

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 25 November 2019

Title: Climate Emergency Update

Portfolio:	Environment & Transport	Cabinet Member:	Councillor Carl Johnson
Report from Service Area:	Environment Housing and Leisure		
Responsible Officer:	Phil Scott, Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure	(Tel: (0191)6437295)	
Wards affected:	All		

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

In July 2019 Council declared a Climate Emergency, setting a target to reduce the carbon footprint of the Authority and the Borough by 50% by 2023 and to become carbon neutral by 2050.

In the report to Council of 25 July 2019, Council noted that Cabinet would receive an update report within six months, by January 2020. Cabinet places such significance and importance on the Climate Emergency that it has requested an update two months early.

This report therefore provides the requested update to Cabinet on the work undertaken since the declaration of a Climate Emergency. It also describes a number of cross-cutting themes that will form the basis of an action plan to tackle the Climate Emergency and requests Cabinet's approval to establish a Climate Emergency Board which will:

- Shape the action plan that will be presented to Cabinet in the summer of 2020.
- Receive regular updates on a number of workstreams.
- Consider and advise on key issues as they emerge.
- Oversee performance and budget management.

1.2 Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. notes the actions taken to date in response to the declaration of a Climate Emergency;
2. notes the cross-cutting themes that will form the basis of an action plan to tackle the Climate Emergency;

3. grants delegated authority to the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, to establish a Climate Emergency Board and set its terms of reference; and
4. notes that a further report and action plan will be presented to Cabinet in the summer of 2020.

1.3 Forward Plan:

This report first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 27 September 2019.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priorities in the 2018-20 Our North Tyneside Plan

Our Places will...

- Provide a clean, green, healthy, attractive, safe and sustainable environment
- Be great places to live

1.5 Information

In June 2019 Cabinet received a progress report on the Authority's Low Carbon Plan. The report provided Cabinet with a summary of the progress being made to reduce the carbon footprint of the Authority and the Borough. Whilst Cabinet recognised excellent progress was being made against original targets and paid credit to the leadership shown on this issue, particularly by the Youth Council, they requested that a Climate Emergency should be declared by Full Council along with the steps the Authority proposed to take in response to this emergency. In July 2019 Council agreed that the Authority should:

- a. declare a climate emergency;
- b. seek to halve the Authority's and the Borough's carbon footprint by 2023, four years ahead of the current target; and
- c. commit that itself and Borough will be carbon neutral by 2050 in line with the national target.

Council also requested the Elected Mayor to instruct the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport to:

- a. publish an annual report on the Authority's website that details performance against carbon reduction targets;
- b. include young people in the development, delivery and review of actions, ensuring that they have a voice in shaping the future;
- c. work with partners across the Borough and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans;
- d. call on Central Government to provide powers and resources to reduce carbon emissions;
- e. ensure that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions are in line with this climate emergency declaration; and
- f. ensure that the Authority Senior Leadership Team embed carbon reduction work across the Authority and take responsibility for reducing, as rapidly as possible, the carbon emissions resulting from the Authority's activities.

1.5.1 What action has been taken?

The Authority is clear in its commitment to tackling the Climate Emergency and has taken a number of immediate steps. These include;

- As part of the Mayor's initial budget proposals, a budget is to be included in the 2020/21 Investment Plan for projects to address the Climate Emergency. The final budget proposals will be submitted to Full Council for approval in February.
- The Authority is conducting a review of over 22,000 street lights to assess the feasibility of converting them to LED.
- The Authority is reviewing the potential to generate renewable electricity at Authority public buildings.
- The Authority published its 2018/19 Annual Greenhouse Gas Report, detailing performance on reducing the carbon footprint of the Authority and the Borough.
- Officers have met with members of the Young Cabinet and Youth Council to help to shape future plans to address the Climate Emergency.
- The Young Cabinet has published a ten-step guide in the Our North Tyneside resident's magazine on how residents can take simple steps to mitigate against climate change.
- The Authority hosted the 2019 State of the Area event in November, which focussed on the Climate Emergency and sought the views of stakeholders and partner organisations in how to address the Climate Emergency.
- The Authority responded to the recent consultation on the Government's proposals to amend building regulations and legislation to require greater provision of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles (EVs). The Authority's response supports this aim and suggests that the proposed requirements should be strengthened in some areas, for example, residential buildings undergoing major renovations with more than 10 car parking spaces should be required to install an EV chargepoint, in addition to the Government's suggestion of cable routes suitable for EV charging.
- Cabinet agreed to consult affected stakeholders and the public for six weeks on a Clean Air Zone Class C and associated traffic management measures in order to deliver compliance with legal limits for NO₂ in the Authority's administrative area in the shortest possible time.
- The Authority is developing a response to the Government's consultation on changes to Part L (conservation of fuel and power) and Part F (ventilation) of the Building Regulations for new dwellings. It is proposed that this will lead to a reduction in carbon emissions from new homes of between 20% and 31% compared to the current standard for an average home from 2020. It will also help to shape 'The Future Homes Standard' that is expected to reduce carbon emissions from new homes by 75% to 80% from 2025.

- Cabinet agreed to commence a public consultation exercise on a new taxi licensing policy which includes, for the first time, the proposed introduction of emissions standards for North Tyneside licensed taxis and private hire vehicles.
- Following a procurement exercise, on 1 October 2019 the Authority commenced a new 2-year contract with J & B Recycling Ltd to reprocess recyclable material collected in the grey bin. The contract has started well and is already bringing benefits with an increase in the amount of material being recovered. Also, the Authority is working with the new contractor to expand the range of materials that can be recycled e.g. pots, tubs and trays.
- The Authority is continuing the refurbishment of the Killingworth Depot, which will be a regional exemplar in energy efficiency and renewable energy generation systems.
- The Authority is working with the North of Tyne Combined Authority on the development of a Citizens Assembly as a means of consulting residents on the approach to and opportunities and challenges of the Climate Emergency.

1.5.2 Developing an action plan and providing governance

The Authority's carbon footprint is made up of the power, heat and water used to run its operational buildings, the electricity used to power over 31,000 street lighting apparatus, the fuel used to operate over 400 fleet vehicles and the business related miles staff travel in their own vehicles (not including commuting to and from work). The Borough's carbon footprint is made up of the power and heat used in the commercial, industrial and domestic buildings across the whole of the Borough, emissions from road and rail transport, and land use and forestation activities, which can result in either a release into or removal of emissions from the atmosphere.

To build on the Authority's track record of reducing carbon emissions and the actions it has already taken since the declaration of a Climate Emergency, the Authority is developing an action plan to identify carbon reduction projects that can be delivered across its own estate. In addition to this, the Authority is procuring external specialist support to develop the actions that can be taken across the Borough by the Authority, residents, businesses and land owners to tackle the Climate Emergency and this will form part of the action plan.

As part of the work programme associated with the declaration of the Climate Emergency, including the development and delivery of an action plan, it is considered appropriate to create a clear and accountable governance structure.

Cabinet is therefore asked to approve the establishment of a Climate Emergency Board which will:

- Shape the action plan that will be presented to Cabinet in the summer of 2020.
- Receive regular updates on a number of workstreams.
- Consider and advise on key issues as they emerge.
- Oversee performance and budget management.

The Climate Emergency Board will be co-chaired by the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport.

The action plan will address a number of cross-cutting themes within the Climate Emergency. These include:

1.5.3 Collective approach to environmental protection

This is not a challenge that belongs to, nor can solely be delivered by Government, either at a national or local level. Residents, visitors, businesses, public, academic and the third sector all have a role to play in reducing reliance on fossil fuel-based energy and heat generation. The action plan will set out the steps that can be taken to encourage appropriate actions to be taken by these important stakeholders.

1.5.4 Improving energy efficiency in building stock

In order to reduce the demand for power and heat in buildings across all sectors, the energy efficiency of existing buildings must continue to improve.

The Authority will continue to improve the energy efficiency of its own public buildings. This is in line with the 'energy hierarchy' approach set out in the Low Carbon Plan which has to date led to a 45% reduction in the Authority's carbon footprint.

Housing across the Borough is the biggest contributor to carbon emissions (37%), through the electricity and gas used to power and heat our homes. The Government Clean Growth Strategy sets a target of all fuel-poor homes to be upgraded to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C by 2030 and an aspiration for as many homes as possible to be EPC Band C by 2035 where practical, cost-effective and affordable. It also sets a long-term trajectory to improve the energy performance standards of privately rented homes, with the aim of upgrading as many as possible to EPC Band C by 2030 where practical, cost-effective and affordable.

To meet a carbon neutral target will require retrofit activities in cross tenure housing. This should be subject to appropriate consideration of the character and construction fabric of buildings and also reflect the need to avoid overheating as the risk of summer heatwaves increases.

Similarly, the energy efficiency of industrial and commercial properties must continue to improve. These currently contribute 28% of the Borough's carbon emissions.

The action plan will consider practical options to improve the energy efficiency of existing building stock.

1.5.5 Cleaning up (de-carbonising) our electricity supply

Electricity used to power our homes and businesses contributes to 22% of the Borough's carbon footprint. Nationally, approximately 29% of electricity is generated from renewable sources and this has led to significant decarbonisation of the national grid in recent years. This important work must continue to enable the United Kingdom to meet its carbon reduction targets. Action can be taken locally to support this work.

The Authority, in partnership with E.On installed a solar PV system on 1,500 council houses and over 2,100 solar PV systems have been installed on private residential properties. Developments in home battery storage, increased uptake of electric vehicles, smart home energy systems, energy storage systems, commercial power purchase agreements and continued decline in PV panel prices and rising energy prices are likely to ensure a continued uptake.

The Authority, residents and businesses can play a key role in increasing generation of new renewable electricity through the installation of solar PV, battery storage and smart grid technology on appropriate commercial buildings, homes and land. The roll out of decentralised renewable energy systems will be further explored in the action plan.

1.5.6 Cleaning up (de-carbonising) our heat supply

Natural gas used to power our homes and businesses contributes to 41% of the Borough's carbon footprint. The Committee on Climate Change stated that by about 2040 the UK will need to stop relying on carbon-based fuels (coal, oil and gas) to generate heat to keep buildings warm or produce hot water or steam in order to be on target to meet national carbon emission reduction targets for 2050. While the detail of how this will be done remains unclear, there are several different approaches which will need to be considered:

- a. reducing demand for heat in existing and new buildings;
- b. Optimising the roll-out of heat networks in urban centres and delivery of zero carbon heat supplies through them using waste heat and/or renewable heat;
- c. Identifying and realising opportunities to recover waste industrial heat to supply heating locally (displacing other fuels);
- d. overcoming barriers to increase take up of renewable heat technologies and/or fuels including air, water and ground source heat pumps, biomass and bio-wastes in buildings and industrial processes;
- e. Generating and using green gas locally, either directly or via the gas network; and
- f. Injecting hydrogen into the gas network to displace fossil fuel gas (whilst ensuring the hydrogen production is zero carbon rather than derived itself from fossil fuels through reforming natural gas).

Clearly it is a significant challenge to remove fossil fuel-based gas from the process of generating heat. The options and opportunities of doing so will be further explored in the action plan.

1.5.7 Cleaning up (de-carbonising) our travel

Travel contributes to 37% of the Borough's carbon footprint. Reducing vehicle emissions and usage by encouraging modal shift and accelerating the transition to low carbon transport is integral to decarbonisation and improving air quality. Decarbonising road transport is a national ambition, with the Government recently reiterating its intention to end the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040 in the Road to Zero strategy.

The rise in electric vehicles is currently very rapid, driven largely by the development of technology and market forces, with their registration doubling every year. It is expected that by or before 2028, every second new car will be an electric vehicle. The demand for home charging points will increase rapidly and, whilst the proportion of cars parked on-street in the LA7 area (30%) is not unusually high, relative to the rest of the UK (27%), consideration will have to be given to how the roll out of recharging infrastructure is supported.

There is also an important role for the District Network Operator, Northern Power Grid, in ensuring there is enough grid capacity to enable this important transition.

The action plan will consider the necessary steps to transition to low and zero carbon travel.

1.5.8 Waste

Although the disposal of waste does not form part of the Authority's or Borough's respective carbon footprints, it is nevertheless essential that the Authority continues to improve in this area as part of its long standing commitment to protecting the environment. The action plan will consider the introduction of carbon and natural capital impact targets, in line with the proposals contained in the Government's Resource and Waste Strategy. These specific proposals will be subject to a spring 2020 consultation by Government. The action plan will naturally be aligned to the Authority's Waste Strategy 2013-2030 and 10 Year Plan for Waste.

Delivering the 10 Year Plan for Waste is being considered by Cabinet separately. Promotion of the waste hierarchy is a key action. The Authority will continue to encourage residents to prevent, reuse, and recycle materials and will work with businesses to reduce the amount of commercial waste it generates within the borough.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Council:

Option 1

To agree to the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report.

Option 2

To not approve the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Agreeing the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report will support the delivery of the commitments made in the Climate Emergency report to Council of 25 July 2019.

1.8 Appendices:

None.

1.9 Contact officers:

Paul Nelson, Environmental Sustainability & Street Lighting Manager, Technical & Regulatory Services, tel. (0191) 643 6467

Colin MacDonald, Senior Manager, Technical & Regulatory Services, tel. (0191) 643 6620

Michael Keenlyside, Environmental Sustainability Officer, tel. (0191) 643 6505

Cathy Davison, Principal Accountant Investment (Capital) and Revenue, tel. (0191) 643 5727

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) [Annual Greenhouse Gas Report 2018-19](#)
- (2) [Low Carbon Plan 2016-2027](#)
- (3) [BEIS Local Authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics 2005-2017](#)
- (4) [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report 2018: Summary for Policymakers.](#)
- (5) [Committee on Climate Change: Net Zero](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

As part of the Mayor's initial budget proposals, a budget is to be included in the 2020/21 Investment Plan for projects to address the Climate Emergency. The final budget proposals will be submitted to Full Council for approval in February.

The financing of specific additional projects to reduce carbon emissions will be considered as part of the development of each business case. Any investment required in addition to existing budgets will be reported to Cabinet / Council, with analysis of any savings projected and how these are to be accounted for as appropriate, for a decision before any expenditure is incurred.

2.2 Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Individual residents, community groups and businesses have demonstrated a passion to ensure North Tyneside is sustainable. Our low carbon work has been informed by working with business on specific technologies, with cycling organisations as we increase North Tyneside's cycling infrastructure and working with our Young Mayors, Members of the Young Parliament and Youth Councillors to listen to their views about how we protect North Tyneside for their future. As a landlord, the Authority has worked with Tenants' representatives and individual tenants on energy efficient products and how to use them. As a leisure business, the Authority has worked with its customers, experts and the sector to reduce energy consumption and as a waste business, the Authority has spent time working on best practice with the sector and local universities to review and revise operations. Recently we have been working closely with our bus operators to apply Government funding to their fleet to reduce emissions.

Additionally, the Authority recently hosted the 2019 State of the Area event, which focussed on the Climate Emergency and sought the views of stakeholders and partner organisations in how to address the Climate Emergency.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equality and diversity issues directly arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no risk issues directly arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

This report supports the recent declaration of a Climate Emergency and includes a number of cross-cutting themes that will form the basis of an action plan to tackle the Climate Emergency.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive ☒
- Head of Service ☒
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☒
- Chief Finance Officer ☒
- Monitoring Officer ☒
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service ☒