

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DECISION

meeting date: THURSDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2023
title: CLIMATE CHANGE
submitted by: ADAM ALLEN, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Committee with a position statement regarding the Council's Carbon Emissions and to suggest priority areas of work and terms of reference for a Climate Change Working Group. The report will be accompanied by a presentation at Committee.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives -
 - Corporate Priorities -
 - Other Considerations -
- The Corporate Strategy 2019-2023 includes the objective '*To aspire to be a carbon neutral borough by 2030*', which is based on a better understanding of our current carbon emissions'. The RVBC Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030 was adopted as a live document in September 2021. The Climate Change Working Group monitors and updates a suggested action plan on how the Council intends to reach the target of being carbon neutral by 2030.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 sets out emission reduction targets that the UK must comply with.. The Act committed the UK to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent by 2050, compared to 1990 levels. However, this target was made more ambitious in May 2019 when the UK Parliament declared a 'Climate Change Emergency' and in December 2020, it was declared that the UK would set a target of a 68% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2030, and 100% by 2050, becoming the first major economy to commit to a 'net zero' target.

2.2 Local Government has a vital role to play in achieving this target and in September 2021, the Ribble Valley Council (RVBC) Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030 was adopted by Policy and Finance Committee. The associated action plan was always intended as a live document that would be regularly reviewed and updated. The Council's ambition remains to become carbon neutral by 2030. It is the role of the Climate Change Working Group to review the plan in agreement with Economic Development Committee and to ensure that the action plan is implemented effectively.

2.3 It is essential that the Council regularly measures its Carbon Emissions, and this is done annually through One Carbon World (OCW). A detailed summary of our emissions and how these compare with others is shown in Appendix 2. However, it can be summarised that the Council has reduced emissions from 1,660 tonnes per year in 2020/21 to 1,515 tonnes per year in 2022/23. Over 43% of these emissions come from diesel fuel used in our vehicles, with a further 44% coming from electricity (16%) and gas (28%).

3. THE CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP AND PRORITY AREAS OF WORK

3.1 It is suggested that the strategy and action plan be delivered in two distinct stages. The first stage will be to focus on ensuring that the Council minimises its own impact on climate change wherever possible through a range of initiatives. It is therefore recommended that the overall aim of the Climate Change Strategy be reworded to state

that we will work towards a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030 rather than the present wording of working towards a Carbon Neutral Borough. It is proposed that working towards a Carbon Neutral Council and reducing the carbon emissions of the Council will be the priority of the working group for the coming twelve months.

- 3.2 The second stage will be to engage businesses and the wider community in reducing the borough's carbon emissions. It is proposed the working group develop plans for how this can be achieved, once stage one is nearing completion.

STAGE ONE – WORKING TOWARDS A CARBON NEUTRAL COUNCIL

- 3.3 Many schemes to reduce the Council's Carbon Emissions have been agreed and funding allocated. It is suggested that the working group focus on overseeing the completion of these schemes to ensure that tangible outcomes are achieved in the coming year.

- 3.4 It should be noted that Carbon Reduction is a cross cutting issue and as such it falls in the remit of different committees. This in most cases will be the Policy and Finance Committee and the Community Services Committee. The working group will have oversight of all schemes and report to the Economic Development Committee, however approval for funding the schemes will need to go to Policy and Finance Committee.

- 3.5 This section summarises the proposed areas of work for the working group:

- 3.5.1 Overseeing the refresh of the Climate Change Strategy and action plan based on the 2023 Peoples Survey – Life in Ribble Valley and based on the recommendations from the One Carbon World Report (Appendix 2).

- 3.5.2 The installation of solar panels at Council Offices

In March 2023, Policy and Finance Committee agreed that an invest to save scheme be developed to add solar panels to the council office buildings. Agreement has now been granted by Electricity Northwest to connect solar panels to the electrical grid. A company is now in the process of final design for the panels. Whilst Policy and Finance Committee have agreed to this scheme in principle, a further report is still needed on options before a budget can be considered for approval.

- 3.5.3 The installation of Electrical Vehicle Chargers on rural car parks and at Longridge and Edisford.

In September 2023, Policy and Finance Committee agreed that £50k of the Rural Prosperity Funding for 2023/24 could be used to install electrical vehicles chargers in five of our village car parks. An independent report has been completed providing possible locations and confirming electrical supplies can be accessed. We are now putting together a tender for the works to ensure that the Council gets the best possible return from any investment. Funding is being sought from the Shared Prosperity Fund for further charging points at Edisford and Longridge.

- 3.5.4 The feasibility of rolling out Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) to all refuse vehicles.

In March 2023, Community Services Committee allocated £15k funding to pilot the use of HVO in our refuse fleet. A tank has been installed at Salthill depot and HVO is now being used in certain vehicles including some of our small vans and next year some of grounds maintenance equipment. The use of HVO can reduce Carbon emissions by approximately 80 percent and is likely to have the biggest impact of any one scheme. HVO is however more expensive than diesel and a clear business case will need to be prepared following the pilot in order for members to assess the benefits against the increased cost.

- 3.5.5 Upgrading all Council Office lighting to LED.

In February 2023, Policy and Finance Committee agreed capital funding of £97.75k for the upgrade of the electrical systems and further installation of LED lighting in Council offices. This scheme will ensure that all lighting used in Council Offices is energy efficient and is controlled effectively. A detailed survey and specification will be completed this financial year, together with a phasing programme for the physical works to be completed in the financial year 2024/25. The survey additionally needs to establish whether the proposed solar panel works will affect the specification.

3.5.6 Launching a recycling campaign.

The collection and disposal of both domestic and commercial waste has a significant impact on the environment due to the high use of fossil fuels used in collection but also through the impact of landfill and the treatment of waste. Ribble Valley does not compare favourably with other Lancashire Districts in terms of recycling, coming seventh lowest out of twelve. Lancashire also has very low recycling rates generally, and as a consequence Ribble Valley does not compare well nationally either, coming 136th out of 174 districts. It is proposed that the climate change working group work in collaboration with the officer waste strategy group to better promote recycling and encourage residents to recycle and separate their waste correctly. It is hoped at this stage that any promotional work will be accommodated within existing budgets.

3.5.7 Launching a “Good Housekeeping” initiative for staff to reduce energy and waste.

A low cost/no cost initiative to further reduce our carbon emissions is to promote good practice in the efficient use of energy in all aspects of our work. An awareness and monitoring campaign will be developed which will also look at the possible use of electric pool cars and other sustainable transport options for staff such as an e-bike / bike to work scheme. No budgets have been approved for this work.

3.6 The working group does not have any delegated decision-making powers and therefore any funding requests will be presented to Policy and Finance Committee for decision, after any proposals have first been considered by the relevant service committees. Oversight reports will be presented to Economic Development Committee on at least a quarterly basis or more frequently if a decision is required.

3.7 The suggested terms of reference for the working group are attached as Appendix 1 for the Committee’s consideration.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – There is no specific ringfenced budget for the Climate Change programme however, budgets are in place for a variety of revenue and capital scheme initiatives that have already been considered and approved. Reports and feasibility studies with costings for any further initiatives will be taken to relevant committees for discussion and consideration. If approved at service committee level, budget approval will then be considered by Policy and Finance Committee prior to any schemes being progressed further.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – This report sets out initiatives that will have a tangible impact on reducing the Council’s Carbon emissions.
- Political – None identified.
- Reputation – It is important that the Council is seen as a leader in the community regarding achieving net zero.
- Equality and Diversity – For all RVBC Policies and Strategies and in line with the Council’s approach to equalities, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) checklist will be completed to determine whether a full EIA is required. This will identify the potential impact of the organisation’s policies, services and functions on its

residents and staff, and will actively look for negative or adverse impacts of policies, services, and functions on any of the nine protected characteristics.

5. RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Committee to consider the information provided within this report and the accompanying PowerPoint presentation.

5.2 Approve the establishment of a Climate Change Working Group and the adoption of the attached draft Terms of Reference (ToR) (Appendix 1).

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Draft Climate Change Working Group Terms of Reference

1. Following the May 2023 Elections, the Climate Change Working Group has been transferred from the remit of the Policy and Finance Committee to the Economic Development Committee.
2. The working group has been constituted by the Economic Development Committee at its meeting held on the 28 September 2023 to consider how the Council is meeting the challenge of Climate Change.
3. The Terms of Reference as agreed by the Economic Development Committee are outlined to the working group as follows:

The purpose of the group is to consider in further detail the challenge of climate change both in relation to how the Council provides its own services and how it provides wider support to the community in their efforts to tackle climate change and to present the findings to Economic Development Committee with suggested actions.

4. This statement allows for consideration of where the Council is now although it doesn't make any reference to the Corporate Strategy.
5. Nominated Members of the group are Councillors, Stephen Atkinson, Louise Edge, Aaron Wilkins-Odudu, Stewart Fletcher, Gaye McCrum.
6. The group will meet as necessary.
7. Four nominated Councillors of the working group need to be present to be quorate.
8. The working group does not have any delegated decision-making powers. However, the working group should be able to make specific recommendations to Economic Development Committee.
9. The working group will consult with the relevant Chairs of other service committees as appropriate.