

Climate Emergency Statement of Internal Control

Define and Document

Context

Local Authorities in England do not have any statutory duties with regards to carbon reduction. There is also not an obligation to report on carbon emissions.

The council declared a climate emergency in March 2019, resolving to:

- Sign up to a science based carbon reduction target that is consistent with achieving the Paris Agreement of no more than 1.5°C global temperature increase.
- Work to make Leeds Carbon neutral by 2030 and call on central government to provide the funding and powers to make this possible.
- Work with other organisations and governments within the UK and internationally to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C.
- Work with the Leeds Climate Commission to run a conversation with residents, Trade Unions, public sector organisations, businesses and the third sector on developing a plan with the actions and milestones required to reach this target.

In February 2020 a climate emergency update paper was brought to Executive board ([\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Executive Board, 10/02/2021 13:00 \(leeds.gov.uk\)](#)) including progress made since the climate emergency declaration in March 2019; proposed targets to achieve net zero as a council and a city; results from the Big Leeds Climate Conversation and next steps; and the proposed future action plan. The report also identified areas where support is required from national government.

The Best Council Plan reflects the Climate Emergency declaration as one of three key drivers to the council's strategic ambitions. Sustainable Infrastructure is one of eight City Priorities with identified key performance indicators.

The Best Council Plan signposts other significant plans and strategies, namely:

- Leeds Transport Strategy
- Leeds Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy
- Leeds Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
- Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy
- West Yorkshire Low Emissions Strategy
- West Yorkshire Transport Strategy
- Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan

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Roles and Responsibilities

Officer Accountability

The Director of Resources is delegated functions in respect of climate change; sustainable energy and carbon reduction; and clean air. These functions are in turn sub-delegated to the Chief officer Sustainable Energy and Air Quality.

The central team (Sustainable Energy and Air Quality) ensure the establishment, monitoring and review of arrangements corporately, in addition to providing advice and guidance in relation to these matters on projects taking place across the council.

Additional project/ programme governance is established for bigger schemes. For example, the public sector decarbonisation fund has its own board that involves stakeholders from across the various directorates that are impacted by the works. A presentation is provided at each meeting to show progress against different areas such as budget, programme and to flag any issues.

Given the scale and complexity of the district heating scheme this also has its own board to monitor progress and the budget.

For many workstreams a project team meeting with controls specific to the project is sufficient. For example, we have secured significant funding in housing but this has been managed through weekly internal project team meetings as well as weekly meetings with supply chain partners and as the number of parties involved is lower, this is sufficient to ensure that we are identifying issues and taking action where possible.

Our work programme can vary greatly from year to year and can often be driven by the availability of certain funding streams. Whenever we start a new project, we consider the governance and whether it is of sufficient size or complexity to warrant its own board.

Democratic Oversight

Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate	Regular briefing on all issues arising
Chair of Climate Emergency Advisory Committee	Regular briefing on all issues arising alongside the Executive member as well as the chair's briefing prior to the main committee meeting
Climate Emergency Advisory Committee Members	The Climate Emergency Advisory Committee facilitates cross party discussion and support for the actions taken in relation to climate emergency. A further four working groups have been set up – <ul style="list-style-type: none">• food and biodiversity,• planning, buildings and energy,• behaviour change and transport and• finance.

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Members	All members are able to attend one of the three working groups that were set up to support the main committee (food and biodiversity, planning, energy and buildings and behaviour change and transport)
Full Council	An annual report is taken to Full Council on the work of CEAC
Scrutiny	The work of the Sustainable Energy and Air Quality team is reviewed through scrutiny committees – for example, communities, housing and environment scrutiny board are reviewing the work that has taken place using the Public Sector decarbonisation Fund in October 2021. Earlier in the year the work of CEAC was also reviewed by this committee.

Clearly Communicate

Advice and Guidance

As the Sustainable Energy and Air Quality team is not able to support every department to consider their decisions in relation to its carbon impacts, guidance has been developed to support officers in completing this section ([Decision making in a climate emergency \(leeds.gov.uk\)](https://leeds.gov.uk)). This provides information in relation to incorporating climate considerations throughout the development, formal decision making and implementation of programmes and projects.

An internal communication campaign is planned to promote the decision making in a climate emergency guidance more widely. This wasn't delivered last year due to staff being temporarily diverted to support Covid work.

In addition the sustainable energy and air quality team work with many departments across the council to support their specific climate emergency plans i.e. transport, public health, economic development etc. This can range from holding regular meetings, attending senior leadership teams periodically or presenting to wider groups of staff to ensure everyone understands the climate emergency and its implications.

Due to the number of procurements and level of finance that we manage across a variety of schemes, we also have many staff who have developed core expertise in these areas and coach other team members.

Training

We intend to roll out carbon literacy training to further support members and officers understanding of the issues. This will be an on-going programme of training.

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Effectively Embed

Establish expectation

Pre the pandemic staff were offered the opportunity to join a staff forum focused on the climate emergency. This gave us the opportunity to work with a large number of staff from across the council and for them to identify potential opportunities for improvement as well as helping to take messages back into services. This has still to be re-established as we return to a more settled work pattern.

As well as this some directorates have set up their own working groups or champions to support their input into the climate emergency. The SEAQ team work particularly closely with planning, transport, asset management and housing as these are the areas that are likely to make the biggest impact through the decisions that they take.

Facilitate compliance

Decision making takes place within relevant delegation and sub delegation arrangements for each of the specific projects that is undertaken, although guided by project boards and other established governance arrangements as required.

In addition, as every decision taken can impact positively or adversely on our achievement of net zero, there is now a section within the corporate report template that requires the climate emergency implications of every decision taken to be considered.

Observe outcomes

As climate change is not a statutory duty, we ensure that arrangements are compliance relates more to individual projects that are under the climate change umbrella.

In particular, the central team receive significant amounts of grant funding to undertake works such as retrofitting of housing or public buildings and with that funding, there are often specific requirements related to the management of the funding and the reporting of the outcomes. As part of the funding terms and conditions we have to report on progress and provide budget updates. The information requested varies from scheme to scheme so as part of any scheme's initiation we set up a monitoring regime with our partners such as Social Landlords, Housing Leeds and the supply chain to mirror what is required by the funding body.

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Meaningfully Monitor

Meaningfully Monitor:

In response to the declaration of the climate emergency, the council made a commitment to report annually to executive board on progress. The latest report was received by Executive Board in February 2021. The report provides an overview of progress against the council's net zero ambition. The programme of work that contributes to net zero is very wide ranging, with projects being completed by a multitude of teams. For example, transport, planning and many other departments all play a key role in helping to deliver the net zero ambition. To ensure that there is a coherent view of what is happening across the council, many key departments are asked to support the development of the annual executive board report.

Every year we monitor the carbon emissions for both the council and the city. This data is included within the annual executive report to show progress and the key actions for the following year.

Within the best council plan there are a few KPIs that are specifically linked to Sustainable Infrastructure, including the carbon emissions of both the city and the council. There are a number of measures related to sustainable transport as well i.e. number of passengers boarding buses in Leeds etc.

Many of our schemes are monitored externally as they receive grant funding with the Chief Officer, Sustainable Energy and Infrastructure named as the escalation point if there are issues with delivery of externally funded schemes. Schemes such as district heating are not monitored externally but there is a board in place and regular updates are provided to the executive member on the scheme's progress and an update is included within the annual executive board report. A standalone district heating report was also taken to Executive Board in the summer.

Review and Refine

Given the impending deadline for the climate emergency, it is imperative that we work in collaboration with all other organisations as there will be no benefit if only one of us were to meet their targets. The council works with numerous organisations including, but not limited to:

- Core Cities
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority
- Leeds and Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commissions
- Yorkshire and Humber Net Zero Officer group
- ADEPT

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- UK100
- Climate Action Leeds
- Leeds Anchor Institutions
- LGA

The different groups allow us to:

- jointly consider challenges and issues
- understand new innovations or best practise and to learn from it where helpful
- develop coordinated lobbying asks

National Policy Announcements and Legislative Change

We review our approach in light of the regular policy changes that are taking place that impact on the net zero agenda as well as reviewing documents issued by organisations such as the Committee on Climate Change. We provide an annual review of key policy changes in the annual executive board report to help set the context to the report.

Assurance statement

Having undertaken the review of the system of internal control for Climate Emergency outlined in this statement the Chief Officer Sustainable Energy & Air Quality is satisfied that the arrangements are up to date and fit for purpose, that they are communicated and embedded and that they are routinely complied with.