



West Lancashire Borough Council

Report of the Corporate and Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee
'Action on Climate Emergency Review'

DRAFT





Action on Climate Emergency Review - Report of the Corporate and Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee

FOREWORD by the Chairman Councillor Donna West



“The Corporate and Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee carried out a review of ‘Action on Climate Emergency’ in 2020/21. This report sets down the outcomes of the work undertaken by Members of the Committee during that period.

We started the Scrutiny Project in March 2021 with a presentation from the Environmental Strategy Officer and Head Ranger, to give an overview and background of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2030, the current position, plans for the future, aims, ideas and opportunities.

We would like to thank all those who have been involved in the review in particular those Members and Officers who took the time to attend meetings.

In addition to the information provided by Officers of the Council, we would like to thank External Partners and Citizens who provided their feedback and comment to the on-line ‘Action on Climate Emergency’ consultation.

THE REVIEW

BACKGROUND

The Corporate and Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 10 December 2020 agreed that the topic selected for review in the 2020/2021 Work Programme of the Committee would be "Action on Climate Emergency" combined with 'Create/Designate Hedgehog and Wildlife areas in public parks/gardens across the Borough'.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To undertake a review entitled 'Action on Climate Emergency'.
2. To encourage and actively promote 'Climate Action' involving the Communities, Businesses, Individuals and Stakeholders across all sectors of the Borough.
3. To participate and engage in a 'Community Action Plan' to encourage engagement from our Communities, Businesses, Individuals and Stakeholders in order to identify targets and key areas of interest for action.
4. To present a report of the Committee's findings to Cabinet and Council, as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(To be considered by the Committee to be held on 16 September 2021.)

1. That the Actions identified in the meeting held on 10 June 2021 be progressed:
 - a. To provide further information to the interested households of details of the Cosy Homes in Lancashire Scheme (CHiL) and encourage to take up free energy efficiency measures in their homes.
 - b. To contact interested parties in respect of Community Energy and invite to a community event by NW Energy Hub and also inform about the Rural Community Energy Fund.
 - c. To develop and promote case studies with performance and savings figures from installed renewable technologies on Council housing.
 - d. To investigate a community/group purchasing project for Solar PV.
 - e. To progress a second bid for further funds for Office of Low Emission Vehicles to further expand the charging network in West Lancs.
 - f. To identify further locations for tree planting, working with the Lancashire Woodland Connect Project.
 - g. To investigate an alternative/reduced mowing regime.

2.

INFORMATION GATHERED

Meeting held on 11 March 2021 (Presentation 1)

The Environmental Strategy Officer and Head Ranger provided the Committee with a Presentation in respect of the Climate Emergency Action Review, which provided an

overview of the background of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2030, the current position, plans for the future, aims, ideas and opportunities.

The Presentation provided information, which included the following:

- Carbon footprint baseline and targeting
- Community Action Plan / Citizen Assembly – Identify Stakeholders / Partners and interested parties
- Projects 2021-22; Green Homes Grant voucher Scheme; On Street Residential Charge Point Scheme
- Potential Projects; The Rural Community Energy Fund; Solar Together
- Waste Reduction Strategy – Current Projects
- Potential Projects – Business Waste; Residential Recycling
- Biodiversity – Current Position; 16 Parks and Country Parks managed by Ranger Service
- Work with local schools to promote, protect, enhance green space
- Programmes on site carried out by staff, volunteers, stakeholders and contractors (subject to funding)
- Planting of in excess of 2000 trees in last 3 years
- Focus on improving habitat connectivity
- Green Infrastructure improvements / Sustainable Transport Plans
- Current Biodiversity including; Improving Clough Valleys in Skelmersdale – CIL / Kickstart
- Towpath Improvements
- Investigating potential Beacon Eco-Park and surrounding green space (subject to funding)
- Biodiversity opportunities; Revise mowing regimes; investigate areas to manage specifically for wildlife habitat
- Fairy Glen Country Park
- Water Management Strategy – Current Position and Potential Projects including; Asset Management Review; Property Flood Resilience Service; Sustainable Drainage; Provision of water butts for the public

Questions and comments were raised in respect of:

- Green Homes Grant Funding – Types of efficiency measures / eligibility of private rented properties / homeowners
- Current carbon output in tonnes / How we report progress against the target reduction
- Vehicle Replacement Programme – Electric vehicle trial / Hydrogen substitute
- Charging points for electric vehicles / costs / locations
- Carbon Budget 2035 - 50,000 ha/year of trees must be planted. What is our contribution and how will they be paid for?
- Recycling contamination
- Potential business waste pilot
- Community Orchards
- Bike Storage
- Hedgehog friendly development (Local Plan)
- Volunteer Litter Picker Risk Assessment / Pack

OUTCOMES: The Environmental Strategy Officer circulated after the meeting a spreadsheet showing all the answers and comments received from the Climate Change Consultation by Ward,

Meeting held on 10 June 2021 (Presentation 2)

The Environmental Strategy Officer and Head Ranger provided the Committee with a Presentation in respect of a Climate Emergency Consultation which was launched on 14 May 2021 until 30 May 2021.

Members were informed that PR was undertaken for the launch and that Community Groups known to the Council were also encouraged to promote. She explained that the Consultation tied in with the four areas linked into the Climate Emergency Action Plan 2030; Renewable Energy Generation; Waste Reduction Strategy; Developing/Supporting Biodiversity Projects and the Development of Water Management Strategies.

The Presentation provided information, which included the following:

- Results – 123 responses
- 86% very concerned / fairly concerned about Climate Change
- Areas currently taking action to reduce impact on the Environment – 93% recycle and reduce waste, examples included; home compost, litter picking, allotment, vegan/ vegetarian diet
- Community Group Action - 48 interested in being involved
- Rewilding/wildlife friendly planting - majority would like to see this delivered in the Community, followed by generating renewable energy and tree planting
- The considered top priority for reducing emissions from homes was Generating renewable energy and insulating buildings
- Green Homes Grant CHiL Scheme – 32 would like details of the Scheme
- Renewable Energy Generation – It was considered by the majority that it would be helpful to receive more information in respect of the Community Group purchasing scheme. (details/data to be placed on the Councils website)
- 44% would like to be involved in a Community Energy Project in West Lancashire
- Transport is the highest source of emissions in West Lancashire – 32 new vehicle charge points have been fitted in Ormskirk and Skelmersdale
- The main considerations for people to be more likely to consider an electric vehicle in the future were being convenient / prominent electric vehicle charging infrastructure in communities / Home electric vehicle charging/ more information and details of the running costs
- Waste reduction – More information on product packaging; buy local and seasonal; donation of unwanted items; work with businesses on credentials; work with Community/Schools
- Biodiversity – areas to prioritise including tree planting; habitat protection; reduced mowing regime; natural woodland/wildlife corridors; water conservation measures
- 77% support reduced mowing regime in open spaces to encourage wildflower regeneration
- 49% interested in helping with a community planting or biodiversity/habitat creation project

The Environmental Strategy Officer listed numerous other areas of interest raised as a result of the Consultation, some of which included food waste/compost collection, cycling infrastructure and litter picking.

Questions and comments were raised in respect of the following:

- Public information on meadows and locations
- If there was a breakdown of the Consultation by Ward
- Varieties of crops on fields for bees
- Accredited companies / schemes for renewable energy
- Tree planting in Wards/ residential areas (appropriate species)
- Recycling education and promotion
- Community Action / Citizen Assembly
- Behavioural change

NEXT STEPS / OUTCOMES::

- To provide further information to the interested households of details of the Cosy Homes in Lancashire Scheme (CHiL) and encourage to take up free energy efficiency measures in their homes.
- To contact interested parties in respect of Community Energy and invite to a community event by NW Energy Hub and also inform about the Rural Community Energy Fund.
- To develop and promote case studies with performance and savings figures from installed renewable technologies on Council housing.
- To investigate a community/group purchasing project for Solar PV.
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- To investigate an alternative/reduced mowing regime.

Membership of the Committee

2019/20

Chairman: Councillor C Coughlan

Vice Chairman: Councillor C Dereli

Councillors: A Blundell, Mrs M Blake, S Currie, J Finch, N Furey, J Gordon, S Gregson, K. Mitchell, P O'Neill.

2020/21

Chairman: Councillor D West

Vice Chairman: Councillor J Finch

Councillors: Mrs M Blake, C Dereli, A Fennell, J Gordon, S Gregson, D Hirrell, K Mitchell, P Turpin, J Upjohn.

Officer Support

Lead Officer: Chris Twomey, Corporate Director Transformation & Resources

Scrutiny Support Officer: Jacky Denning, Democratic Services Manager
Julia Brown, Member Services Officer

Officers Reporting: Tina Iball, Environmental Strategy Officer
Dan Massey, Head Ranger

Legal Officer: Tom Dickinson, Principal Solicitor

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report; however, developments in this area of work are likely to involve key partners, stakeholders and residents of the Borough, in its on-going development.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report other than work associated with the 'Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2030. Financial or resource implications will need to be considered for any future projects or actions arising from this review.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Tackling climate change and enabling a low carbon future has many links to health and well-being. The impacts of climate change include warming temperatures and increases in the frequency or intensity of extreme weather events such as heat waves and flooding. Such events can threaten our health (especially for the most vulnerable), the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe.

Improving the energy efficiency of homes not only saves energy and carbon but will reduce fuel poverty, deliver affordable warmth and reduce ill health/deaths resulting from living in a cold home.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The decision does not have any direct impact of members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required. An EIA would be undertaken for any future projects or actions arising from this review.

Appendices

None.