

REPORT FROM: DIRECTOR OF PLACE

TO: CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP

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CARBON LITERACY TRAINING

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members of the Climate Emergency Working Group with an update on options for Carbon Literacy Training.

RECOMMENDATION

That the information within the report be noted.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

Members are aware of options for carbon literacy training, and the consideration being given to the best approach for Pendle Borough Council.

ISSUE

1. Following the declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019, carbon literacy training has been identified as an action as part of Pendle Borough Council's (PBC's) Climate Emergency Action Plan.
2. Carbon literacy training is being increasingly undertaken by organisations which have committed to working towards net zero.
3. Frequently adopted training courses are those developed through The Carbon Literacy Project, which has registered 'Carbon Literacy' as a trademark and defines it as: "An awareness of the carbon dioxide costs and impacts of everyday activities, and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions, on an individual, community and organisational basis."
4. According to The Carbon Literacy Project website:

"Carbon Literacy® is a term used to describe an awareness of climate change, and the climate impacts of mankind's everyday actions. The term has had occasional use in scientific literature and casual usage but now is exclusively associated with The Carbon Literacy Project.

Carbon Literacy is the knowledge and capacity required to create a positive shift in how mankind lives, works and behaves in response to climate change.”

5. The training offered through The Carbon Literacy project is well received, however requires a significant amount of time from each individual – totalling approx. 8 hours. The format of the training can be tailored to specific audiences by different providers, however it includes essential elements in order for it to pass the accreditation process.
6. In addition to the time resource required for the training available through The Carbon Literacy project, while the course is available to individuals at no cost, for organisations to develop and roll out tailored course there is a significant cost, especially where they seek to gain Carbon Literate Organisation (CLO) accreditation.
7. Consideration should be given to the desired outcomes of the delivery of carbon literacy training and how best to achieve these.
8. The aims of delivering carbon literacy training are to increase understanding and awareness of the issues around climate, the impact of personal choices, what action can be taken at different levels, and encouraging individual behaviour change.
9. As identified on The Carbon Literacy Project’s own website, the term ‘climate literacy’ developed from academic literature.
10. It is well known that the language used to discuss climate issues is a barrier, as many technical, scientific and policy-based terms are used to discuss issues in ways which are not accessible to the general population. In order to facilitate effective behaviour change, and communication and engagement on climate issues, the language, messages and framing needs to be adapted to the needs and understanding of populations at different levels, and talked about in their terms.
11. There is undoubtedly a need and role for increasing understanding and educating people about climate change, particularly in the public sector where organisations have a responsibility to act and lead by example. However this should be carefully considered, as members of staff and Councillors, as individuals themselves, are likely to find technical language a barrier, and information/education-based interventions as unsuccessful, as general populations do.
12. Rather than educating people to understand technical and scientific language on climate issues, which is resource-intensive and unlikely (in isolation) to achieve successful engagement, buy-in, or behaviour change, the language used to discuss, inform and engage on climate issues needs to be made more relatable and accessible.
13. However, as a public sector organisation, staff and Councillors should have a good understanding of climate issues and some of the language and terms associated with these. More importantly, they should be aware of the action being taken locally by PBC and partners to support local communities and businesses in dealing with the impact of climate change, and how they can take action as individuals.
14. It is recommended that options for carbon literacy training are confirmed with associated costs and resource, with a view to rolling out a range of tailored ‘training’ for staff and Councillors. Options to complete Carbon Literacy Training available from The Carbon Literacy Project will be promoted and may be proposed for key members of staff, however this training is likely to be optional. Central to PBC’s approach to ‘carbon literacy training’ as a concept will be adapting its language and approach to make the discussion and engagement of these issues more accessible. PBC takes a bottom-up approach, rather

than top-down, and will talk about climate issues in ways that are understandable to people without the need for formal training.

NEXT STEPS

15. A programme of training on climate issues for PBC is confirmed in the Climate Emergency Action Plan by March 2024 to commence in 2024/25.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: None arising directly from the report.

Financial: None arising directly from the report.

Legal: None arising directly from this report.

Risk Management: None arising directly from the report.

Health and Safety: None arising directly from the report.

Sustainability: None arising directly from the report.

Community Safety: None arising directly from the report.

Equality and Diversity: None arising directly from the report.

APPENDICES: None.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS: None.