

Subject:	Climate Change Strategy		Status:	For Publication	
Report to:	Council		Date:	5 October 2022	
Report of:	Public Protection Manager		Lead member:	Environment and Corporate Services	
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Forward Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes/No	Attached:	Yes/No	
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes/No	Attached:	Yes/No	
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That Council note the progress in year two of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
- 1.2 That Council agree the priority actions for the coming year.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Council is requested to note the strong progress over the last year including;
 - Climate Change Officer appointed in October 2021
 - Partnership working developed to ensure effective delivery of priority actions
 - Establish Climate Change Network to increase community involvement
 - Significant progress being made to reduce the Council’s Carbon Footprint
 - 10% reduction in the Council’s carbon emissions since launch of action plan
 - Substantial further reductions anticipated in next year
 - Supported the development of a Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document, currently out for consultation
 - Continued development of further carbon reduction schemes including heating, lighting and improved insulation of council owned buildings
 - Conversion of all operational vehicles to Hydro Vegetable Oil
 - Conversion of Mayoral and pool cars to fully electric vehicles
 - Successful first Climate Change Conference held
 - Establishment of Business and Community Grants Scheme
 - Continued excellent progression of the Rossendale Forest project with over 8000 trees planted in first year
 - Two hundred volunteers signed up to support Rossendale Forest planting events

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In September 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency and committed to take action locally through a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

3.2 The strategy and action plan were agreed in July 2020 and work has progressed on a number of priority actions over the past 2 years.

4. DETAILS

4.1 The first two years of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan have seen progress in a number of areas.

4.2 Year 1 showed significant progress in the establishment of a Climate Emergency Network, the installation of a number of Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points, the completion of a carbon audit for all council owned buildings and the first plantings of the Rossendale Forest.

4.3 Detailed progress in all these areas was contained in the first annual report to Council in July 2021.

4.4 CURRENT COUNCIL CARBON EMISSIONS

4.5 Measuring our carbon footprint is vital to the success of the strategy and following on from the initial work done by One Carbon World to identify a baseline figure for all Council functions, further analysis of the Council's Co2 emissions was completed in August 2022.

4.6 This showed that our Co2 emissions fell from 2,054.20t Co2e in 2020 to 1,859.60t Co2e in 2021 – a 10% reduction in the Council's carbon footprint.

4.7 This can be attributed to a number of factors including, increased awareness of staff in reducing our carbon footprint, a move to purchasing electricity from renewable sources and a move away from diesel to Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil in our refuse vehicles.

4.8 These changes are expected to have a much greater impact during this coming year.

4.9 PROGRESS IN YEAR 2 OF THE STRATEGY

4.10 Priorities for year 2 were agreed as part of last year's annual, progress against each priority area is detailed below:

4.11 Initiate a programme of carbon reduction schemes across the council based on the One Carbon World audit:

- The Council's electricity supply has been converted onto renewable energy for our half-hourly contracts, (meaning that real time data is collected every 30 minutes and in use in our main council owned building). This is estimated to reduce CO2 by around 74% this year for these buildings (based on consumption from the previous year).
- These make up 54% of our total consumption of electricity, and the remaining 46% are non-half-hourly, which will be moved to a renewable energy contract when their contracts are due for renewal in October. Replacement of all light bulbs at Futures Park with LED bulbs is planned and will again see a saving in both carbon and energy costs.
- The biggest impact in our carbon reduction is the conversion of the whole of the operational fleet to Hydro Vegetable Oil (HVO) from conventional diesel. This was completed in February 2022 and the major impact will be seen over the coming year.

Forty-nine council owned vehicles are now powered by HVO and this should see a reduction in emissions of approximately 80%.

- To underpin and provide a framework to support the carbon reduction schemes, a sub strategy focusing on reducing carbon in council owned buildings has been produced.

4.12 Launching a business carbon reduction grant scheme in association with the Chamber of Commerce.

- This scheme was launched at special business breakfast as part of our Climate Change Conference in November 2021.
- The scheme offers fifty percent funding towards carbon reduction schemes up to a maximum of 5k.
- Three applications have been approved to date with a number still pending. The schemes approved have been a number of schemes including conversion to LED lighting and installation of solar panels.
- The grant scheme is currently under review to see how it can be made easier to access for businesses.
- It is expected that next year applications will increase as the programme becomes more established.

4.13 Launching a Community Carbon Reduction grant scheme –

- This scheme was also launched at the Climate Change Conference and it provides 100% funding towards carbon reduction schemes for community groups.
- Four community groups have benefited to date, funding schemes for replacement double glazing and infrared heating systems. Further applications are pending. This scheme is also being reviewed to seek improvements in its delivery.

4.14 Project under both the community and business grants scheme will lead to an estimated emissions reduction of circa 13t CO₂e (equivalent of taking 2.8 cars off the road for a year).

4.15 The total of grants paid to date is £29,537.25, with a number of further grant applications pending approval.

4.16 Review Council planning guidelines to promote sustainability

- A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) covering climate change has been produced and a draft version was published for consultation between 13th July and 24th August. . The document sets out the Council's expectations regarding future developments in minimising carbon emissions and sustainability.
- The Climate Change SPD covers four key principles, these are:
 - Reducing the dominance of fossil fuelled vehicles via encouraging sustainable and more active transport
 - Improving energy efficiency and promoting renewables in the Borough
 - Water interventions

- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
- Twenty one responses to the consultation were received from a mix of residents, developers and statutory consultees. Comments concerned a number of topics including wind turbines and deep peat extraction.
- The final SDP is expected to go to Cabinet for approval in December 2022 ensuring that carbon efficient designs are adopted by developers.

4.17 Work with local Housing Associations and private landlords –

- Work continues with residential social landlords, in particular Together Housing, to upgrade all their properties to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) A rating.
- Major changes to minimum energy standards for rented properties come into effect from 2025. This will shift from an E rating to a C rating as a minimum requirement and will be mandatory for all tenanted properties. This first changes in 2025 will apply to new tenancies, followed by all tenancies from 2028.
- To support this, we are working with private sector property owners across the borough to ensure their properties will meet the new requirements.
- This includes targeted training sessions covering a range of housing related issues and in particular the minimum energy standards and improving insulation.

4.18 Launch a major recycling initiative and a non-recyclable plastic reduction campaign.

4.19 In March 2022, Council agreed a Single Use Plastics Strategy for Rossendale. This strategy aims to make Rossendale a plastic free community by 2025. The actions relating to the Council have been completed and we are now engaging community members to progress community elements of the strategy.

4.20 Examples of the work undertaken by the Council, include:

- An audit of the Council’s use of Single Use Plastics has been completed and a number of recommendations have been adopted.
- A revised recycling system has been introduced across Futures Park, replacing personal waste bins with designated recycling bins
- This has led to a reduction in single use bin liners and an increase in the amount of waste being recycled.
- A review of procurement is ongoing to ensure, where possible the purchase of single use plastic products is avoided or reduced.
- This includes a reduction in the number of taxi licensing plates purchased by introducing a new re-dating system, meaning a single plate last up to 5 times longer than previously.
- A requirement for all events taking place on council owned land to have a no single use plastics policy is currently being implemented

The Council will be launching a broader waste recycling campaign across the Borough in October 2022. This will launch in parallel with a recycling pilot study.

4.21 Develop our cycling and walking initiatives.

- Designated walking routes have now been established across Rossendale. These are well signposted.
- As part of the longer term Leisure Facilities review, all centres will become outdoor gateways promoting cycling and walking across the borough. The Council has purchased electric bikes for use by staff.

4.22 Developing the Rossendale Valley Green Growth Corridor –

- Work on the growth corridor is likely to take place in future years and at that point we will connect with these projects to maximise their green potential.
- It has been possible to continue with work on the asset register and identify opportunities on council owned land for decarbonisation schemes. The most likely schemes to come to fruition will be solar schemes and small-scale wind power.

4.23 Rossendale Forest

4.24 The Rossendale Forest project aims to plant 16,000 trees over four years. Year 1 has been a major success with 8,270 trees being planted and the publicity campaign winning an award.

4.25 In summary:

- Throughout the Winter period 2021/22, the Council has completed a project with other Pennine Lancashire Authorities and Ribble Rivers Trust (RRT) under the Forestry Commission's Treescapes Fund. This resulted in the planting of 5,170 trees at 17 different council owned sites.
- A further 3100 trees have been planted on privately owned and RBC sites taking the total to approximately 8,270, towards an overall project total of 16,000 over a 4 year period.
- A combination of council staff and the community have carried out planting on council sites. In year 1 approximately 200 volunteers registered, with over 300 individual participations in events.
- Ribble Rivers Trust has delivered one planting session on council owned land at Loveclough Allotments. A further 1,300 trees were planted.
- A Rossendale Forest brand has been created and is widely used on social media posts and will be used on additional signs at planted areas.
- A campaign, highlighting the success of the Rossendale Forest project has won Viva PR the Public Relations and Communications Association "Dare Award" for best public sector campaign for the North West region.

4.26 PRIORITIES FOR YEAR 3

4.27 In the coming year, it will be essential to continue the strong work of the previous two years. This will include enhancing and expanding the grants schemes and introducing many schemes to reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint. It will also be essential to build the climate change network and engage community groups in the work to achieve maximum impact. This will include a mini-conference in mid-2023. In addition to the above, the new priorities for the coming year will include:

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4.28 Seeking funding for further installation of EV charge Points. The current charge points installed on council owned car parks are now proving popular and showing regular usage by motorists. We are bidding for funding from the government's On-Street Residential Charging Scheme (ORCS), which funds 60% of a project. In partnership with private sector installers, this will provide charge points on residential car parks in areas where there is limited off road provision. The Climate Change SPD outlines that charging must be considered in new developments, and sets out the minimum expectation from the Council.

4.29 Development of Decarbonisation initiatives. A submission for funding through the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) is being developed. This funds renewable energy projects for fossil fuel systems that are coming to the end of their life and will significantly assist in the overall cost of installing carbon efficient heating and lighting systems in our buildings.

4.30 Solar Together. The Council, along with other Lancashire councils, have registered an interest to join 'Solar Together'. This is a group-buying solar scheme that offers councils a method to promote the uptake of renewable energy in their area, reducing the carbon emissions and energy costs of domestic properties. This scheme would allow all residents in Rossendale to participate in this scheme, which works by reverse auction, meaning the lowest bid wins and so encourages competitive pricing. A list of residents across Lancashire, initially focusing on the 'able-to-pay' markets, which includes 5,162 Rossendale Residents have been identified who will be contacted directly to gauge interest in the scheme.

4.31 Rossendale Forest. Council owned sites available for planting are scarce after using most in year one. The next phase is now focusing on facilitating and linking with private land owners to ensure planting and development of the forest continues. This is being done by;

- Linking potential landowners to Ribble Rivers Trust. If deemed a suitable site for their priorities, RRT will secure trees and plant the site up.
- Sign-posting landowners to sources of trees such as the Woodland Trust or Forestry commission. If trees are secured, RBC will then recruit volunteers from the database to assist with planting.
- Utilising specific funding streams to purchase trees for planting on private land, such as the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) Community Grants.
- Proprietary work has already taken place and secured partnerships with 2 farms to plant 800 trees via OPCC funding.
- Eight sites identified and details shared with RRT to progress further discussions with landowners, with a potential for a further 9,000 trees planted.
- A private landowner has secured part funding from the Woodland Trust to plant a further 1,000 trees, facilitated by volunteers on the Council register.

4.32 Heat Decarbonisation

4.33 Work continues in developing a bid for the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funding. This opened in mid-September 2022.

4.34 This funds renewable energy projects for fossil fuel systems that are coming to the end of their life.

4.35 The amount of funding would lead to significant savings, both in carbon and in monetary terms.

- 4.36 Quotes have been received for ground-sourced heat pumps for Futures Park, ranging between £397k and £1 million. Further investigations are continuing in relation to air-sourced heat pumps. It is hoped that substantial external match funding can contribute to this cost.
- 4.37 Investigations are continuing to explore installing a more energy efficient boiler in Bacup library, and replacing substandard glazing at Henrietta St. depot and the A, B and D centre in Bacup.

4.38 Decarbonising Rossendale

- 4.39 In partnership with Valley Heritage, energy consultants have been engaged to investigate the potential for local energy generation in the conservation area of Bacup, particularly in relation to solar power.
- 4.40 Conversations are ongoing around the possibility of setting up a heat network within the area. Valley Heritage have also commissioned a course aimed at 'Understanding Domestic Retrofit', alongside running energy drop-in sessions for residents.

4.41 THE CARBON REDUCTION FUND

4.42 The £1Million Carbon Reduction Fund was agreed by Council in 2021 and it is intended that this fund supports schemes over a period of the four years. In the past 12 months the fund has primarily been used to support Business and community grants, however work has progressed in other areas and provisional allocations made for works due to take place.

4.43 A summary of spend and commitments is provided below:

- Community grants totalling £18,415, a further 3 applications pending
- Business grants totalling £11,022, a further 3 applications pending.
- A lighting improvement scheme for council buildings has been tendered totalling £52k
- A provisional scheme for an energy efficient boiler at Bacup library has been developed. This will reduce carbon emissions and save the Council on its annual fuel bills. The provisional cost is 80k.

It is to be expected that spend of the fund will be lower in the first year as schemes are developed and grant schemes promoted. Currently £161k is expected to be spent from the first year's allocation. Many schemes are now progressing to delivery and the review of the grants schemes is intended to accelerate investment.

4.44 CLIMATE CHANGE OFFICER POST

4.45 It was agreed by Council in July 2021 that a Climate Change Officer should be appointed to provide leadership to the Council's carbon reduction work. This post was appointed to in September 2021 and funding is for two years. It is expected that the carbon reduction schemes being implemented through the Carbon Reduction Fund will result in ongoing financial savings for the Council. It is proposed that these savings be ring-fenced in order to fund the climate change officer role in the longer term. This will be assessed and a separate decision sought in relation to this.

5 RISK

A risk register has been developed for the strategy as part of the Council's programme management process and these risks are monitored regularly. A public commitment has been made by the Council to do what it can locally to tackle climate change. This report limits the risk of not delivering on that commitment by putting the resources in place to ensure delivery. This report identifies ways in which the risk of non-delivery can be mitigated

6 FINANCE

6.1 There are currently no additional financial implications arising from this update report.

6.2 Setting aside any future carbon reduction financial savings to fund the climate change officer post beyond the current two years, will have an adverse financial impact on the budget, however at this point in time it is not possible to quantify the level of savings that may be achieved.

7 LEGAL

There are no legal implications arising from this report. Each project will be subject to its own considerations on a case by case basis.

8 POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are currently no additional policy or equalities implications arising from this update report.

9 REASON FOR DECISION

9.1 In 2020, the Council made an ambitious commitment to play its part in reducing carbon emissions. The following two years have seen significant progress towards achieving this.

9.2 Continued development of the outlined priorities will allow us to move forward further and even faster to ensure we reach our net zero ambitions by 2030.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Climate Change Strategy	https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/file/16648/rossendale_council_climate_change_strategy
Annual report to Council 2021	Item D1: https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1249/council
Decarbonisation Strategy	Available Room 118
Climate Change SPD	https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/download/11615/climate_change_spd
Rossendale Forest PR pack	Available Room 118