

Climate change update - reducing carbon emissions across the Council's estate

Date: 21 October 2021

Report of: Chief Officer, Sustainable Energy & Air Quality

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Environment, Communities & Housing)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- This report provides a progress update to Scrutiny Board on work to reduce carbon emissions from the corporate estate and from a range of the Council's other activities.
- The report summarises the programme of work to deliver decarbonisation measures across the corporate estate, predominantly using Government grant funding.
- The report also provides an update on sustainable Council fleet and staff business travel schemes and measures being implemented.
- The range of measures and activities outlined provide a very clear and direct contribution to the City priority relating to climate action and to the achievement of the Council's net zero carbon target.

Recommendations

- a) Scrutiny Board is requested to note the contents of this report and to comment and make recommendations as appropriate.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 This report provides a progress update to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Communities & Housing) on work to reduce carbon emissions from the corporate estate and from a range of the Council's other activities.
- 2 The council's key sources of emissions are street lighting, its buildings and its fleet. The Council has already acquired the largest local government electric vehicle fleet in the UK, committed to halve the energy required for street lighting by transferring to LED and to replace gas in our city centre buildings with district heating. A series of further recommendations were made to the Executive Board in 2020, including the following:
 - o Commit to a rationalisation and energy efficiency programme which reduces emissions from Council buildings by a further 40% by 2025;
 - o Purchase 100% of our electricity from green sources, supporting new renewable capacity;
 - o Purchase only low emission vehicles by 2025;
 - o Remove payment for the use of staff petrol and diesel cars by 2025.
- 3 The results of these actions predicted and reported to Executive Board in 2020 are set out in the table below:

	Tonnes CO₂e 2018	Tonnes CO₂e 2025
Streetlighting	13,821	0
Buildings (gas)	28,618	20,600
Buildings (electricity)	18,107	1,405
Fleet	10,274	9,000
Total	70,820	31,005

- 4 The above figures primarily cover scope 1 and 2 emissions, but work is also in progress to quantify our scope 3 emissions (to include areas such as food, etc.).

Corporate Estate

- 5 The Council has continued to work to reduce carbon emissions from its estate. Energy prices are currently at an unprecedented high, and whilst this represents a significant financial risk to the Council, it also strengthens the business case for investment in energy efficiency measures and renewables infrastructure.
- 6 The scheme to transfer the city's street lighting to LEDs has continued to be rolled out, resulting in a 10.5 million kWh reduction in electricity consumption since 2018 and a saving of 2,348 tonnes CO₂e. Moving forward, a further 1,900 lanterns per month will be replaced up until the planned completion of the roll-out in October 2023.
- 7 In addition to this, the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) opened the £1 billion Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) in Autumn 2020, offering grant funding to support the decarbonisation of heat in non-domestic public sector buildings. A total of five bids were submitted by the Council to the grant scheme between October and December 2020, all of which were successful.
- 8 The combined value of the schemes being delivered is £25.2m, with bids including the installation of air source heat pumps, connections to district heating network, solar PV, building energy

management systems, LED lighting, double glazing, variable speed drives, metering and radiator upgrades. Initially the Sustainable Energy & Air Quality team (SEAQ) applied to deliver works across 43 sites. As preliminary activity has progressed, there have been some alterations to scope. Overall, measures will be delivered at no fewer than 40 sites. These include 8 leisure centres, 4 civic buildings, 12 primary schools and a further mix of offices, depots, children's centres and homes for older people. The SEAQ team, LBS, Corporate Property Management and a range of other internal and external partners have been working together this year to carry out technical feasibility assessments, design work and to procure contractors to deliver these schemes. A large volume of installations have already been completed, and the entire programme must be delivered by the end of March 2022. The schemes will enable an estimated 3,145 tonnes CO₂e to be saved per year upon completion and would support the local green economy, safeguarding or creating an estimated 280 jobs.

- 9 Asset Management continue to lead the programme of rationalisation of the Council's estate, with the changes in ways of working resulting from Covid-19 restrictions highlighting in particular the scope for rationalisation of office space, as well as exploring opportunities across the wider estate.
- 10 Whilst a number of buildings have re-opened with Covid secure measures in place, Asset Management are working with Directorates through their service review process to understand estate requirements going forward, with options appraisals, Member engagement and the capital receipt programme all feeding into this wider process.
- 11 The Council also approved a target in January 2020 to move to 100% electricity provided from green sources through entering into a power purchase agreement, but with the ambition to progressively move to more locally produced renewables over the next ten years. In light of the opportunity presented by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to accelerate the roll-out of renewable generation capacity across the council's own estate, the emphasis this year has been more on the latter part of this target. However, the Council is still actively seeking opportunities to enter into a corporate agreement that will see all of its electricity demand met from renewable sources, but that will provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate the rapidly changing profile of its future energy requirements. Alongside this, the Council is exploring the potential to deliver large scale solar schemes within Leeds.
- 12 These measures combined will deliver substantial progress towards the commitment made in January 2020 to a rationalisation and energy efficiency programme which will reduce emissions from Council buildings by a further 40% by 2025.

Fleet and Grey Fleet

- 13 The corporate fleet will benefit from the Electric Vehicle Trial Centre, with the trial fleet being absorbed into the corporate fleet at the end of the Trial Centre programme. The trial centre has a fleet of 45 vehicles currently, with the additional 16 larger vans providing 61 further electric vehicles (EV) to complement the existing fleet of 300 zero emission vehicles. The development of the charging infrastructure for fleet is ongoing with the roll out of new charge facilities at depot sites and officers' homes. This includes a significant charge hub installation at the Seacroft Ring Road site that will support the growing EV fleet used by Leeds Building Services. The fleet replacement programme is being developed with the internal target of all vehicles using alternative fuel where possible and to align with the city target of Carbon Neutrality by 2030.
- 14 The new Waste Services depot is also being designed to include charging facility and capacity that future proofs the potential for up to 50 electric refuse collection vehicles. The site opening in 2022 and will have the immediate capacity to charge 20 refuse vehicles as well as the existing fleet of small vans. Electric refuse vehicles are estimated by the Energy Savings Trust to reduce carbon emissions by approximately 32 tonnes per annum and NO_x emissions by 104kg per annum.
- 15 Work has continued to promote sustainable alternatives to Council staff for business related travel ('grey mileage') in support of the aim to remove payment of expenses for travel in staff petrol and diesel cars by 2025. However, Covid-19 restrictions have unsurprisingly had a huge impact in reducing levels of staff business mileage this year, with expense claims for 2020/21 at 49% of the mileage claimed for 2019/20.

- 16 During Covid-19 over 8,000 staff worked from home. A survey carried out in June 2020 showed that there was significant support from staff to keep working from home the future:
- 52% of staff expressed a desire to remain working remotely for most or all of the time, and over 80% wishing to work from home for more than half of their week;
 - In terms of the future office environment, the tasks that staff would prioritise if they had limited time in the office in future were: team meetings, collaboration with colleagues, training and development and personal social interaction.
- 17 The promotion and expansion of sustainable travel alternatives for staff has been impacted by Covid-19 given the implications for use of public transport and initiatives such as car-sharing. It will be important now to ascertain the new norm in relation to grey fleet patterns so as to determine what the appropriate offering and balance of alternative travel options should be.
- 18 However, as staff return to work in offices they will be advised on the current and emerging position with public transport and other green travel options, as well as to optimise hybrid work to avoid unnecessary work journeys.
- 19 The Cycle to Work scheme was extended last year to allow the purchase of bikes (including e-bikes) up to a value of £3,000, and also repayments over 24 months in order to make the scheme more affordable. Purchase of bikes following the start of the initial lockdown were higher than for any of the last five years of the scheme. Cyclescheme were appointed in June 2021 as the new Cycle to Work scheme provider.
- 20 An Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Lease Car Scheme is also to be tendered and will be launched in 2022. This will provide staff with an option to have an electric vehicle “on the road” at lower cost. Based on uptake in other organisations this will see further reductions in emissions from grey fleet mileage, with the potential for around 200 staff replacing their diesel or petrol vehicles with ULEVs annually.
- 21 The Car Club pool car scheme remains available and has been adapted to ensure provision of Covid secure vehicles, with the current contract now extended by WYCA until February 2022.
- 22 Although the availability of sustainable travel alternatives and a review of the expenses policy will remain central to achieving the Council’s aim to reduce grey mileage, consolidating new and more efficient ways of working that have emerged during this year will be of equal importance, and all services have been challenged to identify and realise these opportunities.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected: None specifically		
Have ward members been consulted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

- 23 The activities covered within this report represent a key part of the Council achieving its net zero carbon targets. As well as substantial carbon reductions, the various schemes and measures covered in this report will bring a range of health and environmental benefits to the people of Leeds and beyond.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 24 Extensive public consultation has been carried out further to the declaration of the climate emergency for Leeds. There has been engagement across Council services in identifying suitable sites and delivering decarbonisation measures.

What are the resource implications?

- 25 The projects and measures covered in this report are largely cost neutral to the Council. In particular, decarbonisation measures across the corporate estate are either grant funded or are based on business cases where the capital repayment costs are offset by the financial savings from reduced energy consumption.

What are the legal implications?

- 26 There are no specific legal implications.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 27 Key risks include market capacity to deliver decarbonisation schemes within timescales, availability of ongoing grant funding for further future schemes, and uptake of sustainable travel measures. These risks are being managed through effective procurement, market engagement, project management and ongoing marketing and communications.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

- Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 28 The proposal clearly supports the three pillars through stimulating investment and employment within the City, and reducing emissions and carbon relating to the Council's and the City's activities.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

- 29 In selecting the preferred technology solutions for decarbonisation measures across the corporate estate, the project team has assessed a range of technology solutions and options.

b) How will success be measured?

- 30 Success will be measured primarily through the Council's ongoing carbon reporting.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

- 31 There are various interim timescales for the measures covered in this report as referred to above. However, the ultimate timescale is for the achievement of the City target of net zero carbon by 2030.

Appendices

- 32 None.

Background papers

- 33 [Report to Executive Board - Annual Report on the Climate Emergency – 10th February 2021](#)