

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) | Date of Meeting: | 11 June 2024 |
| Subject: | Annual Progress Report Climate Emergency | | |
| Report of: | Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services | Wards Affected: | (All Wards); |
| Portfolio: | Cabinet Member – Public Health and Wellbeing | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | Yes | Included in Forward Plan: | Yes |
| Exempt Confidential Report: | / No | | |

Summary:

Sefton Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019. Following that declaration, work has progressed within the council and a climate emergency strategy and associated action plan created.

Annual reporting on progress made is required as part of the governance approach to the programme. Members are asked to note the progress made on achieving net zero carbon by 2030 and the programme of works supporting the Council's transition to low carbon working.

Recommendation:

Overview and Scrutiny are recommended to note the progress made on the targets in the Sefton climate emergency strategy and action plan.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

Revenue Costs

There are no revenue implications arising directly from this report in terms of providing an update on progress. It should be noted however that to achieve a net zero position will require substantial capital and revenue investment in buildings, fleet etc. at present due to the financial position of all councils external funding is identified as the primary source of funding that could deliver this- this position is reflected in the LCR co-ordinating funding bids for oversubscribed central government grants. Whilst this isn't ideal, the fact that government have recognised the need to provide support is welcome and this will continue to be prioritised. In the event that it is clear that this funding will not be

forthcoming to achieve the objectives of the programme, the council will need to make a decision on how it wishes to approach this.

Capital Costs

Please refer to previous comment under 'revenue costs'

Implications of the Proposals:

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): | |
| There are no resource implications arising from this report | |
| Legal Implications: | |
| There are no legal implications arising from this report | |
| Equality Implications: | |
| There are no equality implications. | |
| Impact on Children and Young People: Yes | |
| Positive impact on future resilience to the causes and impacts of climate change. Reduction in emissions will have a positive long term effect. Children and Young people are a key part of the Council's communication and engagement strategy. | |
| Climate Emergency Implications: | |
| The recommendations within this report will | |
| Have a positive impact | Yes |
| Have a neutral impact | No |
| Have a negative impact | No |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes |
| The report directly addresses the climate emergency with a strategy in place to achieve the targets required. | |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

| |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Protect the most vulnerable: By enabling greater resilience to future climate events. |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: By enabling greater resilience to future climate events and encouraging energy security measures |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: By training staff to consider climate impacts as part of service delivery |
| Place – leadership and influencer: By Sefton taking decisive action on its energy/carbon emissions |
| Drivers of change and reform: |

| |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| By Sefton taking decisive action on its energy/carbon emissions |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: By enabling greater resilience to future climate events. |
| Greater income for social investment: By Sefton taking decisive action on its energy/carbon emissions |
| Cleaner Greener By Sefton taking decisive action on its energy/carbon emissions |

Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7651/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5751/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 Sefton Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019. Following that declaration, work has progressed within the council and a climate emergency strategy and associated action plan was created.
- 1.2 The period 2020 -2030 was split into three phases of action in order to align with financial reporting cycles. This report covers the beginning of phase 2. Phase 1 laid robust foundations for future work and Phase 2 includes the delivery of key capital works. The progress made on the delivery of the strategy has been impacted by the energy and cost of living crisis, over the last two years. However, efforts have been made this year to address this. With less available budget within the council for investment purposes overall, more innovative programmes of work and bids for external funding have been prioritised.
- 1.3 Both the strategy and action plan have seven key principles to guide work in this area – guided by the acronym C.L.I.M.A.T.E
 - Carbon Reduction
 - Leadership
 - Innovation
 - Mobilisation
 - Adaptation
 - Transformation
 - Engagement

As such, the Annual Report is structured around reporting against each of the above principles.

2. Progress during 2023/24

- 2.1 The work carried out over the past year is reflected in the attached document 'Climate Change Annual Report 2023/24' Appendix 1. A summary of the carbon footprint and some highlights of the progress made, is presented below.

2.2 **Carbon Footprint** – Council emissions continue to fall for the 4th successive year. During 2023-24 the Council have reduced overall emissions by 29%. The fall is in line with the planned reductions in the Council's net zero trajectory. This has been achieved by the move to use electricity from renewable energy sources and has counteracted the rise in gas use (driven by a resumption of operations at Dunes Splashworld, the Council's largest gas user).

Some of the other projects and work to support the move to low carbon working, undertaken over the last 12 months, are listed below.

2.3 **Street Lighting** – In 2020 the Council approved a 4 year £12.750m invest to save project, the Street Lighting Asset Project, for the roll out of more energy efficient LED street lighting across the borough. The project is now well into delivery and is due to end in 2025. To date 19,772 lanterns have been changed, along with 4,162 full lighting columns, saving a total of 9-million kWh and two-thousand tonnes of carbon since April 2021 (representing ~6% of the Council's original footprint).

2.4 **Public Engagement** – Last year there was a commitment to increase engagement with the community on climate change through implementing the new Climate Communications and Engagement Plan. This has been progressed and the Council now has a dedicated climate microsite (sefton.gov.uk/climate), launched a quarterly e-newsletter (to over 4,000 email addresses), developed climate 'stamp' logo and brand identity (climate stripes) and regularly promotes climate-related campaigns.

2.5 **Adapting to the effects of Climate Change** – Action has been taken across all departments to assess the risks associated with a changing climate (e.g. flooding or heatwaves). This process involved workshops and meetings and is now established within the Council's risk assessment process. This will allow service areas to be more resilient to immediate risks such as extreme weather events and plan to reduce the costs and impact of risks in the future.

2.6 **Decarbonising our buildings** – A combined LCR bid for Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Phase 3c was submitted in October 2023. If successful, ~£8M would be invested in 10 key sites in Sefton including Bootle Town Hall, Meadows Leisure Centre and Crosby Lakeside, the current heating system would be replaced with a low carbon alternative such as heat pumps with improvements made to the building fabric (insulation and glazing) and overall energy efficiency via LED lighting and solar panels. Initial indications are that the full award will not be made but Sefton will receive a smaller proportion of the funding requested. The Council's climate strategy includes the decarbonisation of 18 buildings which would represent ~11% of the total footprint, it is likely that only 2 of these buildings will be decarbonised via Phase 3c, with a likely 1-2% reduction to our overall target.

2.7 **Purchase of 'clean' electricity** – from 1 April 2023 all of Sefton's electricity was generated by renewable energy sources such as solar PV or wind. This has a significant impact on the Council's carbon footprint as it meant that our existing emissions from using electricity fell to zero emissions. This was achieved by specifying electricity sources that are certified as from 100% renewable sources through the Council's existing electricity contract. There is an additional cost to

secure this type of electricity which will be monitored for affordability in future years.

- 2.8 **Green Sefton** - The natural environment also plays an important role in Sefton's decarbonisation journey, not only because it absorbs and stores carbon dioxide but also because of the co-benefits it has, including better air quality and reducing flood risk. During 2023-24 Green Sefton reviewed new national coastal erosion risk maps taking into account climate change predictions for sea level rise, installed water level monitoring equipment on smaller watercourses to understand changes in localised flows due to changes in the weather patterns and planted 635 standard trees (6,878 since 2019-20).
- 2.9 **In Summary** – Due to activities undertaken, at the end of 2022/23 Sefton reduced carbon emissions by 29%. However, since the Council declared a climate emergency carbon emissions have fallen by an impressive 41% (against initial 2019/20 baseline). In the coming year officers will take up the PSDS 3c funding to further reduce emissions by 1-2% and will resubmit our remaining buildings for PSDS funding due Autumn 2024. Work will also begin on intervention to decarbonise our fleet that could achieve an additional 13% reduction once completed.

3 **The Liverpool City Region Carbon Footprint and action plan**

- 3.1 All six authorities in the Liverpool City Region (LCR) have declared a Climate Emergency and are taking targeted action, as well as sharing creative ideas and lessons learned to help the whole city region achieve net zero carbon by 2040 or sooner. Carbon emissions for the LCR area are estimated by Central Government and made publicly available online. There is a two-year lag in data released, meaning references made in the report refers to 2021 results.
- 3.2 In 2021 LCR's emissions increased by 5.6% from 2020. However, since 2019 emissions were overall lower by 4.4% in 2021 compared to the high of 2019.
- 3.3 In early 2023, the LCR Combined Authority (CA) published the 'Pathway to Net Zero' strategy which outlines an ambitious plan to reduce carbon emissions across the entire LCR. Later the same year, a 5-year Climate Action Plan 2023-28 was published, which set actions for the Combined Authority to complete, that help contribute towards decarbonising the LCR.
- 3.4 In 2023-24 Sefton Council worked with the LCR CA on a number of key projects including, joint applications for external funding to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, the Low Carbon Skills Fund and domestic retrofit initiatives. Collaboration and information sharing on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Solar Together Project. This work is on-going and will continue in 2024-25.

4 **Priorities for 2024/25**

- 4.1 Work will continue to deliver the climate emergency action plan and in 2023-24 there are a number of key projects officers will focus on. These include;

- Delivering some decarbonisation works (works awarded under PSDS 3c)
- Updating and relaunching climate emergency training for all staff and elected members
- Build upon the engagement and educational activities already underway.
- Work with colleagues in property service to embed climate friendly policies within the emerging corporate landlord property management framework.
- As we near the half-way point to our 2030 target, to review the strategy and make any adjustments necessary to remain on track.

4.2 The Council remain broadly on track to reach net zero by 2030 but recognise a significant amount of work remains including decarbonising some Council buildings (Phase 2: 2023-25) and moving to an electric/low carbon fleet (Phase 3: 2026-29). Along with identifying offsetting options for remaining emissions from 2030.