

Climate Emergency

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

The report focuses on how the LGA has been responding to the climate emergency over the summer and how this issue will now be dealt with across a number of its boards. This report specifically highlights some key recommendations for how the EEHT Board will be progressing the policy lead on climate emergency work. There is also a specific update on climate related transport issues.

Recommendations

That Board members note the report and approve:

1. the policy recommendations outlined in paragraph six; and
2. the proposal for a regular climate emergency update paper for the EEHT Board in paragraph seven.

Action

Many of the areas of recommendations are covered in the proposed forward plan (waste, transport, the Environment Bill). Members may wish to raise any other issues or broader points on taking forward work on climate change.

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Climate Emergency

Background

1. Since the broadcast of the BBC's Blue Planet II documentary in late 2017 environmental issues have risen up the public's consciousness. From Greta Thunberg's school strikes for the climate to the Extinction Rebellion protests in London – the environment is at the forefront of many citizens' minds. A recent survey by Ipsos MORI showed 85 per cent of adults are now concerned about global warming, the highest figure since this question was first asked in 2005¹.
2. Local government has been responding to the environmental concerns of the public for a long time. Local councillors understand that these issues are of significance to their local residents. Back in 2000 over 300 councils signed up to the Nottingham Declaration² on climate change. The LGA followed this up with a climate change commission and a climate change survey. The Climate Change Act in 2008 resulted in national indicators for local councils³ measuring local carbon dioxide impact. In 2012 the LGA worked with the Environment Agency to establish the Climate Local programme to support council action on climate change. Throughout this period councils across the country have been working on various initiatives to deal with climate change with many of them working towards being zero carbon. To date 234 councils in the UK have declared a climate emergency⁴.
3. The LGA passed a motion at its 2019 annual conference in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the role of local government in delivering them⁵. This included a declaration of a 'Climate Emergency' and committed to supporting councils in their work to tackle climate change by providing a strong unified voice for local government, and sharing best practice across all councils. There was unanimous cross party support for this declaration.
4. The Leadership Board set up a Climate Emergency Sounding Board to take forward the LGA's work over the summer. The Sounding Board met twice to identify how the LGA can support councils meet the climate emergency challenges that they are facing, through its lobbying and improvement work. Councillor David Renard, Councillor Adele Morris and Councillor Rachel Blake from EEHT were on the Sounding Board.

¹ 12 August 2019 <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/concern-about-climate-change-reaches-record-levels-half-now-very-concerned>

² https://friendsoftheearth.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/nott_dec_principles.pdf

³ NI 185 (percentage CO2 reduction from local authority operations) and NI 186 (per capita CO2 emissions in the local area)

⁴ Climateemergency.uk

⁵ Local Government Association

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/UN%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20Motion%20and%20LGA%20Response.pdf>

LGA Next Steps

5. Leadership Board met on 11th September and agreed that the LGA should act quickly. Members highlighted that many Whitehall departments and agencies are involved in developing climate work and these silos need harnessing at a local level. Councils can act as the agent for change locally as they have the credibility to bring all these national interests together with local communities. It was agreed the LGA would offer the Government a joint national taskforce between local leaders and relevant Whitehall Departments (at least including BEIS, MHCLG, DEFRA, DfT and Treasury) to consider the most appropriate actions, funding, coordination and collaboration needed to drive the UK's climate change agenda. We are currently in the process of contacting the different Secretaries of State.

Recommendations

6. The Leadership Board agreed to a range of lobbying and policy recommendations which fall within the remit of the EEHT Board. The table in appendix A outlines the key areas where the EEHT Board will focus its climate change work for the rest of the year. EEHT Board has been asked to develop the detail of the Climate Change work, with City Regions and People and Places asked to consider the specific urban and non-met issues. The Improvement and Innovation Board will lead on the improvement offer. To ensure that this issue is managed as a priority, the Leadership Board will receive regular reports to coordinate and commission work across the organisation. Members are asked to consider the table and note the process for progressing work across the LGA.
7. The EEHT Board will continue to receive a regular Climate Emergency Update paper to keep board members abreast of the activity taking place across the organisation on climate emergency.

Current learning from councils

8. Many councils have already taken forward action on climate change. The LGA will be collating this to share with the sector. From what has been observed so far there are some key issues many of these councils have been focussing on:
 - 8.1 Developing a climate strategy and measuring its progress:
 - 8.1.1 Bristol, Leeds, Manchester and the Mayor of London have all developed their own zero carbon strategies. Surrey County council is working with the University of Surrey to develop a carbon baselining toolkit.
 - 8.2 Understanding how to integrate climate change into the decision making process:
 - 8.2.1 Councils such as Birmingham City and Leeds have identified a member of the cabinet who is responsible for climate change. Bristol City Council have established an Environment Sustainability Board. Future cabinet papers at

Newcastle City Council will contain a section setting out the climate change implications of the decisions being taken.

8.3 Involving partners, citizens and the most vulnerable in climate change work:

8.3.1 Leeds City Council has established a climate commission. This brings together key organisations and actors from across the city and from the public, private and third sectors. Birmingham City Council is setting up a cross party, multi-agency climate task force which will include representatives from faith communities and business, health, education and third sectors. Oxford City Council has established a citizen's assembly to focus on climate change. Up to 50 residents are regularly attending their events.

8.4 Identifying resources to support climate change activity:

8.4.1 Stroud DC and Scarborough BC have both identified funding for a dedicated carbon neutral officer. Cornwall have identified £500,000 revenue spend to support delivery of their climate change plan. Brighton and Hove City Council is establishing a sustainability and carbon reduction investment fund. Nottingham City Council are looking at a work place parking levy. Haringey have a zero carbon homes offset.

8.5 Sustainable Procurement:

8.5.1 Both Nottingham City Council and Sheffield City Council are looking at how they can make their approach to procurement more sustainable for the long term.

8.6 Long term investments:

8.6.1 Bristol City Council have formed their own energy company. Norwich City Council are in the process of doing the same. Waltham Forest and Southwark Council have both moved their funds out of fossil fuel investments.

Climate Change Online Toolkits

9 There are also a number of helpful toolkits and reports which are currently available to support councils with their work:

9.1 Friends of the Earth produced a report in March 2019 looking at a range of actions local authorities could consider: <https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/33-actions-local-authorities-can-take-climate-change>.

9.2 The Association for Directors of Environment Planning and Transport (ADEPT) published a report in June 2019 looking at how councils can help businesses and communities manage the impact of climate change: [Preparing for a changing climate – good practice guidance for local government](#).

9.3 Ashden have produced a climate change co-benefits toolkit for local authorities:
<https://www.ashden.org/programmes/co-benefits>.

9.4 The Committee on Climate Change produced a report in 2012 focussed on councils:
[How local authorities can reduce emissions and manage climate risk](#) .

9.5 The Passivhaus Trust has some sector leading ideas around developing eco-friendly buildings: <http://www.passivhaustrust.org.uk/>.

9.6 The Improvement Team has funded some councils with an environment focus:
[Rother – Productivity Programme](#); and [Behavioural Insights Programme: Reducing household waste in Havering](#).

Climate Emergency: Transport update

Decarbonisation of local transport

- 10 At its last meeting, the LGA Leadership Board, with the advice of the specially set up Sounding Board, has asked that further detailed work is undertaken to support councils on their climate change work (as outlined above).
- 11 This includes work on longer-term transport solutions including: establishing the resource needs and regulatory changes to support the move to electric vehicles (EV) including the provision of charging points on new housing developments. The implications of the development of hydrogen fuel cell technology for the mix of local transport and infrastructure provision and the incentives and investment required to support a shift towards public transport and walking and cycling (recognising that modal shift will need to be part of the solution to reducing carbon emissions).
- 12 As sustainable and future transport was already an EEHT Board priority, work has started on this and will also take on board the above recommendations. This includes:
 - 12.1 A potential partnership with Oxford University following up their work on supporting electric infrastructure development in Oxford with the city and county councils.
 - 12.2 A joint good practice event on electric charging infrastructure on 24th March 2020 with Cenex, which was established in 2005 as the UK's first Centre of Excellence for Low Carbon and Fuel Cell technologies. Cenex now operates as an independent not-for-profit consultancy specialising in the delivery of projects, supporting innovation and market development, focused on low carbon vehicles and associated energy infrastructure.
 - 12.3 A programme to research best practice, capture expert views and initiate debate on the decarbonisation of transport, with practical advice for councils and elected members on issues such as modal shift, adoption of low/ zero carbon technologies and behaviour change. This programme will explore:

12.3.1 the role of local government and local leadership;

12.3.2 what more councils can do;

12.3.3 identify policy and institutional barriers; and

12.3.4 and demystify the technology alternatives:

12.3.4.1 The programme also go beyond technological improvements: it will explore the implications of moving to a strategy of “Avoid, shift and improve”. I.e. avoid individual motorised transport; shift transport and travel demand from carbon-intensive to more sustainable modes like rail, public transport, cycling or walking; and improve efficiency and reduce total emissions.”

12.3.4.2 Issues such as induced traffic (the phenomenon of new roads capacity attracting new trips that otherwise would not be made) and road pricing will also be explored.

12.3.4.3 Delivery will be through a mix of reports, web products, articles and discussion events. The aim is that the programme’s conclusion will coincide with the LGA annual conference (30 June to 2 July 2020).

Implications for Wales

13 We will be looking to share learning with our WLGA colleagues and work collaboratively on any common issues.

Financial Implications

14 The policy work listed within this report can be handled within existing resources. Any additional items would need further financial consideration. There are financial implications for any extra improvement activity.



**Environment, Economy, Housing
and Transport Lead Members**

22 October 2019

Appendix A

	EEHT specific policy areas	Timeframe
1.	Work with Government to address the need for greater energy efficiency in the built environment and how this can be achieved through regulatory changes and through planning practice which builds on the evidence of recent inquiries.	Ongoing work of EEHT board
2.	To continue working closely with Government, as it implements its Waste and Resources Strategy to identify ways to reduce the total level and the level of unrecyclable waste entering the system and the investment priorities for waste disposal and processing of recyclates, considering the investments that have already been made by councils	Ongoing – greater activity expected in 2020 during second phase of DEFRA consultations.
3.	Work on longer-term transport solutions including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing the resource needs and regulatory changes to support the move to electric vehicles (EV) including the provision of charging points on new housing developments. • the implications of the development of hydrogen fuel cell technology for the mix of local transport • infrastructure provision and the incentives and investment required to support a shift towards public transport and walking and cycling (recognising that modal shift will need to be part of the solution to reducing carbon emissions). 	Ongoing work of EEHT board
4.	To review and update the LGA position on energy, examining the national and regulatory issues about green energy and any lobbying that needs to be developed	This is a new piece of work which will be incorporated into the work programme for this cycle
5.	To review the Environment Bill (once published) for any further requirements which may need to be managed alongside any climate emergency actions	Completion of this work will be dependent on the publication of the Environment Bill

	Shared work areas for EEHT and other parts of LGA	Timeframe
1.	Offer Government a joint national taskforce between local leaders and relevant Whitehall Departments (at least including BEIS, MHCLG, DEFRA, DfT and Treasury) to	Initial contacts to Secretaries of State to be made by end of October.

	consider the most appropriate actions, funding, coordination and collaboration needed to drive the UK's climate change agenda Liase with Leadership Board	
2.	Work with Government departments to establish jointly the funding and policy changes needed to deliver zero net carbon by 2030. Liase with Finance team	Ongoing but hoping to progress quicker once taskforce is set up.
3.	Delivery of a climate change conference Liase with improvement	Jan 2020
4.	Support to the sector in understanding best practice and most effective actions at the local level, for example through a bank of case studies Liase with improvement	EEHT officers working with ADEPT on a suite of case studies. First meeting of joint panel October.

	Proposed work for Improvement Team	Timeframe
1.	Leadership support, by incorporating climate change issues into programmes for councillors and officers (for example a number of councillors have requested a leadership essentials course on taking responsibility as a leader/portfolio holder after declaring a climate emergency)	November
2.	Support for long term action-planning and setting strategic objectives, for example through the deployment of 'climate experts'	Delivery will require additional resourcing
3.	Accelerated learning pilots in partnership with experts in the field, including leading academics and institutions, to offer practical suggestions to the sector	Delivery will require additional resourcing
4.	Information support for councils through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Don't be left in the dark' guidance and more detailed toolkits to help councils take immediate action. • Workshops and events to help councils develop a better understanding of climate change issues and how these can be tackled 	Delivery will require additional resourcing