

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



## **ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL**

### **CLIMATE EMERGENCY UPDATE, REPORTING & TIMESCALES**

#### **REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to update the panel on progress made in the response to the Climate Emergency and to present proposals for revised reporting timescales.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Note the contents of this report and appendix;
2. Considers whether the revised reporting timescales are appropriate in the current and post-covid environment, and;
3. Note that the revised timescales as suggested in the report and Appendix 1 will be presented to Council Executive for approval.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I</b>	<b>Council Values</b>	Being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
<b>II</b>	<b>Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	Specific risk assessments and method statements covering the works will be agreed before they commence.
<b>III</b>	<b>Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None
<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	A number of new performance indicators will be developed in order to monitor progress in achieving new climate change targets.
<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	Outcome 8 - We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.

<b>VI</b>	<b>Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	Officers from across the council will be involved in the preparation of reports.
<b>VII</b>	<b>Consideration at PDSP</b>	This is the first time the PDSP has considered this matter.
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Other consultations</b>	Climate Change & Sustainability Working Group.

## **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D.1 Background**

A motion to declare a Climate Emergency was agreed at a meeting of West Lothian Council on 24 September 2019. As part of the agreed motion a short term, cross-party working group was established. The remit of the group, to formulate a way forward which involved the wider public, business and other public bodies, was agreed at a meeting of Council Executive on 22 October 2019.

The Working Group reported back to Council on 17 March 2020 with an update on progress and a set of recommendations and proposals, including a range of reports that would be used in the development of a new Climate Change Strategy in 2021. The recommendations and actions are attached as Appendix 1.

These recommendations and actions were agreed in the period before the first COVID-19 lockdown. Since that time there have been many changes to normal life and there have been significant environmental changes as a result. Some of these changes have been positive and some have been negative. But all were unanticipated. At this point in time it is not clear if some or all of these changes will be temporary or permanent.

The Scottish Government was due to publish a revised Climate Change Plan in April 2020 which would set out the priorities and direction of travel to achieve the ambitious new targets set out in the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) Act 2019. However, publication of the plan was significantly delayed, and it was not published until December.

### **D.2 Current Position**

Some of the timescales set out in the agreed recommendations and actions have, unfortunately, already slipped. This is the combined result of officers being involved in other priority tasks and also PDSPs not meeting. However, notwithstanding, significant progress continues to be made with project delivery and reducing the council's emissions.

The annual Climate Change Declaration Report for 2019/20 was presented to Council Executive for approval on 17 November. The report highlighted the significant work that the council has taken forward to reduce its emissions and adapt to the changing climate. In 2019/20, our emissions were 36,635 tonnes, down 5,807 tonnes (13.7%) on the previous year and 24,426 tonnes (40%) from our current baseline year of 2013/14.

In addition, and despite the challenges and constraints faced due to the COVID-19, officers have continued to take forward work in response to the climate emergency. Examples of initiatives that have been progressed in 2020 include:

- Developing a detailed proposal Solar PV and EV charging project at West Lothian Civic Centre.
- Working in partnership with Greenspace Scotland to take forward their Green Heat from Greenspaces initiative.
- Working with the Energy Saving Trust to develop a feasibility study for a future *Switched on Towns and Cities* bid, focusing on forecasting future EV uptake and charging infrastructure requirements to 2025.
- Investigating options for the delivery of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan and a study into the council's existing land assets and their potential contribution to carbon sequestration.

Progress also continues to be made on each of the recommendations on the Climate Emergency Working Group but it is not going to be possible to meet all of the timescales set out.

### **D.3 Approach & Reporting**

The approach recommended by the Climate Emergency Working Group included the preparation of a number of reports which were to be submitted to PDSP, as set out in Appendix 1. The content of these reports would then form part of the development process for a new Climate Change Strategy, Carbon Management Plan and associated documents. A number of these reports were due to be presented between June and October last year but that was not possible for the reasons set out above. However, it is proposed that these now be progressed in the timescales set out in Appendix 1. The publication of the new strategy is planned to coincide with the COP26 conference being held in Glasgow in November which will bring a global focus to Scotland and the work being done to combat climate change.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Work to respond to the Climate Emergency has continued across the council during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic and the response to it has had an impact on delivery timescales at a local and national level, with delays to key documents such as the Scottish Government's revised Climate Change Plan.

The wide ranging impacts of COVID-19 could not have been foreseen when the working group was developing its proposals and recommendations, and it is now proposed that the timescales for reporting and for development of the new strategy and associated documents are revised.

Doing so will give officers the opportunity to ensure that they are fully relevant to a post-COVID-19 environment and take into account emerging areas of work including the Green Economic Recovery and any other corporate priorities.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

None

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1 – Working Group Recommendations & Proposals

Contact Person: Peter Rogers, Energy & Climate Change Manager  
Tel: 01506 281107  
Email: [peter.rogers@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:peter.rogers@westlothian.gov.uk)

**Craig McCorriston**  
**Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration**

2 February 2021

## Appendix 1 – Working Group Recommendations & Proposals

### Strategic Framework

Action	Description	Original Completion Target	Proposed Completion Date
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	2045 although there remains the possibility for a council specify target earlier than 2045.  Lead officer: Craig McCorriston
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	November 2021  Lead officer: Peter Rogers
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	November 2021  Lead officer: Peter Rogers
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	November 2021  Lead officer: Peter Rogers
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	March 2021  Lead officer: Garry Heron

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	All Heads of Service
---	--	---------	----------------------

### Reporting

Action	Description	Original Completion Target	Proposed Completion Date	Responsible Officer
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	March 2021	Craig McCorriston in consultation with the Governance Manager
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	December 2021 But with quarterly updates on current performance in advance of that.	Peter Rogers but with input from Heads of Service
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	March 2021	Peter Rogers but with input from Heads of Service
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	February 2021	Jim Jack
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	October 2020	February 2021	Peter Rogers

	appropriate. Report to include timescales and estimated costs.			
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.	October 2020	February 2021	Jim Jack
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.	October 2020	February 2021	AnnMarie Carr
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	February 2021	Peter Rogers
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	February 2021	Peter Rogers
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	February 2021	Joanna Anderson
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	February 2021	Angela Gray
Report to PDSP on the role of Planning in tackling Climate Change	How Planning policy & guidance can help tackle climate change mitigation and	October 2020	February 2021	Jim McGinley

	adaptation			
--	------------	--	--	--