

Climate Emergency Update

Purpose of report

For decision.

Summary

This report provides an update on the climate emergency work that has been undertaken since the last Board meeting. It brings together the best practise work requested by members at the last meeting. The paper also outlines work which has been carried out by the environmental charity Ashden. This focuses on the most effective action a council can take on climate issues. Ashden will be present at the meeting to take questions from Board members. The paper concludes by outlining the next steps for our climate change work.

Recommendation

That the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board;

1. Consider the questions for Ashden as outlined in paragraph 15; and
2. Approves the climate emergency actions recommended in paragraph 26.

Action

That officers carry out the recommendations and provide a further update at the next board meeting.

Contact officer: Sonika Sidhu
Position: Senior Adviser
Phone no: 0207 664 3076
Email: Sonika.sidhu@local.gov.uk

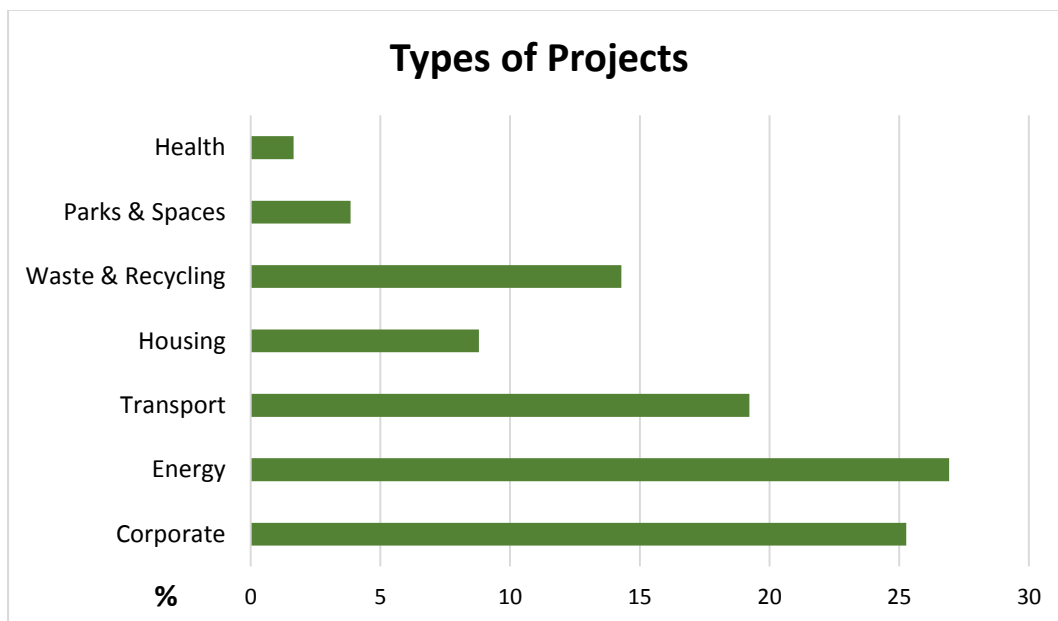
Climate Change Update

Background

1. The LGA declared its support for the 'Climate Emergency' at its 2019 conference in July. It 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 and this was further supported by the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board (EEHT) at its October meeting. The board asked officers for regular updates on the LGA's work around the climate emergency. This paper represents the first of those updates.

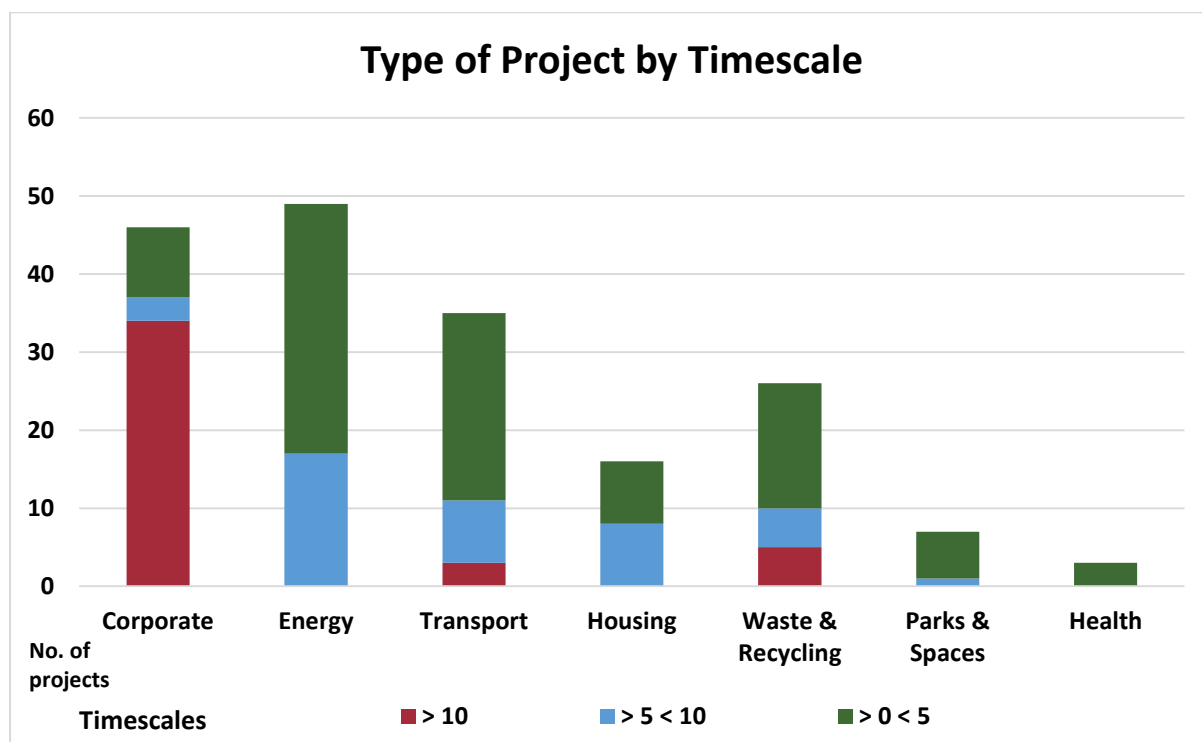
Best Practise

2. At the previous board meeting members tasked officers with collating best practise across councils and using this to establish which projects could deliver carbon impact whilst also being affordable and deliverable. We have looked at what 100 councils are doing on climate change, covering 182 different projects.
3. When looking at the type of project it was clear that a quarter of all projects were corporate (diagram i). As highlighted at the October board meeting councils clearly recognise that effectively addressing climate change requires a whole council approach which embeds climate change across all of a council's work areas. The councils who are doing this are producing strategic plans, baselining current positions, developing consultation approaches with partners, business and the public. They also have identified a political lead for climate change so that the issue has political direction and drive.



(diagram i)

4. Looking beyond corporate activity it is clear that energy projects are by far the most popular. Many of the councils we looked at are involved in renewable energy schemes because these offer some of the biggest carbon savings over an extended timeframe. Following on from this transport projects were the next most popular with councils recognising the opportunity to encourage modal shift by supporting cycling, providing electric vehicle charging points and lower emissions public transport. Ultra-low emissions zones also provide certain councils with the opportunity to address significant air quality issues. The third biggest policy area was waste and recycling. Many councils are looking at how to increase recycling efforts and reduce waste sent to landfill. Some are also looking at single use plastic policies and how to make waste collection routes more efficient.



(diagram ii)

5. When looking at these projects by timescale (diagram ii) over half (53 per cent) of all projects have been completed or are likely to be completed in the next 5 years. The costs of these projects range from grants up to £3 thousand to install electric vehicle charging points, to £9 million with a completed solar farm in Cambridgeshire, to £28 million for a completed leisure centre combined with a heat and power plant at Eastleigh Borough Council. The majority of projects in the over 10 year's category are corporate strategies, policies or commitments. For projects that may be completed in the next 5-10 years, 41% are focused on energy followed by housing and transport. For the projects that have indicated a cost in this category, figures begin in the millions and range from £8.4 million, to £20 million to £62 million.

6. The following projects can be seen as deliverable in a shorter time frame, predominantly as they focus on issues councils have direct control over:
 - 6.1. greening of council fleet
 - 6.2. ensuring council procurement strategy contains climate change action
 - 6.3. tree planting
 - 6.4. policy to ensure council becomes single use plastics free
 - 6.5. moving towards more efficient street lighting
 - 6.6. lower emissions buses and taxis
 - 6.7. installing water fountains

7. The projects which are likely to deliver greater carbon impact fall into the medium to long term as they need clear funding routes and work with partners. Some of the most popular medium-term projects were:
 - 7.1. establishing sustainability and carbon reduction investment funds
 - 7.2. vehicle charging points
 - 7.3. emissions zones
 - 7.4. retrofit projects
 - 7.5. zero waste to landfill policies and improved recycling rates

8. The longer-term projects which yield the biggest carbon savings were predominately energy projects where councils were finding different ways to access or generate sustainable and renewable energy. This varied across solar initiatives, wind turbines and heating networks. This involves projects which take at least 5-6 years to deliver and often require significant capital investment. However, many of these were also income generating over their life spans and deliver significant carbon savings.

9. Overall, the data suggests that councils have been proactive in responding to climate change in the past, with the majority of projects completed or likely to be completed in the near future. There is not a singular approach to how best to deal with climate change. Councils need to develop localised responses which address their local circumstances. But it is clear that those councils who have spent resources on developing their corporate approach to this issue have been able to deliver clear progress. The data also suggests that councils are ambitious and driving policies, strategies and projects to do more in the next decade and this will most likely require significant resources.

10. This review of best practise gives us some insight into how councils are dealing with the climate emergency. It provides us with some useful learning which we can publish and share with the sector. We will also discuss the findings with the improvement team to further inform direct support to councils. However, in terms of moving our lobbying work forward it is important for us as the LGA to have our own baseline position of the sector. We need to understand across the sector what progress has been made and how

confident councils are that they will make the progress their local residents expect in the future, based on current levels of funding and the existing regulatory framework. It is therefore recommended to members that we undertake a climate emergency survey of all councils. Any significant issues raised by the survey will then need to be discussed with government in order to ensure resources and support is available to deliver the level of expectation

Ashden

11. Members specifically requested further information about which climate change initiatives would deliver the greatest carbon impact whilst being affordable and deliverable. Our analysis of best practice yielded limited financial information. The environmental charity Ashden has worked with Friends of the Earth and put together a list of the most effective actions councils can take on climate change <https://www.ashden.org/programmes/top-31-climate-actions-for-councils> . These 31 actions are quantified in terms of likely carbon savings, approximate cost and co-benefits. The co-benefits for each action can be better health, improved economy, increased equity and resilience. Ashden has recognised that councils vary in size across the country and so have done some modelling to make their figures applicable to councils of varying population sizes.
12. The list of 31 actions is not exhaustive. But it again provides an indication of where councils are currently choosing to invest time and resources. The actions fall within the following categories. The themes of transport, housing and council estate appear to be the ones where a range of projects have been identified.

Theme	Number of actions identified
Raising money	2
Housing	6
Transport	9
Council estate	5
Power generation	2
Waste	2
Land use	1
Influencing others	4
Total	31

13. In **Appendix A** we have set out the top 5 projects which generate the greatest carbon savings as identified by the Ashden model. This indicates that projects which identify and invest in renewable energy sources are the ones which generate the greatest carbon savings. This is followed by projects focussing on transport issues such as encouraging a rapid shift to electric vehicles by offering EV charging points and projects looking at

consolidation centres. Finally, using a council's supply chain to minimise emissions through greener procurement also delivers one of the top 5 carbon savings.

14. When looking at the costs of these projects this varies. Projects which require capital outlay have the biggest upfront costs – with investment in a renewable energy facility being the most expensive capital project. However, for a number of these projects what is actually required is the revenue cost of funding a dedicated officer who can focus on delivering specific tasks to get the required level of detail to achieve the identified carbon savings. It will be down to individual councils to identify what type of spend they are able to commit and the level of carbon saving this will deliver for them. Due to the current funding challenges facing the sector councils will need to think carefully about how they programme the carbon savings they want to achieve and the pace at which they can realistically deliver them.
15. Representatives from Ashden will be attending the board meeting and explaining their model in further detail. Members will have an opportunity to raise any further questions about carbon savings and costings. Members may wish to understand:
 - 15.1. What the relationship is between spend and carbon saving?
 - 15.2. What patterns Ashden have observed around capital and revenue spend?
 - 15.3. What are the best projects to invest in?
 - 15.4. Where councils should be focussing their efforts in the short and long term?

Decarbonisation of Transport

16. We have commissioned the University of Leeds to assist us with a programme of research which will involve capturing and disseminating best practice, expert views and initiate debate on the decarbonisation of transport. We are also seeking to disseminate practical advice for councils and elected members on issues such as modal shift, adoption of low/ zero carbon technologies and behaviour change.
17. This programme will explore:
 - 17.1. the role of local government and local leadership;
 - 17.2. what more councils can do;
 - 17.3. identify policy and institutional barriers; and
 - 17.4. demystify the technology alternatives
 - 17.4.1. The programme will 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.

17.4.2. It will help councillors make more-informed decisions on investment taking into account carbon contribution but also issues such as induced traffic (the phenomenon of new roads capacity attracting new trips that otherwise would not be made and potential impact on congestion). Delivery is expected to be through a mix of reports/ briefing/ discussion papers, web products, articles and facilitated events.

LGA Climate Emergency intelligence

18. The LGA recently held a successful Leadership Essentials course on Climate Emergency. Elected members were very enthusiastic. Delegates were asked to identify what sort of climate emergency support they required from the LGA. The key issues were:

- 18.1. Lobbying around funding
- 18.2. Reform of the National Planning Policy Framework
- 18.3. Collective bargaining support for energy supplies
- 18.4. Helping councils to be more joined up and identify potential climate emergency synergies
- 18.5. Lobbying for greater energy efficiency in new developments

19. As policy officers we have also been reflecting on our own policy areas and recommend to members that we need to review our key policy lines in light of our position on the climate emergency. As the EEHT board we need to ensure our major policy lines reinforce our position on the climate emergency and that we have fully worked through the climate change impact analysis of our lines. It may also be necessary for us to work with other boards to ensure that there aren't any contradictions with our carbon position and broader LGA policy lines.

20. Officers will also be working to analyse the impact of the manifesto of the new government following on from the election results. All the main party manifestos made major commitments to climate change. It will be essential that the LGA meets with the new government quickly to establish a climate emergency task force and work out what the expectations will be of local government. In particular we will need to identify funding streams and the potential for any legislative change which could support our work.

LGA Climate Emergency Conference

21. The LGA will be hosting a climate emergency conference on Wednesday 22 January 2020. The aim of the event is to provide councils with the opportunity to share experiences whilst focussing on some of the bigger national issues such as green infrastructure and understanding the expectations of the new government. Councils will also have the opportunity to engage in a session helping to develop the LGA's asks on climate emergency. The conference is free to LGA members.

22. In the following months we are planning on holding some subject specific workshops around planning, transport, waste and energy. These workshops will discuss in further detail what support is needed to address the climate emergency in these key areas. We are hoping that these sessions will culminate in a climate emergency session at the LGA conference in July. We then want to use this opportunity to start pushing out our key climate emergency messages in preparation for COP26. COP26 is the Conference of the Parties which is the major United Nations annual climate change summit. It will be taking place in Glasgow in November 2020.

Partnership Working

23. Officers have been working with a range of partners to develop our positioning on climate change. Key relationships include:

- 23.1. Regular meetings with ADEPT to share policy positions. LGA currently helping ADEPT with climate emergency case study work and regional workshops
- 23.2. SOLACE – providing potential support around their climate change workshops
- 23.3. Friends of the Earth, Ashden, UK 100, Energy Trust, Broadway Initiative – developing collective lobbying lines
- 23.4. Good Homes Alliance – attended their recent workshop which addressed climate emergency

Implications for Wales

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

Financial Implications

25. There are currently no identified financial implications of this work for the LGA. The Leadership Board will look at the LGA's own response to climate change and determine if there are any further financial implications which need to be taken into consideration. The Improvement Board will consider if any new offers need to be developed.

Next Steps

26. The following recommendations are for members to consider:

- 26.1. Publicise the list of 100 council best practise examples.
- 26.2. Provide LGA Executive with update on our climate emergency work at January 2020 meeting.
- 26.3. Officers to review key policy lines across planning, transport, housing, waste and energy to ensure consistency with LGA's climate emergency position. This may require some specialist support e.g. decarbonisation of transport work.
- 26.4. Officers to develop further LGA's energy lines and to work with councils to establish what further support they need.

- 26.5. Officers to work with other LGA Boards to ensure join up with the LGA's climate emergency position.
- 26.6. Renew discussions with new government about climate change task force.
- 26.7. LGA to undertake a climate change baseline survey.
- 26.8. Further consideration given to the LGA climate conference in January 2020 being followed up by policy specific workshops culminating in LGA conference and possible COP26 session.

Appendix A – Top 5 Carbon Saving Projects (Sampled from Ashden’s work)

ACTION	DETAILS	CARBON SAVINGS (tonnes pa)	COST
23. Identify areas suitable for renewable energy in the local plan	Most councils could dramatically increase the amount of renewable energy generation in their area. Average renewable capacity for a district council like our town is around 32MW, whereas the 'best in class' has 172MW. Increasing renewable capacity depends on finding suitable sites; 1MW of wind capacity requires 25-64 acres of land, whereas 1MW of solar PV requires around 4 acres. (However, solar PV has a lower 'capacity factor' than wind, meaning three times as much solar capacity would be required to generate the same amount of energy as wind.)	180,000 (based on an increase in renewable capacity of 140MW , comprising wind turbines with 30% capacity)	£45k pa (to cover a half-time officer to identify sites and encourage investment)
24. Invest in the development of renewable energy and energy storage	Investing in a solar farm and energy storage will provide clean power when it's needed. Figures are based on a project led by Warrington Council.	31,000 (based on replacing a CCGT power station)	£62m one off cost but with an operating surplus generated over the lifetime of the farm.
13. Enable the rapid shift to electric vehicles through putting in place EV charging	Where possible, travel by private vehicles should be discouraged in favour of public transport, walking and cycling. Where private vehicles are essential, encouraging and enabling uptake of electric vehicles by providing a good network of charging infrastructure will cut carbon as well as improving air quality. The carbon emissions of EVs are around 2/3 lower than combustion vehicles when charged from the grid.	17,200 (based on 30% of passenger cars, vans and LGVs being EV)	£110k one off cost to fund 44 new charge points (at a cost of £2.5k per charge point with the remaining supplied from government grants).

<p>31. Through procurement, ensure the local authority supply chain is minimising carbon emissions</p>	<p>Councils spend millions of pounds buying goods and services; they can ensure that their suppliers are doing everything they can to minimise their carbon pollution. Figures are based on a council spending £71 million pa.</p>	<p>12,070</p>	<p>£45k per annum to cover a full time officer to change procurement specs, engage with suppliers and check bids.</p>
<p>11. Establish urban consolidation centres</p>	<p>Urban Consolidation Centres can enable last mile deliveries to be made using electric freight vehicles (including e-bikes) rather than diesel-powered HGVs. Located at the edge of a town or city, goods would be transferred from heavy vehicles at the UCC to the electric vehicles.</p>	<p>4,400 (based on an 20% reduction on freight emissions; ultimately, up to 80% reduction could be achieved if there was full coverage and uptake of UCCs)</p>	<p>£45k pa to cover officer time to engage with partners and facilitate solutions.</p>