

# Allerdale Borough Council

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22 April 2022

### Climate Change Action Plan update

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<b>Portfolio holder</b>	Councillor Marion Fitzgerald - Policy, Governance and People Resources Portfolio
<b>Report from</b>	Climate Change Advisory Group - Cllr Sally Lansbury, Chair
<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Is this a key decision</b>	No

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#### **1.0 The reason for the decision**

- 1.1 The Climate Change Action Plan as agreed by Executive on 21 April 2021 has now been updated.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress being made and the updates proposed to the Action Plan.

#### **3.0 Background and Introduction**

- 3.1 At its 4 March 2020 meeting Council agreed that a Climate Change Group be established to further develop the Council's Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) and work on its implementation. It was agreed that the Climate Change Group would have responsibility for publishing an annual progress report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and that any future updates should be approved by Executive.
- 3.2 The Group sits within the work area of Policy, Performance and Economic Development Strategy and receives administrative support from advisers within this unit. The Portfolio Holder is Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr Marion Fitzgerald (Conservative) and the group is Chaired by Cllr Sally Lansbury (Labour). The group currently has six members.
- 3.3 The CCAP is presented annually to Executive and to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.4 The CCAP is structured to shadow the Local Government Association (LGA) and Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) programme areas:

- Economy Skills and Infrastructure
- Refitting Homes and Buildings
- Decarbonisation of Transport
- Planning to develop Zero Carbon development
- Reducing Waste and encouraging sustainable consumption
- Restoring nature for all and improving biodiversity (also referred to as LULUCF)
- Funding, Governance and Accounting

3.5 The Climate Change Advisory Group has a small budget to support its work. To date £10.9k has been allocated (in partnership with Cumbria Action for Sustainability) to support community group projects with their carbon reduction ambitions and around £4,000 to training of officers and elected members in Climate Science and Solutions (around 60 people to date). The training courses have been well received by both officers and members and more sessions are planned to take place in the next financial year.

#### **4.0 Progress, key achievements and areas for improvement**

4.1 The Group has achieved the immediate priorities established at Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2021. These and other areas of progress include:

- Continuous improvements to Allerdale Borough Council website. The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan have been published for some time. There are regular updates on waste and recycling – most recently the updates to bulky waste advice and waste advice promotions that link in with the Recycle Cumbria campaigns.
- Establishing a regular schedule of meetings with internal and external stakeholders – Cumbria Green Investment Plan, Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS), Parks and Open Spaces Officer, Planning Team, Waste Team, Procurement Team, REBUILD initiative, Sustainable Keswick and Climate Emergency West Cumbria groups;
- Establishing a prioritised activity programme, split into work areas that link to the ADEPT and LGA framework;
- Regular presentations from external stakeholders and meetings of this cross party group to ensure that the work programme is delivered;
- Climate Literacy Training – delivered to around 60 officers and members, this has had an impact on individuals and teams;
- Work by the procurement team, in particular, following the climate literacy training to further embed climate considerations into the Council's policy and procedures around procurement including training to support officers;
- Work with CAfS to develop a grants scheme for Allerdale community groups seeking to reduce their energy emissions and make environmental improvements;

- We have a communications strategy supported by the Communications team and an environmental newsletter with 3000+ subscribers.
- We have prepared robust consultation responses for:
  - Transport For the North Decarbonisation Strategy
  - Cumbria Transport Infrastructure Plan
  - Community Resilience Strategy
  - Cumbria Green Investment Plan
  - Workington Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Tree planting and meadow creation in our communities is moving on a pace and we will continue to influence that through our parish councils and community groups;
- We have created communications networks with Electricity North West (ENW), Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP), Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership (ZCCP), CAFS, town and parish councils and community groups.

4.2 The Council is top of the league of Cumbrian local authorities in terms of the information available to the public regarding its Climate Change Action Plan. (Source: Climate Emergency UK, January 2022). This achievement was reported widely in local and national media – we see this assessment as a good result – and an opportunity for further improvement.

4.3 The Group has also identified a number of areas for improvement:

- Whilst our engagement with community groups and parish councils is good, there are some gaps - we have not fully achieved our aims of engaging with schools or the farming community, although our partner organisation ZCCP is now starting to develop these links.
- Engagement with many Council officers is strong, however, not everyone is involved and engaged at the same level – climate change action should run through all department's policy, strategy and activity if we are to achieve our targets. It is positive that climate change considerations appear at the heart of the local government reorganisation programme as a cross cutting theme.
- Communication of the work programme could be improved – we intend to bolster our messages through further bulletins from the Communications team.
- Pathways need to be found, in order to address the climate impacts of corporate finance, investments, governance and accounting. This may involve reviewing where funds are held, but also municipal bonds and support for Community Interest Companies as a means of raising finance for new industry and projects that reduce emissions and wasted energy.

## **5.0 Opportunities and priorities for 2022/23**

- 5.1 From May onwards, we will be holding focus groups in each of the work areas – this will involve members, officers and external stakeholders.
- 5.2 We will work with the ZCCP Local Authority Coordinating Officer, with Copeland Borough Council, Carlisle City Council and Cumbria County Council to align targets for 2023 and beyond in order that the new authority has a clear strategy moving forward.

- 5.3 We will focus on steering the Shadow Authority towards banking and insurance companies that invest only in Climate Positive funds; committing to contracting only with renewable energy suppliers and ensuring that all strategy and policy documents and HR specifications, include targets relating to Cumberland's targets to Net Zero by 2037.
- 5.4 We will support our planning and procurement teams to ensure they have portfolio holder and SMT support in introducing new policies and guidelines.
- 5.5 We will continue to work with partners including ENW, Rural Community Energy Fund, the Energy Hub and partners such as Charge my Street on decarbonisation of transport – both at ground level regarding adoption of an Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy and at a higher level on the potential for hydrogen production and the future decarbonisation of the M6 corridor.
- 5.6 We will explore opportunities to take action on decarbonisation of council buildings and operations.
- 5.7 There will be continued improvements to website information on energy and residual waste via the ABC website and ancillary communications.
- 5.8 There will be continuing support for community groups to develop their own projects through the Community Climate Grants Scheme, in partnership with CAFS.
- 5.9 The Group also intend to work with our farming community to ensure opportunities for Agri Forestry, Agri Volataics, Regenerative farming methods are developed. With new legislation and changed subsidies – there are climate positive actions that the farming community now have the opportunity to explore.

### **Constraints**

- 5.10 The Group recognise that there is further work to do on our communication and engagement in some areas. The disturbing effects of Covid-19 on members personal and work lives along with the uncertainties of Local Government Reorganisation, internal re-organisation and home working brought challenges in policy and project development. We expect this to improve now that things are settling back to a more steady state.
- 5.11 The Climate Change Advisory group represents a new type of member working/advisory group for the council. This has presented some challenges in terms of reporting lines as the group reports to Executive through the portfolio holder rather than to Council. The commitment of all members of the group, including the portfolio holder has meant that these challenges have not proved insurmountable, however, the shape and role of any member working group in the future is something that the new unitary authority may want to consider.

### **6.0 Key updates to the Allerdale Borough Council Climate Change Action Plan**

- 6.1 Some updates have been made to the CCAP. In the main these are updates to the narrative sections of the CCAP, some minor changes have also been made to the actions to mark a few activities as complete and show the progress being made in other areas. In updating the CCAP the Climate Change Advisory Group have:

- included updated information from the IPCC and the recommendations from COP 26;
- reviewed the assessment from Climate Emergency UK and feedback from members, stakeholders and officers and edited some narrative within the document in line with new science and vocabulary;
- reviewed the action plans from other Cumbria local authorities;
- introduced a co-benefits section linking to example scenarios;
- considered the recommendations of the Copeland and Kendal Citizens Panels;
- added an additional appendix to show linkages across key council policies and strategies which incorporate climate positive action and the route to net zero emissions for Cumbria.

## **7.0 Delivery arrangements**

- 7.1 The Climate Change Advisory Group will oversee the implementation of the plan by working with officers and through sub-groups consisting of councillors in the group around each theme focusing on the detailed delivery.
- 7.2 Direct responsibility for delivery will be with the specific services.
- 7.3 The Climate Change Advisory Group is clear that the Council can only be responsible for its own actions and activities and all other aspects will need to be achieved through influence and partnership.

## **8.0 Implications and Impact**

### **8.1 Contribution to Council Strategy Priorities, Outputs and Outcomes**

The action plan contributes directly to the Council Strategy. The action plan links strongly to the 'Cleaner, Greener Allerdale' theme within the Council Strategy, but also links to the Resilient Communities and Thriving Towns and Villages themes. More broadly the action plan also strongly supports the Cumbria Joint Public Health Strategy.

### **8.2 Finance/Resource implications**

While there are cost implications within the plan, these are fundamentally around shifts in 'business as usual' approaches.

Specific projects will be individually costed once developed. Any proposals emerging from action planning that would require additional resources will be subject to the usual Council decision making processes.

Central government has a series of programmes to support local authorities to address the implementation of changes needed to meet its targets. It is likely that the Council will need to develop its preparedness to access these funds over the coming months.

### **8.3 Legal and governance implications**

There are no legal or governance implications directly associated with this report. Government legislation and support to develop solutions to meet legislative requirements continue to be created and issued.

#### 8.4 Risk analysis

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Controls required</b>	<b>Mitigated score</b>
The Council does not achieve the aims of the plan.	Loss of public and government confidence in the Council.	Regular monitoring as part of the internal performance management process. Annual assessment of progress made available to stakeholders.	Low

#### 8.5 Increasing satisfaction and service

The overall subject of climate change currently has a national and international prominence and there is clearly a strong interest locally from a number of groups and individuals in the activities the Council will pursue to achieve its goals.

#### 8.6 Equality impacts

The Action Plan and the process of its development sought to involve a range of interested parties, and the comments received from the public include some which are more concerned to ensure specific groups are included in the Council's intended actions, for example bus users, young people, cyclists, and tourists. Equality impacts are considered in the development of individual projects and programmes.

#### 8.7 Health and Safety impacts

There are no health and safety implications directly associated with this report.

#### 8.8 Health, wellbeing and community safety impacts

Achieving the ambitions of the action plan is intended to have long term positive benefits for all.

#### 8.9 Environmental/sustainability impacts

Achieving the ambitions of the action plan will have long term positive benefits for sustainability and the environment.

#### 8.10 Other significant implications

Achieving the ambitions of the action plan will contribute to achievement of the government targets and Sustainable Development Goals.

#### Appendices attached to this report

<b>Appendix number</b>	<b>Title of appendix</b>
Appendix A	Allerdale Borough Council Climate Change Action Plan March 2022 update

## Background documents available

Name of background document	Where it is available

### Report author(s) and contact officer(s):

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