

Report of	Meeting	Date
The Lead Member for Climate Change (Introduced by the Cabinet Member (Health and Wellbeing))	Cabinet	Wednesday, 16 November 2022

## Report of the Lead Member for Climate Change

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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### Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on the work of the Climate Emergency Task Group.

### Recommendations to Council

2. To note the work of the Task Group towards the Council's carbon net-zero goal and completion of the Air Quality and Climate Emergency Action Plans.

### Reasons for recommendations

3. To provide members with an understanding of the work that has been achieved to date.

### Other options considered and rejected

4. The report is for information only no other options have been considered.

### Corporate priorities

5. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: (please bold all those applicable):

<b>An exemplary council</b>	<b>Thriving communities</b>
<b>A fair local economy that works for everyone</b>	<b>Good homes, green spaces, healthy places</b>

## **Background to the report**

### **Climate Emergency**

6. The impacts of man-made climate change have been identified as being a significant risk to life as we know it to both humankind and the wider environment.
7. In 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency pledging to make the Council operations and the borough as a whole carbon neutral by 2030. Since this declaration a Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan has been developed and adopted at Full Council. This completed the existing Air Quality Action Plan, which is due for a review in 2022/23 and the newly adopted Biodiversity Strategy.
8. To achieve the aims of the Strategy and to accomplish the council's pledge of net-zero by 2030 a cross party Climate Emergency Task Group was convened.
9. The Council as a social leader, regulator, employer and developer has a moral and legal duty to minimise its emissions and impact on the environment, prepare for the impact of climate change, adapt to and encourage others to do the same.
10. A full update of the work towards these goals was presented to members at the July Council meeting. This report does not reiterate that report but details the specific work of the task group and the challenges and obstacles that have been identified over the last year.
11. While the Task group and Officers involved have undertaken a significant amount of work, including applying for and successfully obtaining grant funding, engaging with our wider communities, groups and schools, to education, raise awareness and make changes within the borough, the Council cannot rest on its laurels and must for the sake of the population and wider environment continue take action to reduce carbon emissions and protect and improve the environment.
12. We declared a Climate Emergency, we must act as we would do in any other emergency to achieve our goals.

### **Air Quality**

13. Air quality presents a serious risk to public health, resulting in the premature death of around 40,000 people across the Country every year. The figures for South Ribble suggest a 4.1% of all deaths are attributed to poor air quality.
14. The Council has five declared areas of poor air quality, known as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) and these are located in Penwortham, Walton-le-Dale, Lostock Hall, Bamber Bridge and Leyland.
15. An Air Quality Action Plan was adopted in 2018 detailing the work that would be undertaken by the Council to maintain and improve air quality across the borough. This action plan is a legal requirement.

## **Biodiversity**

16. The Council formally adopted a Biodiversity Strategy in July 2022 and a public consultation is currently being run to develop an Action Plan to ensure we protect and enhance the habitats and species of importance within the borough.

## **Task Group Actions Update**

17. The task group have continued to meet regularly over the last year, although the frequency of the meetings has been reduced from monthly to quarterly, with more regular meetings between officers and the Chair to ensure a clear understanding of progress is being maintained between meetings. Going forward quarterly progress updates will also be shared with all members after the Task Group meetings.
18. The reduction in meetings has followed engagement with the Community Hubs, Town and Parish Councils, some of which now have their own Climate Emergency groups.
19. The group have continued with the commitment to online meetings, saving carbon emissions by not requiring members to travel to the Civic Centre. Together with a commitment to go paper free for all meetings and encourage this across Council meetings.
20. Task group members have also been involved in key projects around the Climate Emergency agenda, including;
  - i. Investigating potential sites for rewilding, encouraging biodiversity
  - ii. Investigating the use and type of takeaway package with a view to encouraging more sustainable products
  - iii. A look at transportation and traffic routes
  - iv. Tree planting, as part of the committed 110,000 trees scheme (now complete and being extended this year), it included the 2021 / 2022 Queens Jubilee Green Canopy project of hedgerow planting with schools, with requests from schools and business already being received for this coming winter tree planting season)
21. Task Group members have also been involved in a number of regional and national promotional campaigns. These have included;
  - i. Attendance at the Lancashire Climate Summit.
  - ii. Signing the UK100 pledge to coincide with COP26
  - iii. Attendance at the UK100 annual update
  - iv. Guest speaker on Radio Lancashire to promote the work the council are doing on installing electric vehicle recharging points.
22. Guest speakers have also been invited to the task group meetings to improve the understanding and partnership working across the borough. These have included Progress Housing, Planners and the emerging Local Plan team, Energy4all an energy co-op facilitator.
23. A specific Climate Emergency logo has been developed in conjunction with the council's communications team to assist in the promotion of the Climate Emergency work.

24. Work is also underway to develop carbon literacy and biodiversity training for members and staff to ensure the council's net-zero ambitions are fully implemented across the Council.

### **Barriers and Challenggers**

25. Work has progressed steadily over the last year, but more is required to achieve the council's aim of being net-carbon neutral by 2030.
26. The new climate emergency engagement officer role is making excellent progress on involving schools and community groups but additional resources would allow even more contact to be made with schools and local businesses, particularly as work around Biodiversity increases. However, the engagement to date is showing improved knowledge within the community and responses have been received on the issues being addressed from school children and residents.
27. The Council has been successful in securing significant grant funding over the last year around the decarbonisation works being undertaken. The timescales for these grants is always ridiculously short and the amount of time and effort on these applications should be acknowledged, as should the ongoing commitment and resources required to provide monthly reporting on progress to the grant facilitators, in addition to internal governance reports.
28. Planning has been identified as a significant area impacting on the ability to achieve the net-zero goal and it is hoped the emerging local plan will provide strong and robust policy to allow robust decisions to be made. Input to individual planning applications are required relating to the Climate Emergency and Biodiversity agendas. The task group are also mindful that current rules around low carbon and renewable fuel development are very restrictive.

### **Equality and diversity**

29. There are no equality or diversity implications from this report.

### **Risk**

30. There are no addition risks associated with this report.

### **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

31. The report is for information only and there are no financial implications of the report. There are various funding streams capital and revenue to enable these projects which are reported through usual monitoring.

### **Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

32. The importance of the Climate Emergency & Air Quality Action Plans cannot be overstated. Clearly, we must do everything to implement that. This report is for information only, and there are no direct legal issues identified from the report.

### **Background documents**

Climate Emergency Declaration 2019

Climate Emergency Strategy 2021

Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021

Air Quality Action Plan 2018

Annual Status Report 2021

**Biodiversity Strategy 2022**

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Actions and Progress Update

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