



WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present West Lothian Council with the recommendations from the Cross-Party Climate Emergency Working Group.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that West Lothian Council:

1. notes the contents of the report, and;
2. agrees the recommendations and proposals put forward by the cross-party Climate Emergency Working Group which are set out in Appendix 2.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	<p>The council is legally bound to comply with duties for public sector bodies within the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The duties require that the council must, in exercising its functions, act:</p> <p>(a) in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of the targets set in or under Part 1 of the Act;</p> <p>(b) in the way best calculated to help deliver any programme laid before the Scottish Parliament under section 53;</p> <p>(c) in a way that it considers is most sustainable.</p> <p>National emissions reductions targets are set out in the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019</p> <p>SEA not required</p>
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.

IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	There are a number of performance indicators related to the council's carbon emissions and related factors.
V	Relevance to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan	Outcome 7 - We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities, and; Outcome 8 - We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Responding to the Climate Emergency could have significant resource implications. The council's budget and financial strategy, which was approved on 28 February, includes an £800,000 Climate Emergency Fund.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	The matter has not been considered by a PDSP but the recommendations set out a requirement for regular updates to the Environment PDSP.
VIII	Other consultations	None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

As part of the Climate Emergency Declaration approved on 24 September 2019, it was agreed that a Cross-Party Climate Emergency Working Group would be established. The agreed motion establishing the group is attached as Appendix 1.

The remit of the group was agreed at a meeting of Council Executive on 22 October 2019. The remit is to formulate a way forward which involves the wider public, business and other public bodies.

The group has met monthly since November 2019 to discuss some of the key issues relating to Climate Change and how the council and the wider West Lothian community can move towards a net-zero carbon future. The group has considered and discussed a number of reports and presentations on a range of subjects including transport, energy use in our buildings and options for the participation of young people in the consideration of the climate emergency.

D.2 Climate Emergency Declaration

The Climate Emergency Declaration noted a number of specific points and agreed a series of actions as follows. An update on each action is set out below.

PDSP Reporting

The motion noted that a number of reports were planned for Environment PDSP including a revised Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan. A revised strategy and associated reports will be prepared for consideration by PDSP but the timescale for this will be reviewed to ensure that full account of the agreed actions within the declaration, including the development of a set of performance indicators and format for quarterly reporting on progress incorporation within the revised strategy as per the details set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

Three specific reports to the Environment PDSP as follows:

- options for moving the council minibuss fleet to all electric or bio-diesel, including timescales and the potential investment required.
- Options for improving energy efficiency of the key council buildings, and the investment that would be required in order to significantly improve efficiency in each
- identifying the extent of the current electric car charging network in West Lothian, where the gaps are, and recommending the best strategy to ensure a “joined up” fast-charging network, with sufficient capacity for the growth in electric car usage, is installed in the county.

The anticipated timescale for reporting on each of these subject areas is set out in Appendix 2.

Follow on Seminar and Engagement with Young People

The agreed motion noted the on-going involvement of the Community Planning Partnership and noted the proposal to hold a further workshop. This follow up workshop took place on 7 October at Howden Park Centre and was attended by a number of stakeholders, including secondary school pupils who were active participants in the discussions held. Feedback from the workshop was very positive and the points raised on the day will feed in to the development of the new Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

Proposals for further engagement are set out in Appendix 2 including specific proposals for on-going engagement with young people.

Letter to the First Minister Seeking Additional Powers and Resources

The Chief Executive wrote to the First Minister on 2 October. A response was received from Roseanna Cunningham on 29 October. A copy of that response is attached as Appendix 3.

D3 Summary Recommendations and Proposals

A draft list of recommendations and proposals to address Climate Emergency is attached at Appendix 2. Central to the discussion at the group was setting a target date for our own emissions and the wider West Lothian community to be net-zero. There was a consensus in the group that the target could be no later than the national target of 2045. The group discussed if there should be a single target covering all of West Lothian or if the council should be more ambitious and set an earlier target for its own activities achieving net carbon zero.

The Climate Change Strategy will be the key driver for the council and the Community Planning Partnership and will set out how we will achieve net-zero carbon across all themes, including through the use of carbon offsetting. However, any target, while challenging, must be achievable and further work is required in order to inform any target for the council and / or West Lothian. The work will look at both the reduction of the council’s carbon production and also options to offset the impacts of the carbon which will continue to be produced as a result of the council’s activities in the short to medium term.

The strategy will be supported and underpinned by a new Carbon Management Plan which will be reviewed annually and refreshed every 5 years to ensure that progress is rigorously monitored and the trajectory towards net-zero is being maintained. If, in the development of the Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan it can be established that emissions from the council's activities can be net-zero carbon prior to 2045, this earlier target will be put to Council Executive for approval in due course.

Within the framework of a new Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan a significant number of ideas came forward from the group. These are set out in Appendix 2 and where indicated will be picked up as actions within the framework of the revised Climate Change Strategy. Reports will be presented to the relevant PDSP's with a quarterly update on progress to the Environment PDSP.

E. CONCLUSION

The recommendations being put forward by the Cross-Party Working Group will ensure that the council develops a clear and considered path to net-zero carbon, both for its own emissions and those of the wider West Lothian area.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments: Three

Appendix 1 – Agreed Motion

Appendix 2 - Summary of Recommendations & Proposals

Appendix 3 – Response from Scottish Government

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17 March 2020

Appendix 1 – Agreed Motion

Council notes the impacts of climate change highlighted in the Report on Global Warming published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in October 2018 and the devastation that an average rise of 2 degrees C in global temperatures is likely to cause.

Council recognises that the world is in the midst of a climate emergency which requires urgent and meaningful action at international, national and local level in order to safeguard our planet for future generations.

Council further agrees that having more environmentally progressive policies can lead to improved health, high quality jobs and more sustainable communities.

Council notes that West Lothian Council signed the Climate Change Declaration in 2007. Council further notes the significant work to date to make West Lothian a more environmentally friendly and sustainable place to live and work, and that the Council's agreed carbon reduction targets are already being exceeded.

Council recognises the climate emergency declared by the UK parliament and councils across the United Kingdom. Council declares a climate emergency and:

- Notes that reports are scheduled for the Environment PDSP on the revised Climate Change Strategy, Carbon Management Plan, UK Climate Change Plan, Local Climate Impact profile and the West Lothian Adaptation Plan

- Agrees that as part of the review of the reports noted above, due consideration be given to a) realistic targets to further reduce the carbon footprint with the aim of setting a net zero target b) how environmental considerations can be built into Council processes and procedures

- Agrees that proposals to the PDSP should include quarterly reports on progress against agreed indicators, partnership working and actions and achievements through the CPP, engagement and partnership with local businesses, third sector organisations and local communities

Instruct officers to:-

- Bring a report to the relevant PDSPs detailing what it would take to move the council minibus fleet to all electric or bio-diesel, including timescales and potential investment required.

- Bring a report to the relevant PDSPs identifying the energy efficiency of the key council buildings, and what investment would be required in order to significantly improve building efficiency in each, noting this could be achieved by energy efficiency investment in green energy generation.

- Bring a report to the relevant PDSPs identifying the extent of the current electric car charging network in West Lothian, where the gaps are, and recommend the best strategy to ensure a "joined up" fast-charging network, with sufficient capacity for the growth in electric car usage, is installed in the county. This should include the actions West Lothian Council can take, and the asks of the Scottish Government and other bodies.

- Notes the partnership approach being taken through the Community Planning Partnership and agrees with the CPP Board's decision on 2 September 2019 that a follow on seminar/conference is organised by council officers in conjunction with community planning partners

- Instructs officers to engage with the young people of West Lothian to ensure they are represented and given the opportunity to participate in the seminar/conference noted above

- Agrees that a short-term cross-party group (2 SNP, 2 Labour and 2 Conservative) is established to formulate a way forward which involves the wider public (Citizens Panel), business and other public bodies to report back to council in 3 months with proposals, which would include the cost implications of such action and the initiative to be community led
- Instructs the Chief Executive to write to the First Minister to seek sufficient resources and new powers for local authorities to enable local government to play a full role and to meet its obligations in tackling the climate emergency.

Appendix 2: Summary of recommendations & Proposals

Strategic Framework

Action	Description	Complete By
Agree a target date for West Lothian to be net-zero carbon	Achieving net-zero emissions by 2045 is in line with national targets set out in the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions) (Scotland) Bill. Interim targets should also be in line with those in the Bill.	2045
Development of new Climate Change Strategy	High level strategy setting the direction and targets for the council, Community Planning Partnership and wider West Lothian Area. Clear objective of net-zero carbon by 2045 at the latest. The strategy will be supported and underpinned by the Carbon Management Plan, Adaptation Action Plan and Communication Strategy.	March 2021
Development of new Carbon Management Plan	Detailed project register to assess impacts (both positive and negative) on carbon emissions. Refreshed every 5 years and reviewed annually.	March 2021
Review and publish Adaptation Action Plan	The Adaptation Action Plan sets out how the council will respond and adapt to the already changing climate now and in the future.	March 2021
Development of Climate Change Communication Strategy	The Communication Strategy will set out how we will communicate a clear and consistent message on Climate Change and improve engagement with members of the public, partners and the business sector.	March 2021
Review of strategies, policies and governance	Ensure that any review of existing council strategies, policies and the governance associated with delivery has regard to the climate emergency.	Ongoing

Reporting

Action	Description	Complete by
Identification of most appropriate method of including climate change considerations in committee reports	Review of existing templates including committee report, integrated impact assessment and strategic outline business case to establish best method of ensuring climate change is considered in the development of policies, plans and strategies.	September 2020

Development of targets, performance indicators and format for quarterly reporting to Environment PDSP	Targets, performance indicators and reporting format will be included within the revised Climate Change Strategy.	March 2021
Report to PDSP on climate change issues and actions identified by service areas	Review of climate change issues and actions identified by each service area across the council. Key themes will be included within the Climate Change Strategy and/or Carbon Management Plan.	June 2020
Report to PDSP on de-carbonising the council's vehicle fleet	Options for decarbonisation of the council's vehicle fleet, including timescales and estimated costs.	October 2020
Report to PDSP on improving the energy efficiency of council buildings	Options for decarbonising existing and future non-domestic buildings, including the use of renewable technologies where appropriate. Report to include timescales and estimated costs.	October 2020
Report to PDSP on waste and recycling	Report to include zero waste to landfill progress and future emissions projections. Report to include timescales and estimated costs.	<i>October 2020</i>
Report to PDSP on the integration of net zero carbon targets in Housing Strategy	Options for decarbonising existing and future housing stock, including the use of renewable technologies where appropriate. Report to include timescales and estimated costs.	<i>October 2020</i>
Report to PDSP and Council Executive on a plan to develop EV charging infrastructure across West Lothian	Review of existing charging infrastructure and options for increasing and enhancing charging network.	June 2020
Report to PDSP on Carbon Offsetting requirements	Carbon offsetting will be critical in achieving net-zero carbon. Report to review offsetting options, timescales and costs.	October 2020
Report to PDSP on Youth Engagement	Report on engagement with young people of West Lothian, including consideration of using ISM model and links with Scottish Youth Parliament.	June 2020
Report to PDSP on the contribution of Procurement in achieving the net-zero carbon target	Review of Sustainable Procurement Duty; consideration as to how climate change can be incorporated into the Procurement Strategy, and; how specifications and tender scoring can take account of carbon/climate change impacts	October 2020

Report to PDSP on the role of Planning in tackling Climate Change	How Planning policy & guidance can help tackle climate change mitigation and adaptation	October 2020
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Training

Develop and deliver Climate Change training for elected members	Consider options for delivery of climate change training for all elected members.	September 2020
Refresh existing training for council staff including induction.	Review of existing training provided to West Lothian Council staff. Consideration of mandatory climate change training.	September 2020