

**REPORT OF: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 17<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2022**

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## **CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION UPDATE**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To outline Pendle Council's progress to date on the Climate Emergency Declaration and associated action plan.

To gain approval for widening the scope for the Climate Emergency Action Plan in future.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That progress of the Climate Emergency Action Plan be noted.
- (2) That Members note the potential of wider expansion to maximise opportunities for future progress, particularly in terms of our carbon neutral target, mainstreaming climate change, and our work in partnership.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To demonstrate commitment to delivering the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration.

### **Climate Emergency Action Plan**

1. Pendle Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019, instigating the Climate Emergency Working Group and associated Pendle Council Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-2025. The Plan was approved by Policy and Resources Committee in March 2020.
2. The Climate Emergency Working Group monitors implementation and performance of the Action Plan with Policy and Resources Committee receiving bi-annual update reports.
3. The 7 priority themes of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan are:
  - Support & enable sustainable travel.
  - Reduce carbon emissions and energy demand from the built environment.
  - Reduce the harmful impacts of waste and water consumption.
  - Support our communities to take action.

- Support our future generations to find solutions.
  - Mainstream climate change.
  - Support biodiversity and the natural environment to help local carbon offsetting opportunities.
4. To support implementation of the Climate Emergency Declaration, a £100,000 budget was approved for 2020/21 and has now been carried forward into 2021/22. The budget programme consists of the following:
- £50,000 to support capital improvement works
- £30,000 to support the Electric Vehicle infrastructure
  - £20,000 for Home Energy Programme (match funded by £20,000 DFG)
- £50,000 revenue.
- £25,000 Small Grants Scheme to support grassroots interventions in both community and school settings.
  - £25,000 for dedicated officer support (Climate Emergency post).
5. The Council is working hard on actions to strengthen its green credentials. Over the last 6 months we have:
- Completed a review of policies in the Core Strategy, including policy ENV3 (Renewable & Low Carbon Generation).
  - Shortlisted potential sites for community growing initiatives.
  - Began work on exploring community renewable energy schemes, completing a report on the potential of this in Pendle.
  - Continued work on the climate action grants programme, including showcasing and publicising the scheme prior to the application deadline.
6. The summary in appendix 1 below outlines the progress made to date against each of the Strategic Objectives.

## Scope for widening

7. Significant work has been undertaken over the last 6 months to combat climate change, however to ensure we meet our 2030 carbon neutral target we must consider the scope for widening this action plan and reviewing our carbon reduction targets.
8. **Climate Emergency UK** recently published a **league table** of council action plans across the country. Pendle Council's action plan receives a total score of 30% on this, scoring below the district council average on mitigation/adaptation, community engagement and communications, measuring and setting emissions targets, co-benefits, and the ecological emergency. We have already begun taking action on some of these since this league table was published, most notably community engagement and communications, but this does still give an idea of where Pendle Council's Action Plan could expand in future.
9. The two highest scoring district councils in the country on this league table – Somerset West and Taunton Council (92%) and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (87%) – will be considered for potential insights below.
10. Our **carbon neutral target** offers the most obvious, and potentially the most impactful, area for **widening**. Currently we have a 2030 carbon neutral target for our estate, but a separate carbon neutral target or a commitment to significant reductions could be included for the

wider area. For example, Somerset West and Taunton Council has a 2050 area-wide target alongside its 2030 carbon neutral estates target.

11. In addition, our existing **estates target** could be strengthened with a statement of longer-term intent to maintain carbon neutrality or to go net-negative post-2030, greater detail on which greenhouse gases are included in this, and recognition of the Council's limitations with an agreement to lobby the government on these.
12. **Mainstreaming** climate change is included in our action plan, but would benefit from strengthening and outlining in more detail. **Training** of staff members and councillors would ensure staff are aware of the importance of climate change and potential ways to incorporate this into their work. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, for example, have an agreement with Keele University to provide training for staff. Embedding training into the recruitment process (alongside greater environmental elements in new job descriptions) would make a lasting impact. However this training would likely require additional funding or grant applications.
13. **Other**, more economical, **mainstreaming practices** which could be introduced include a stronger, more overtly environmental implications section at the end of reports, greater consideration of climate change in pension fund investments and the inclusion of climate change in the evaluation criteria for tender submissions.
14. To help increase the number of **volunteers** involved in environmental initiatives, Somerset West and Taunton Council offers all Council officers additional paid leave annually to volunteer in local climate action project like tree planting. As of February 28<sup>th</sup>, we've had 138 volunteers taking part who have planted 3,100 trees, however getting more Council staff involved gives greater scope to increase this further. Such a policy would also have strong benefits beyond environmental ones, and is something which our Employee Volunteering & Skill Sharing Policy could permit.
15. According to Pendle Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, only 15% of current action are taken directly in **partnership**, demonstrating the potential for greater work here. For example, working with local faith communities would help increase engagement and awareness surrounding climate change whilst targeting groups often marginalised. Partnership work could be directly considered in future budgets, as with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, for whom £1,500 of its £60,800 2021/22 budget for tackling climate change is focussed on the Local Authority Energy Partnership.
16. Partnership work could go 'above' (Lancashire County Council) and 'below' (Town and Parish councils) in the political system, as well as to other actors like local businesses and schools. Setting up a climate action commission, climate board or partnership could be considered as a potential base for such partnerships.

## Next steps

17. The existing action plan served as a platform to launch climate action, with much of its focus being on internal organisational measures. Looking to the future, a revised action plan which goes significantly beyond the above ideas and is more public-facing with more stretched annual carbon reduction targets now needs to be considered if we are to achieve our 2030 carbon neutral ambitions. However, this will be subject to greater funding and resource requirements and, wherever possible, opportunities such as the emerging New Deal for Lancashire and external funding streams, which will need to be explored to support this crucial agenda.

18. It is recommended that the revised plan is driven by wider partner engagement and provides an opportunity for public sector, business and community input whereby there is a shared vision for a carbon neutral Pendle. The process will be delivered through a Climate Emergency Engagement Plan which will be considered by the Climate Emergency Working Group at its next meeting in April.

## IMPLICATIONS

**Policy:** The Climate Emergency Action Plan will support delivery of the Strategic Plan and, longer term, the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration.

**Financial:** None arising directly from this report.

**Legal:** None arising directly from this report.

**Risk Management:** Impact of COVID-19.

**Health and Safety:** None arising directly from this report.

**Sustainability:** Addressing climate change and reducing Pendle's carbon footprint is fundamental for long-term environmental sustainability.

**Community Safety:** None arising directly from this report.

**Equality and Diversity:** None arising directly from this report.

## Appendix 1- Climate Emergency Action Plan progress

Priority Theme	Strategic Objective	Progress Summary
<b>1.0 Support and enable sustainable travel</b>	1.1 Introduce a staff electric car pool scheme	Possible booking platforms and costings currently being explored. We'll investigate opportunities for electric vehicle charging points at Council buildings for Council staff, as well as charging points in our car parks for members of the public.
	1.3 Enable and promote active travel such as cycling and walking	<p>Currently looking into potential to purchase one or two e-bikes.</p> <p>In the process of signposting part of Pendle Leisure Trust's Green Corridor route.</p> <p>Working with Community Rail Lancashire and Connecting East Lancashire to promote and enhance the canal tow path, specifically around Brierfield Station, as a safe cycling and walking route.</p> <p>Creating a circular route around Pendle which incorporates the canal towpath, and will include signposting and digitalising for future promotion.</p>
	1.4 Support and enable a green transport infrastructure	<p>Working with Lancashire County Council and Burnley Borough Council on a joint Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).</p> <p>Also working on a new bridleway as part of the Lomeshaye Industrial Estate Extension.</p> <p>Efforts underway to incorporate cycling and walking into the Nelson Town Deal through Accessible Nelson.</p> <p>We have been working with Cycle Development Pendle Partnership (CDPP) partners including Go Velo, Connecting East Lancashire, Community Rail Lancashire and Cycle Sport Pendle to promote and encourage more cycling in Pendle.</p>
<b>2.0 Reduce carbon emissions and energy demand from the built environment</b>	2.1 Heat our buildings with low carbon and/or renewable heating and change behaviours towards energy consumption	A <u>review of policies in the Core Strategy</u> was carried out and published on the Council website in December 2020. In the longer term, the intention will be to combine Policies ENV3 and ENV20 to form a new policy concerned with the implementation of Zero Net Carbon development. A separate policy concerned with the generation of heat and electricity from renewable sources is also likely. As noted above the new Pendle Local Plan is unlikely to be capable of being adopted by Council before 2024.
	2.2 Encourage energy efficiency standards and improvements and reduce fuel poverty	<p>Additional resources available through the Climate Emergency budget (£20,000) to enhance the Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHiL) scheme. Total spend to date is £11,642.30.</p> <p>Electric Vehicles (EV) project now out to tender.</p>

	2.3 Implement compliance in existing core strategy policies for all new development proposals, unless it can be demonstrated that compliance with the policy is not viable or feasible	At Council on 9 December 2021, councillors passed a motion requesting that "officers re-visit the Core Strategy and Pendle Local Plan Part 2". Progress on the Local Plan Part 2 has effectively been paused for the moment. It is currently unclear when a new Pendle Local Plan will be in place. In all likelihood the date has now slipped from March 2022 – the planned date of submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination – to mid-2024.
<b>4.0 Supporting our communities to take action</b>	4.1 Develop a media campaign to encourage community action on climate change	Numerous recycling campaigns launched over the previous 6 months, including on garden waste recycling, the Recycle Week campaign, and a campaign on recycling over Christmas.
	4.2 Identify Pendle Council assets to support community action	A shortlist of potential sites for community growing initiatives in Pendle has been completed.
	4.3 Work with voluntary and community groups to enable collective action on climate change	Initial report written and presented to the Climate Emergency Working Group on the potential for community renewable energy schemes in Pendle. Potential sites are currently being shortlisted.
<b>5.0 Supporting our future generations to find solutions</b>	5.1 Work to ensure young people are engaged in solutions	COVID has limited the ability to engage with young people, with the Pendle Schools Climate Movement being disbanded due to the pandemic. A communications and engagement plan to be presented to the Climate Emergency Working Group in April will outline the introduction of a more comprehensive approach to this.
	5.2 Work with local schools, Nelson and Colne College and other education bodies to increase understanding and involvement in climate change solutions	<p>Work on the climate action grants programme has continued, with 13 schools/community groups already receiving funds for their projects. Efforts to publicise the scheme prior to the deadline for applications on 20 March is currently being undertaken, with an advert in Colne Life and news releases already being sent out.</p> <p>Again COVID has limited work here, with Nelson and Colne College's Green Gathering, which the Climate Emergency Officer and other relevant councillors were due to attend, being cancelled.</p> <p>Initial work, such as speaking at Nelson and Colne College's Conference Day is in the pipeline. More comprehensive work is currently being looked into as part of the upcoming communications and engagement plan.</p>

19. The outstanding Strategic Objectives which we now need to focus on going forward appear to be:

1.2 Reduce emissions from Pendle Council's transport fleet.

- 3.1 Reduce single plastic use in the Council and in the community.
- 4.1 Develop a media campaign to encourage community action on climate change.
- 5.1 Work to ensure young people are engaged in solutions.
- 5.2 Work with local schools, Nelson and Colne College and other education bodies to increase understanding and involvement in climate change solutions.
- 6.2 Include climate emergency considerations in all key new Council policies and plans.
- 7.1 Improve land and building management practices to better retain carbon.
- 7.2 Improve opportunities for biodiversity and enhance and preserve the natural environment.
- 7.3 Invest in tree planting and woodland management.