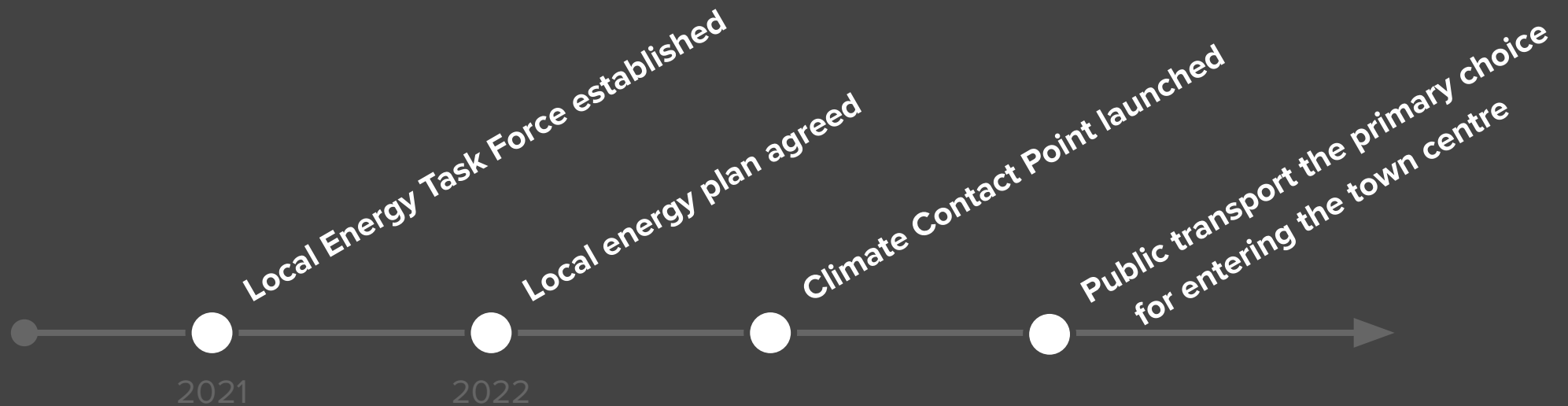
Next steps

First steps in 2021



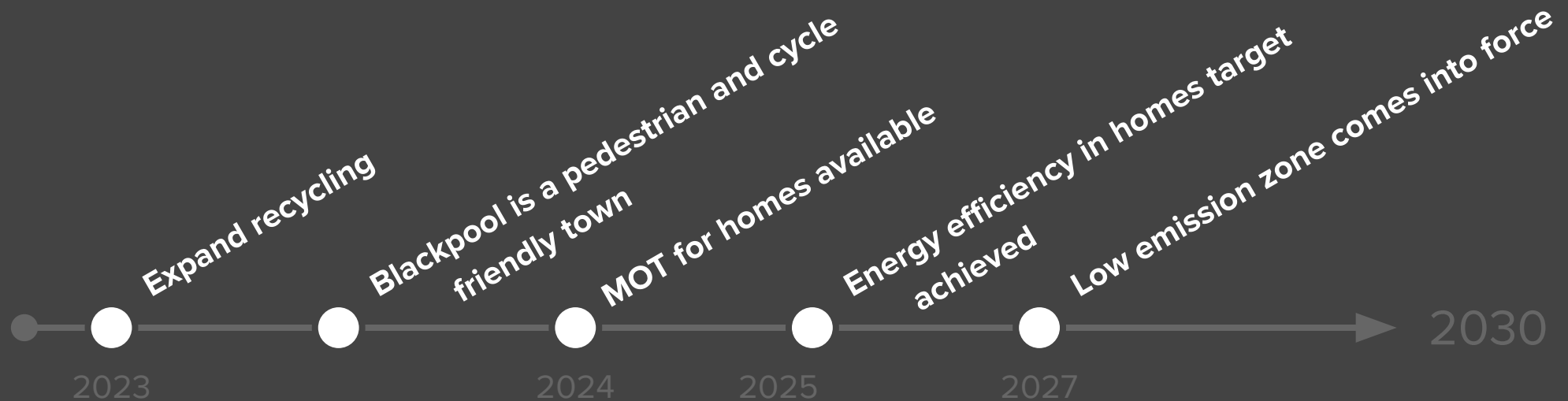
2030

Timeline of primary recommendations



2030

Timeline of primary recommendations



Blackpool Climate Assembly

Final report

futuregov/

The Blackpool Climate Assembly was supported by FutureGov, an independent organisation on a mission to build 21st-century public sector organisations that are catalysts for change in the internet and climate era.