

11 February 2020

## **Climate Change and Environment Update Report**

### **Purpose of report**

For direction.

### **Summary**

This report provides members with an update on our climate change work. It provides key feedback from the LGA Climate Emergency Conference and responds directly to members requests for further identification of potential climate change policy lobbying points. The report also updates members on progress around key environmental issues since the general election - the return of the Environment Bill and the Agriculture Bill. It also outlines the resumption of work on the waste and recycling consultations.

### **Recommendations**

Members of Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board are asked;

1. to consider the table in **Appendix A**, and to feedback their views on the listed policy asks; and
2. to approve the next steps of testing out the messages as outlined in paragraph 11.

### **Actions**

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

**Contact officer:** Sonika Sidhu  
**Position:** Senior Adviser  
**Phone no:** 07775802327  
**Email:** Sonika.sidhu@local.gov.uk

11 February 2020

## **Climate Change and Environment Update Report**

### **Background**

1. Following on from having declared a climate emergency at conference in July 2019, the LGA is now focussing on how it can best support the sector in meeting the climate challenge. The 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, it was agreed that the Executive Advisory Board would receive regular reports to coordinate and commission work across the organisation. This report is part of the regular update process.
2. This report provides an update on the key LGA activity undertaken on climate change since the previous EEHT Board. It brings together some initial climate change policy asks as requested by members. The paper also updates members on key environmental policy issues which have progressed after the General Election.

### **Issues**

#### **Executive Advisory Board January 2020**

3. At the January 2020 meeting of the new Executive Advisory Board, Cllr Renard introduced the report updating the LGA Executive on progress since the LGA declared its support for the Climate Emergency at the 2019 conference. The report highlighted the work of the EEHT Board to date. This included:
  - 3.1. The work on best practise examples (100 councils project)
  - 3.2. Analysis around the key climate change policy areas for councils
  - 3.3. Work being undertaken with other partner organisations to develop LGA policy lines
  - 3.4. Key feedback from the LGA Climate Change Conference
4. The work of the EEHT Board was well received. Executive Board members expressed their thanks for a comprehensive report. A detailed, lengthy discussion took place on climate change during which members highlighted the moral responsibility to act on climate change. There was a clear need to understand how to generate public support for local government's actions on climate change, and members flagged up that both national and local action was required. The LGA needed to continue to lobby for further resources for councils on climate change. Adaptation, energy from waste and impact on public health were all areas members felt needed greater focus.

11 February 2020

5. The Chairman raised how crucial culture change would be in responding to climate change and emphasised the importance of local government providing leadership on local responses to the emergency.
6. It was agreed:
  - 6.1. To further develop and publicise the best practise examples
  - 6.2. To develop specific policy and funding asks of Government which will support councils to deliver on climate change
  - 6.3. To internally join up Board activity on climate matters.
  - 6.4. Continue discussions with new Government about climate change task force.
  - 6.5. Follow up the LGA climate conference in January 2020 with policy specific workshops culminating in LGA conference and possible COP26 session.
  - 6.6. Launch a new sector-led improvement offer for climate change at the beginning of March 2020 and continue conversations with MHCLG about including a climate change deliverable in the 2020/21 MoU.

### **LGA Climate Emergency Conference**

7. The LGA Climate Emergency Conference took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 and received very positive feedback from delegates. The event was fully booked up with a waiting list. Around 45 councils were represented with just under 20 elected members in attendance. The event was a combination of sharing of best practice, external expert speakers providing broader challenge to the sector and some focussed workshops to gain direct feedback from councils.
8. The conference provided a snapshot view of climate change activity in a selection of councils.
  - 8.1.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of councils in attendance had declared a climate emergency.
  - 8.2.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of councils had developed or were developing a climate change strategy.
  - 8.3. However, over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the councils hadn't identified the funding streams needed to deliver their projects.
  - 8.4. There was also mixed feedback on the progress being made to set up climate change partnerships and engagement of residents. Councils fed back that these activities were all being planned for but that they wanted to take a little time to ensure they were doing the right thing.
9. In terms of policy asks the following areas were flagged up by delegates:

11 February 2020

- 9.1. Funding – but not simply focussed on capital as often it was revenue funding which councils needed to make these projects happen;
- 9.2. Transport – a very popular topic with several councils wanting greater control over bus services, and support to deliver effective countywide travel. There was an ask for an instant decision on electric scooters;
- 9.3. Comprehensive reform of extended producer responsibility scheme (EPR) which delivers fully funded recycling services;
- 9.4. Reform of planning policy which strengthens council's ability to deliver sustainable new builds;
- 9.5. Greater investment from the Government in green energy; and
- 9.6. Clearer and more consistent message from Government on climate change which doesn't contradict other policy areas.

### **Emerging Policy Asks**

10. The Climate Emergency Conference generated a number of policy asks councils are interested in. Officers have also been delivering regional climate change workshops in partnership with ADEPT (Association of Directors of Environment, Planning and Transport). These too have generated further policy asks. Table i in **Appendix A** outlines the policy asks which have been raised with us so far.
11. These asks need to be further reviewed and tested out with councils. It is proposed that a range of methods are used to test the asks out. This will include:
  - 11.1. LGA officers holding subject specific sessions where they will discuss asks with officers and members;
  - 11.2. An LGA survey to all councils inviting them to feedback on climate change issues including policy asks;
  - 11.3. Continuing to work with ADEPT on regional climate change workshops;
  - 11.4. Working with other LGA boards to cross reference our asks;
  - 11.5. Working with our climate change partners such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, UK100 etc. to test out the key asks; and
  - 11.6. The final asks will be brought back for member approval.
12. Officers are currently working with MHCLG to test out the scope for a climate change task force led by MHCLG. This group would involve a range of government departments

11 February 2020

working with local government to respond to the climate emergency. Initial talks have been progressing well. This group could provide an opportunity for us to raise our policy asks directly with government.

13. **Members are asked to consider the table in Appendix A, and to feedback their views on the listed policy asks.**
14. **Members are also asked to approve the next steps of testing out the messages as outlined in paragraph 11.**

### **COP 26**

15. The 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) is taking place in Glasgow from 9 to 19 November 2020. COP meetings are the UN's forum for addressing climate change issues. COP21 took place in Paris in 2015 and produced the Paris Climate Agreement which is acknowledged as the first time a global framework was set out to address climate change.
16. Some consider the success of COP21 to be partially due to the diplomatic work carried out by the French government to make the event a success. COP25 was a disappointment as it failed to result in any major commitments. There is therefore further pressure on COP26 to deliver some progress – especially as it is seen as a 5-year anniversary since the Paris Agreement.
17. BEIS will be the lead government department for COP26. Councils are starting to show an interest in COP26 and its work. The LGA has applied for observer status to the COP and officers are currently considering whether the LGA will hold any events to coincide with the meeting.
18. On Tuesday 4 February the Prime Minister held a launch event for COP26. The Prime Minister took this opportunity to announce that the ban on selling new petrol, diesel or hybrid cars in the UK will be brought forward from 2040 to 2035 at the latest. He also added that the UK government was launching a “year of climate action”.

### **Environment Bill**

19. The Environment Bill was reintroduced on Thursday 30 January 2020.
20. The speedy return of the Bill to Parliament following the General Election underlines the government's commitment to tackling the climate emergency and to protecting and restoring the natural environment for future generations in line with the 25 Year Environment Plan.
21. The bill focuses on:

11 February 2020

- 21.1. Ensuring the environment is at the heart of all government policy making
- 21.2. Establishing a new independent Office for Environmental Protection
- 21.3. Places 25 Year environment Plan on statutory footing and creates powers to enhance nature and habitats
- 21.4. Improving air quality
- 21.5. Restore and enhance nature
- 21.6. Transform way we manage waste
- 21.7. Protect water resources
- 21.8. Regulating chemicals

22. The Environment Bill policy statement<sup>1</sup> contains a specific chapter on “Delivering environmental ambitions at the local level”. DEFRA now needs to take its engagement with the sector on delivery of the Bill to a more significant level. Officers will be raising this with DEFRA and will report progress back to the Board.

### **Resources and Waste Management**

23. The second round of consultations around the future of resources and waste management are due to take place towards the end of summer. DEFRA has already started a series of workshops around this which LGA officers are fully engaged in. The consultations will focus around the detail of implementing:

- 23.1. Reform of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
- 23.2. Consistency of collections (both domestic and business)
- 23.3. Deposit return schemes (DRS)

24. The EEHT Board has previously established that there is support for the governments plans to move to more consistent collections if they are fully funded. Significant reform of the EPR system is essential and councils need to be fully funded for any new services required and additional performance expected. Energy from waste will be an area we continue to lobby on, on behalf of our membership. Officers are currently undertaking further work to understand the finance required to deliver the proposed reforms. This work will be shared with members at a future EEHT Board meeting.

### **The Agriculture Bill**

25. The Agriculture Bill 2019-20 had its second reading Monday 3rd February. The Agriculture Bill is an opportunity to transform British farming, placing a new focus on the relationship between the agricultural industry and the environment. A new scheme based on the concept of ‘public money for public goods’ presents a significant opportunity to develop a new policy framework which enables a more place-based approach to incentivising land management activities that better align with local priorities, such as

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-bill-2020/30-january-2020-environment-bill-2020-policy-statement#delivering-environmental-ambition-at-the-local-level>

11 February 2020

supporting the diversification of farming activities, protecting important cultural assets or supporting local carbon neutral ambitions.

26. The LGA is currently included in Defra stakeholder engagement on the land management reform and attends regular meetings of the Environmental Land Management Stakeholder Group on governance. The People and Places Board are leading on this work. EEHT will continue to receive relevant updates.

### **Implications for Wales**

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

### **Financial Implications**

28. 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**

29. Members to approve the recommendations in paragraph 13 and 14 of the report:

**29.1. Members are asked to consider the table in Appendix A, and to feedback their views on the listed policy asks; and**

**29.2. Members are also asked to approve the next steps of testing out the messages as outlined in paragraph 11.**

**Appendix A**

**Table i Emerging Climate change policy asks from the sector**

Policy Area	Specific Asks
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional funding from government to implement carbon reduction plans</li> <li>• Not simply focussed on capital as often revenue funding is needed to make projects happen</li> <li>• Link EPC (energy performance ratings) to council tax</li> <li>• Ability for councils to raise funding for climate change locally</li> <li>• Resources and skills need to be funded so that councils can deliver on climate change</li> <li>• Non-competitive funds to tackle the climate emergency</li> <li>• New statutory duty (fully funded) for councils to report on their own carbon emissions and for the local area</li> </ul>
Transport/Air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater control over local bus services</li> <li>• More effective county wide travel options</li> <li>• More funding for public transport/active travel</li> <li>• More funding for electric vehicle infrastructure</li> <li>• Clear delivery road map for electric vehicle networks</li> <li>• All taxis to be electric vehicles</li> <li>• Legalise electric scooters</li> <li>• Move freight transport from road to rail</li> <li>• More funding for rural bus services</li> <li>• Low carbon green book rethink</li> <li>• Greater consistency needed around clean air zones as all have evolved differently</li> <li>• Funding for concessionary bus fares for young people so they start using public transport from a young age</li> <li>• Transport hubs in smaller towns</li> <li>• Councils to have automatic powers to introduce workplace parking levy schemes</li> <li>• All area to be given automatic rights to bus franchising should they want them</li> <li>• Ability for councils to enforce moving traffic offences through full implementation of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.</li> </ul>
Housing/Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reform of planning policy which strengthens council's ability to deliver sustainable new builds (zero carbon homes)</li> <li>• Investment in housing retrofit schemes</li> <li>• Planning requirements for segregated cycle and walk paths</li> </ul>

11 February 2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joined up strategic planning that links housing, infrastructure and jobs</li> <li>• Planning policy to incentivise wind</li> <li>• Amend the national planning policy framework</li> <li>• Code for sustainable homes</li> </ul>
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive reform of extended producer responsibility scheme (EPR) which delivers fully funded recycling services</li> <li>• National standards for recycling</li> <li>• Influence consumer behaviour to reduce waste</li> <li>• Invest in new technology for recycling</li> <li>• Review GDP metrics with environment in mind and measure waste in carbon metrics not tonnage</li> </ul>
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater investment from the Government in green energy</li> <li>• An energy strategy from government to specifically promote wind, wave and solar</li> <li>• Transfer money from Energy Company Obligation to local authorities</li> <li>• Review and strengthen policy on decarbonising heating</li> <li>• Flexibility on Salix (government loans for energy schemes)</li> <li>• Funding to retrofit council buildings and schools</li> <li>• Funding for off grid housing</li> <li>• Power over distribution network operators (DNOs)</li> </ul>
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirement to address green growth in all strategies</li> <li>• Green new deal?</li> <li>• A clear understanding of how DfE and DBEIS skills policy and funding streams will support climate change at national and local level.</li> <li>• Create skills set, competency framework, job descriptions and train people for climate change roles</li> <li>• New apprenticeships around climate change</li> <li>• National infrastructure plans need to address climate change</li> </ul>
National Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard public sector tool for measuring carbon impact and adaptation</li> <li>• Clearer and more consistent message from Government on climate change which doesn't contradict other policy areas</li> <li>• Embed climate change into all national policies</li> <li>• Need a climate change Minister</li> <li>• Further devolve powers and funding on climate change to local councils</li> </ul>
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powers for local authorities to influence large point source carbon emitters in their area</li> </ul>